

## Warfare

*You are on a battlefield, where a pharaoh is leading his army into war.*

The military played an important role in Egyptian society, both in peacetime and during war. Egypt had a standing army of full-time soldiers that was stationed throughout the empire. In addition to Egyptian soldiers, this army was sometimes made up of *mercenaries*, soldiers from other lands who were paid to fight for Egypt. When it was necessary to send the army into battle, the pharaoh would take one of every ten men who worked in the temples to add to the army's strength. The army was organized into companies and divisions. A *company* was made of about 200 foot soldiers; 5,000 men made up a *division*. A captain led each company, and he carried a staff topped with the company's emblem. A general or lieutenant-general led each division. Each division marched under the banner of its local God.

Egyptian soldiers used a variety of weapons in battle. The *infantry*, or foot soldiers, used javelins (long spears used for throwing across distances), daggers, and short, curved swords. To protect themselves, they used shields made of rawhide and wore headgear made of padded caps. Some soldiers fought in *chariots*. These wooden, horse-drawn, two-wheeled carriages served as movable firing platforms from which archers could attack the enemy. Two soldiers rode in each chariot. The driver wore a leather or bronze helmet and leather body armor for protection. The archer was armed with a bow and arrow and javelins.

In peacetime, soldiers worked on different jobs outside of the military. They might dig irrigation canals or carry stone from the desert to build a pharaoh's tomb.

**Discussion Question:** What role did the army play in ancient Egyptian society?