

# Spartacus

Spartacus was a Thracian gladiator; he was the leader in the Gladiatorial War against Rome. Spartacus served in the Roman Army and escaped gladiatorial training school and took refuge on Mount Vesuvius where other runaway slaves joined him. After defeating two Roman forces in succession, the rebels overran most of southern Italy. Ultimately, their numbers grew to at least 90000. Spartacus defeated the two consuls in 72BC and fought his way northward towards the Alps, hoping to be able to disperse his soldiers to their homelands once they were outside Italy.

## Life as a Gladiator

Spartacus lived the life of a gladiator. He was basically a slave who was forced to fight for the entertainment of the Romans. It is thought that he was sold into slavery and spent much of his early life living and training to become a gladiator in a Ludus, which is a gladiator training school. Many of the fights they trained for were to the death. Life in the Ludus was very difficult for Spartacus.

The regime at the Ludus was extremely strict and Spartacus together with 70-80 others rebelled and fought their way out of the school. They took knives from the kitchen and killed the guards. The band of gladiators, led by Spartacus, succeeded in obtaining proper arms and weapons, and took refuge in the crater of Mount Vesuvius in 73BC.

## The Slave Army

Spartacus and his men grew in number and along with his other generals Crixus, Castus, Gannicus and Oenomaus they trained and developed an Army made up of a large number of slaves. The group of gladiators plundered and pillaged nearby villages and towns in the area to gather supplies and free other slaves who joined their ranks. Their numbers quickly rose and word spread to Rome that an invasion from the slave army was close at hand.

Rome trembled at the grave rumours in 73 bc that the city was about to be attacked by a rabble army of gladiators and rebelling slaves. Spartacus and his army were now spreading through parts of Italy and ransacking markets, towns and rich landowners. They defeated all before them as they went; taking money and freeing slaves at each new battle. Slave insurrections were not really new to Rome but never before had a slave army fought on the doorstep of Rome, a place where the majority of the population were slaves.

## Battle Victories

For two long and gruesome years Spartacus and his slave army took on the might of the Roman Empire and defeated all who came before them. The defeat of Glaber was the first victory. The over confident Glaber and his troops were defeated at the base of Mount Vesuvius. It was a humiliating loss and one that would be repeated on a number of occasions. After this came more crushing losses for the Roman Empire, including the battle at Picenum.

<http://www.tribunesandtriumphs.org/gladiators/biography-on-spartacus.htm>

<http://www.historynet.com/spartacus.htm>

