



## Ancient Greek Pottery Plate of Spartan Soldiers

When a Spartan boy child was born, it was considered that he would grow up to be strong enough to carry the Spartan shield and fight for the state. He was allowed to return to his parents' home and live with them until he was 7.

Then at age 7, he was taken away from his parents to live in a barracks with other children of his age where he would stay for five years. He was fed very little food and was forced to steal and scavenge in order to stay alive. But he was punished if he was caught doing so or for anything else he was caught doing wrong, however small. Every day of his life was spent training to be as fit and strong as he could be made to be, and learning to use the weapons of war.

At the age of 12 he was taken from the barracks and made to eat, live and sleep in one garment with no shoes under the open sky for one year in order to learn to survive off the land as a soldier must when in a foreign land.

At 13 he was returned to the barracks to continue his military training but now he was actually expected to take part in serious war games including raids on non-Spartan villages where he could be killed or seriously injured.

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At the age of 20 the Spartan boy was finally considered to be a soldier and would continue to live in barracks as part of the standing army.

Only at 30 would he be allowed to marry and own and live in his own house and start a family. He would continue to serve as a soldier until he was 60 when he was allowed to retire. As a result of this “*Spartan way of life*”, a Spartan soldier was considered to be worth three of any soldier from any other state or nation.

In Greek texts, they describe the *Spartans* using the famous *phalanx* formation for battle, on the march, even when camped, where they used their heavy shields to block others from getting in. They marched forward as one body, crushing their opponents.

The *Spartans* fought and won some of the most famous battles in history.

