

# WORLD MILITARY HISTORY-I

## UNIT-I

### Greek WARFARE

#### 1. Ancient Greek Military System

**Phalanx** :- The phalanx was a rectangular mass military formation usually composed entirely of heavy infantry armed with spears, pikes sarissas or similar pole weapons.

**Hoplite** :- Hoplites were citizens-soldiers of Ancient Greek city-states who were primarily of armed with spears and shields. Hoplite soldiers utilized the phalanx formation to be effective in war.

General concepts of Greek military system.

- \* A foot soldier hoplite was equipped with a thirty-inch shield, a helmet, leg guards, a breastplate, a spear and a sword.

- \* The equipment of the soldier weighed altogether as much as 70 pounds.

- \* When in battle, the hoplites soldiers formed a tightly packed formation known as phalanx.

- \* They stood ~~their~~ shield to shield in rows of eight to sixteen soldiers deep.

- \* In addition to the hoplites, other units were also formed.

- \* Poor men who could not afford the equipment of a hoplite, joined auxiliary units.



\* These units include archers, slingers, javelin throwers as well as those equipped with clubs and swords.

\* Wars were generally fought in the summer.

\* By the end of the fifth century standing armies were created.

## 2.1. BATTLE OF MARATHON

Causes:-

\* The Battle of Marathon was fought because the Persian Army wanted to defeat the Greek city states that supported the uprisings in Ionia against the Persian Empire.

Course of the Battle:-

\* The first encounter on the Greek mainland between Greece and Persia took place in 490BC, on the land plain of Marathon, 26 miles northeast of Athens.

\* The Persian expeditionary force of Darius I was not large numbering under 30,000.

\* Led by generals Hippias, Datis and Artaphernes, the Persian army arrived.

\* The Athenians under a brilliant general Miltiades gathered an army of 11,000.

\* To meet the larger invading force, Miltiades thinned out the central part of the army.



\* For several days both sides hesitated to attack and finally Miltiades decided to attack and ordered the central portion to advance.

\* As the Persians came forward, he ordered soldiers from left and right portions of his army to sweep down, attacking the Persians on three sides and the Persian soldiers began running for their ship.

\* Then the Greeks marched back to Athens, in time to defend the city against Persian cavalry.

The Persians lost about 6,400 soldiers and the Greeks lost 192.

Results:-

\* A clever military strategy and better weapons of Athenians helped them to win the battle. But this battle with the Persians marked only the beginning of the Persian wars.

## \* 2.2 Battle of Thermopylae

Causes:

\* After king Darius died, his son Xerxes organized another attack on Greece. King Xerxes organized a huge army of more than 120,000 soldiers. To get this army from Persia to Greece, Xerxes chose to cross the Hellespont, a narrow sea channel between Europe and Asia.



## Course

\* In 480 BC Xerxes and his soldiers overwhelmed several Greek city states.

\* Hearing the news, Athens and Sparta decided to work together. Their strategy had two parts.

\* The Athenian navy would try to stop the Persian navy and the Spartan king, Leonidas would try to stop the Persian army.

\* Leonidas led an army of 6,000 to 7,000 Greeks from many city-states including 300 Spartans, in an attempt to prevent the Persians from invading Greece.

\* They made their stand at Thermopylae. At this site, the Persian army would have to go through a narrow pass between the mountains and the sea.

\* Then a Greek traitor showed the Persians a secret path in the mountains. The path allowed the Persians to surround the Greeks and attack them both sides.

\* To save his army, Leonidas ordered most of his troops to escape.

\* Leonidas prepared to fight with the remaining 300 soldiers.

\* But all of them including Leonidas were killed.

## Results:

\* By having the advantage of path through the mountains, the Persians won the battle and could now advance to Athens.



## 2.3 Battle of Salamis

Cause:-

⇒ It is the continuation of the Battle of Thermopylae.

Course:-

⇒ In 480 BC as news of the Greek defeat at Thermopylae reached Athens, its citizens panicked and sailed for nearby islands. Only a small army was left to defend the city.

⇒ An Athenian navy leader **Themistocles** thought that he knew a way to defeat the Persians.

⇒ He wanted to fight Persian navy in the narrow channel between the Greek islands and Greek mainland.

⇒ The Persian would find it hard to move their ships around to attack the Greek navy.

⇒ For his plan to work, he set a trap. He sent a loyal servant to Xerxes' camp with a message saying that Themistocles wanted to change side and join the Persians. If the Xerxes attacked now, half the Greek sailors would surrender.

⇒ Believing this message, Xerxes ordered his ships to attack.

⇒ As the Persians approached, the Greek ships appeared to retreat. Soon, the Greeks had surrounded them.

⇒ Persians lost about 300 ships and the Greeks lost only 40 ships.



Result:-

⇒ Once again, the Greeks had defeated the Persian Empire. At Salamis, the Greeks combined military strategy with their knowledge of coastal geography to influence the outcome of the battle.

### 3. ~~Battle~~ Peloponnesian War -

~~Ex~~

⇒ The Peloponnesian war was an ancient Greek war fought by the Delian League led by Athens and the Peloponnesian League led by Spartans.

⇒ It occurred in three phases.

⇒ (i) Archidamian war (481 BC - 471 BC)

⇒ (ii) Sicilian War (415 BC - 413 BC)

⇒ (iii) The Ionian War (413 BC - 404 BC).

Archidamian War:-

⇒ The first 10 years of the conflict are Archidamian war after Spartan king Archidamus.

⇒ Sparta launched repeated invasions of Attica, while Athens took its naval supremacy to suppress the signs of unrest in the Spartan empire.

⇒ This period of war was concluded in 421 BC, with the signing of the treaty Peace of Nicias after the Athenian general who engineered it



## Sicilian expedition:

→ The Peace of Callias was soon transcended. In 415 BC, Athens dispatched a massive expeditionary force to attack Syracuse, Sicily, the attack failed disastrously with the destruction of the entire force in 413 BC.

→ This ushered into the final phase of the war.

## Ionian war: - (413 - 404 BC)

→ In this phase, Sparta, now receiving support from rebellions in Athens' subject states

→ In this phase, Sparta now receiving support from Achaemenid Empire i.e. Persians supported the rebellions in Athens' subject states in Aegean sea and Ionian against Athens.

→ The destruction of the Athens' fleet in the Battle of Argospotami effectively ended the war. and Athens surrendered in the following year.

### Commanders & leaders.

Athens

Pericles

Nicias

Demosthenes

Sparta

Archidamus

Lysander