

Polybius "roman army" essay sample



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Polybius “ Roman Army” Essay Sample

The Romans were just known for their army, but also for their army discipline. In comparison to today and the punishments given out were almost, inhuman. If you were found guilty of any charges, a tribune was to be assembled to deliver a swift punishment to the so called crime. Let's start off with standing post or guard duty, any and everyone who has ever served in the military has had to do this. You have been standing there all night, and NOTHING is going on. After hours and hours of nothingness, you finally start to stay, and maybe you jerk your self-awake once or twice. Heaven forbid you actually fall asleep. If this happens, and you are caught there is no " I'm sorry", no " it will never happen again" there is nothing but dishonor and death. The tribune is called that morning, and you would have been beaten to death with clubs and stones by all of your comrades. The soldiers other punishments could include, fines, demanding of sureties, and of punishment with stripes. Being beaten to death was a common punishment for several severe offenses as, stealing, giving false evidence, committing the same fault three times, and homosexual practice.

Leaving your post out of fear and throwing away any of your weapons on the battlefield was also punished with death. Polybius said "" Those who have lost a shield or a sword or any weapon on the battlefield often hurl themselves upon the enemy hoping that they will either recover the weapon they have lost, or else escape by death from the inevitable disgrace and the humiliations they would suffer at home." Not very often did this happen, when a squadron deserted its post. For punishment the tribune would use the famous, the horrible, sentence of decimation. The tribune called the

legion on parade and ordered to the front those who were guilty of desertion of their ranks. They would call them every name under the sun to insult them, and then they would be told to choose a number. Then everyone out of ten would pay for crimes.. And they did this by being clubbed and beaten to death by the army. The rest of the men were allowed to live, but after all that embarrassment I think death would have been the better option.

Polybius told the Romans. " That alone wouldn't make men brave. You encourage them to act heroically by holding out all kinds of rewards and incentives."

Soldier's that acted with great heroism, was rewarded by his general in front of all the troops and presented with gifts. The hero had voluntarily and deliberately exposed himself to danger. He would be presented with a spear if he killed an enemy, not during a battle or where it wasn't necessary to engage in single combat. An infantryman would receive a goblet; someone in the cavalry would be presented with furniture for his horse. These men were not just honored in the army, but they were honored throughout the community and at home were they were allowed to display trophies. The Romans compared to our military is somewhat different in the level of punishments and rewards, but still very much the same. Today soldiers are given the Purple Heart for being injured during war and the highest is the Medal of Honor for going above and beyond the call of duty. These men are still very regarded in every community and home for the service to their country.