

14TH-19TH CENTURY

# Ottoman Janissary

The elite infantry of the Ottoman Empire

centuries the Ottoman Empire's mighty army was led by Janissaries. The first force was formed around 1380 by Christian prisoners captured after successful Ottoman campaigns in Europe. Between 1380 and 1400, they were taken from their homeland and bred for battle. After being drafted into the army, they became property of the sultan and acted as his personal bodyguards. The Janissaries were forced to observe strict rules and were trained to a high standard as disciplined and skilful warriors. As the sultan's most trusted guards, the companies resided in barracks and were constantly drilled for a life of war. The Janissary commander was called the agha and ranked above other commanders in the Ottoman military. Janissaries used swords and rifles as they moved quickly to overwhelm fortresses or to outflank cavalry. On the battlefield, Janissaries were recognisable due to their distinctive headgear, which was also fought at sea, using their rifles to fire at mariners on enemy ships. They gained a reputation as some of the best warriors in the world, deploying devastating walls of fire. In peacetime they also served in Ottoman cities as policemen. At their peak in the early 19th century, there were over 100,000 Janissaries and the Ottoman Empire represented one of the finest fighting forces in the world.

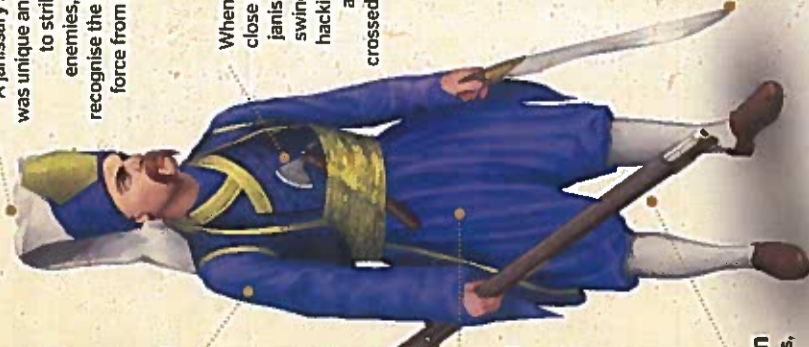
Notable battles...

LEGGE OF CONSTANTINOPLE 1453  
BATTLE OF MOHÁCS 1526

**Robe**  
The robe was worn over a tunic and was made of heavy, dark cloth. It was decorated with gold embroidery and was a symbol of status.

**Headgear**  
A Janissary's headgear was unique and designed to strike fear into enemies, who could recognise the formidable force from a distance.

**Axe**  
When fighting at close quarters, a Janissary would swing their axe, hacking away at anyone that crossed their path.



**Primary weapon**  
Fighting off as archers, Janissaries soon demised and wielded pikes, becoming one of the most accurate fighters in the world.

**Bow and arrow**  
The Sioux bow fired iron arrows over a short range and some were backed with animal tendons to provide extra power.

**War paint**  
A Sioux warrior's face and body were covered in war paint, and bird feathers were worn in the warrior's hair.

**Tomahawk**  
Before rifles were introduced by settlers, axes were used as both melee or projectile weapons.

**Shield**  
The small shield was made of animal skin or leather and could deflect enemy arrows.



WEAPONS OF CHOICE  
BOW, SPEAR, AXE, RIFLE, COUP STICK

PRE-EUROPEAN COLONISATION-1890

# Sioux warrior

Native American warriors who preferred to count coups rather than draw blood

Unlike many of the other warriors on this list, the Sioux seldom fought in large numbers. They preferred to attack in small raiding parties that focused on stealing horses or avenging a fallen comrade rather than occupying territory.

The Sioux, like other Native American tribes, did not believe in the ownership of land, but they did compete with rivals like the Crow for hunting and living space in the summer months. Both Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse were Sioux warriors, and it was any young man's ambition to prove their status

**Secondary weapon**  
With its curved blade the yatagan sword was useful on the battlefield as well as an enduring symbol of the Janissary.

PRE-EUROPEAN COLONISATION-19TH CENTURY

# Zulu warrior

The men who defied the European imperialists

Zulus were divided up into regiments of hundreds or thousands of warriors called an ibutho. Younger unmarried men comprised the main fighting force, and to maximise their time in service, chiefs often didn't let their troops marry until their mid-30's. When a Zulu was married, they could choose to leave the ibutho and from then on were only required to fight in times of war.

Shields were only issued in wartime; Zulus were not allowed to own one in peacetime to help quell potential civil war. Younger regiments tended to have darker shields while more experienced contingents defended themselves with lighter coloured versions. The shields themselves were used to knock enemies off balance before stabbing them with short spears. As well as being traditional, it helped Zulu leaders identify different units on the battlefield. There wasn't a standing army and Zulu warriors returned to their homes between conflicts.

The army didn't have any sort of supply system and lived off the land. This made operations short but often decisive. The Zulus knew the lay of their land better than anyone, which made ambush attacks highly effective. Their prowess in battle enabled the Zulus to conquer rival tribes and made them more than a match for the invading Europeans.

Notable battles...

BATTLE OF ISANDLWANA 1879,  
BATTLE OF RORKE'S DRIFT 1879

# Horns of the buffalo formation

When the Zulus delivered a crushing defeat to the British at the Battle of Isandlwana in 1879, they had their tactics to thank. The formation was pioneered by Zulu King Shaka and involved a strong central core of warriors flanked by horns - two units of light troops. As the enemy moved to engage the strongest Zulu units in the centre, they would be flanked and encircled. This strategy was devastatingly effective against local tribes but was less successful against the British, especially at Rorke's Drift, where concentrated rifle fire prevented the Zulus from getting in close. However, against the scattered British forces at Isandlwana, it led to an emphatic victory.



WEAPONS OF CHOICE  
ASSEGAI, RIFLE



**Headress**  
Zulu regiments wore headresses so their commanders could orchestrate battles from a distance.

**Assegai**  
Equipped with a sharp, pointed blade, this spear was used to stab enemies from behind a large shield.

**Modern firearms**  
As well as spears, Zulu warriors also wielded rifles that had been imported into Africa by settlers or taken from defeated foes.

**Stamina**  
With no supply train or heavy armour, Zulu forces could cover over 30 kilometres in a day.

**Is**  
A Zulu warrior made from a spear, a shield and when he intimidates

**C**  
The cow was made of durable material and the

**K**  
introduced



Over 200,000 Gurkhas served as allies of the British in the two World Wars



WEAPONS OF CHOICE  
KUKRI



**Battlefield courage**  
Gurkha regiments universally wore this headgear during WWI for traditional reasons.

**Kukri**  
A distinctive curved knife made of tempered steel, the kukri was a lethal weapon in practiced hands.

**Weapon and tool**  
The kukri can also be used to chop food and wood. An old legend stated that it had to draw blood every time it was drawn.

1815-PRESENT

# Gurkha

Loyal and fearless, they were a vital asset to Britain in WWI

During World War I, Gurkhas were some of the finest soldiers on the side of the Allied powers. They travelled from their native Nepal to many theatres of the war, including the treacherous cliffs of Gallipoli and the blood-soaked fields of the Western Front. Time and again, the brave Gurkhas led assaults on key positions.

Gurkhas were first enlisted by the British in 1815 and around 3,500 still serve the British Army. Almost 2,000 were awarded gallantry awards during The Great War and several have received the Victoria Cross. Their motto is 'better to die than be a coward'.

Notable battles...

BATTLE OF LOOS 1915, GALLIPOLI CAMPAIGN 1915-1916