

# FOCUSED FIREPOWER

A WWII Wargame for Heroes

## British Forces

# British Infantry Company

During the interwar years, budget deficits and unemployment blighted the United Kingdom. Noticeable worldwide motions towards peace and the economic depression it appeared there was scant interest in, and even less funding for, the armed forces. This lapse in preparation would prove all too costly as on September 1st 1939, Germany invaded Poland, prompting Britain and France (two long standing allies of the Polish nation) to declare war on Nazi Germany.

Ill prepared and under equipped, the British 'Expeditionary Force' was designed to provide support to their French Allies (who at the time had the largest standing army in the world). For the first few months of the war, despite being on a war footing, there was little actual 'warfare' between Britain and Germany. This 'Phoney War' was to turn all too real in the spring of 1940 as the Germans finally attacked in earnest.

The German combined-arms assault swept aside British and French forces in a matter of weeks. Resisting valiantly yet unable to stem the tide, the Allies were soon forced back to the English Channel itself. The events that followed, 'Operation Dynamo', have gone down in British mythology as the 'Miracle of Dunkirk'.

Now with France, Holland and Belgium subdued by German Blitzkrieg, the British stood as an island alone, its Commonwealth allies able to offer little more than moral support as the British faced an apparently unbeatable German war machine. Germany believed the war in the west to be won, yet Great Britain would not give up the fight. One man came to the fore, the maverick politician Winston Churchill, and it was his inspirational speeches and stubborn refusal to admit defeat would inspire a nation and the world.

From June 1940 to June 1944 the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern theatres became the main battlefields where the British army could bring the war on the ground to the Wehrmacht, whilst the 'Forgotten' soldiers of Burma and the Far Eastern Campaigns (see Far East ORBATS) would fight a vicious war against the Japanese until the close of 1945. The 'War in the Desert' became the fires in which the British Army was tempered. Galvanised by victories over Rommel's DAK, they proved to the people back home and indeed themselves, that the German Army was not infallible and that Britain was holding its own.

In December 1941 the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbour brought the United States of America into the war, the world's biggest democracy would become Great Britain's staunchest ally (indeed she already supplied vital aid and materials via lend lease now she would give her most precious commodity, her life's blood). Pearl Harbour initiated the war in the Far East, coinciding as it did with the Japanese attacks on British held Malaya and Hong Kong. Great Britain declared war upon Japan the following day.

Now faced with the challenge of how best to continue the

prosecution of the war there was disagreement in the Allied camp. Whilst America sought to undertake no operations that would delay the invasion of continental Europe itself, Churchill desired to invade Italy. Popular support for the fascist cause was on the wane and Churchill believed that an invasion would remove Italy from the war. Additionally, the opening of a second front with an invasion of Italy by way of Sicily would make certain that up to twenty German divisions would be tied up in the theatre, greatly reducing the pressure on the Soviet Union and the assets available to repel the eventual Allied invasion of France.

When it became apparent that Operation Overlord could not take place in 1943 it was agreed to commit to an invasion of France in early 1944 and to go ahead with an invasion of Sicily, the war in Sicily and Italy had begun.

Italy did indeed capitulate, surrendering on 8th September 1943, and whilst this took one Axis combatant out of the fray (save for the fascist 'diehards' who formed the 'Italian Socialist Republic') the slow, hard slog up the Italian peninsula against hardened and entrenched German opposition in some of the worst weather Italy had experienced in years was anything but easy.

While the grim battles in Italy raged on the Allies made their plans for the invasion of France, by 1944 the grim days were long past and Britain was set to become the staging ground for the Allied Liberation of Europe, after four long years the British were going back to France. The British Army had paid an awful price for its education in modern warfare, but it had learnt the lesson well, when it returned to the Continent in 1944, battle hardened by years of fighting in the African Desert, in Sicily, in Italy and bolstered up by the industrial might of America it was a very different army to that which had been forced back across the Channel four long years ago, now she could face the might of the Wehrmacht on equal terms.

On 6 June 1944, D-Day, the biggest amphibious operation in history was launched on Fortress Europe by combined Anglo-American forces. From a British perspective the landings were a complete success and, combined with Allied air superiority, they were able to put massive pressure on the German forces. Despite many strong pockets of resistance and a number of fierce counter-attacks mounted by the German Army, the advance towards Germany and finally Berlin was inexorable. (See 'Road to Berlin' ORBATS)

In some areas, the argument is proposed that the British were simply treading water until the Americans arrived to save them. Whilst only the most ignorant person could attempt to deny that the influx of American manpower and material was the turning point in the British war effort and no one would dare to say the American sacrifice was not the key to victory in the West, the dismissal of the British contribution to the war, from whatever quarter, is an insult to those men, women and children who died in its prosecu-

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tion.

Britain and her Commonwealth allies bought the time required to generate an Allied victory, and paid in blood. The world we live in today is due in no small part to their sacrifice. It is no small thing to say that the spirit of this, our 'Greatest Generation', lives on in the men and women of the British Armed Forces today.

## British Special Rules

**Marksman:** For over 200 years the British Army had placed a high emphasis on marksmanship and all troopers were expected to maintain a high proficiency with their rifles under fire.

All British elements have the Marksman special rule.

**Night Fighting Specialist:** The British Army often attacked at night to provide as much protection as possible for their troops before contact with the enemy. Such expertise was invaluable when attacking defensive positions. Due to their experience, British forces are not affected by the 'Fractured Chain of Command' rule during night-time operations.

**'Mole-Men':** The tactics of the first world war took some time for the British army to evolve out of. The premise that the infantry would move ahead of the armour, dig in and wait for support was a well founded tradition in British Military doctrine - indeed the German troopers called their foes 'Mole-Men'. However this practice ensured that the British infantry were well used to constructing fortifications at speed.

British infantry will create Hard Cover whilst Digging In for 2 turns not 3 as would normally be the case. The creation of Prepared Defences is also accelerated - taking only 4 turns to create rather than the normal 6 turns.

**Preliminary Bombardment (1943-1945):** The British army preferred artillery tactic was to pound the enemy position, weakening the enemy's front, before advancing.

British players may elect to fire once with his off-board Artillery BEFORE the game begins in a special form of TBFO. This fire-order must be topographically based and the barrage is considered to be 'Inaccurate' (see Special Rules). Each shot fired does not count towards the elements specialist ammunition as the preliminary bombardment is factored in when deciding on ammunition reserves.

## British Equipment

**PIAT:** The Personal Infantry Anti-Tank Weapon was originally intended to be the Brit's definitive anti tank weapon. However it was 'clunky', poorly designed and as enemy armour thickness increased the weapon moved towards obsolescence. With typical British inventiveness it was also fielded as a combination between an anti-tank weapon and a light mortar by changing the charge into a HE shell.

The PIAT counts as a Hand-held Munition AND Light Mortar (with a slightly shorter range - See British Crib Sheet)

**Bren Gun:** The BREN gun was considered to be a solid and dependable weapon when the war started and soon it's shortcomings soon became apparent. Whilst highly accurate, it was unable to put out even  $\frac{1}{4}$  the rounds per minute of the German MG34 and soon the shortage of raw firepower began to take its toll in British casualties.

The BREN gun acts as a Light Machine Gun. It cannot deploy a Beat Zone, but fires at full effect at Long Range to represent its greater accuracy.

# British Infantry Company - 1939-1940

In early 1940 the British Army sent the bulk of its recently mobilised units to France following the declaration of war against Germany. They took with them the larger part of the Army's motorised transport, infantry and cruiser tanks, and the heavy guns of the artillery. The campaign they fought in lasted barely a month. Those men who survived it largely came back to Britain with only the clothes they stood in, sometimes not even that. Practically all their heavy equipment and vehicles littered the roads and fields of France, marking the withdrawal to the beaches of Dunkirk.

Few of the Battalions committed were fully up to strength as regards transport while support weapons, such as anti-tank rifles, 2-inch mortars, and even the vital Bren guns were often in short supply. Where weapons were available there were sometimes crucial shortages of ammunition rendering them useless. The paper allocations are therefore included below, however there was considerable variation in what units actually had to hand.

**Company HQ:** included the commander, a Major or Captain, and his second-in-command, along with batmen and orderlies. Throughout the war, every Rifle Company HQ included an attached Signal Section and Medical Section. The HQ commanded 3 Platoons each comprised of four rifle squads.

<b>Company HQ</b>	<b>Pts: 85/UMV 3</b>
Major/Captain (CO)	Pistol, Hand Grenades
Lieutenant (CO)	Pistol, Hand Grenades
Gunner	Bren Gun, Pistol, Hand Grenades
1 Snioer	Sniper Rifle, Hand Grenades
4 Troopers	Rifle, Hand Grenades
<b>Signals Section*</b>	<b>Pts: 100 (25 Each)/UMV 1 Each</b>
4 Signallers	Rifle, Hand Grenades, Field Radio
<b>Medical Section*</b>	<b>Pts: 60 (15 Each)/UMV 1 Each</b>
4 Medics	Pistol, Hand Grenades, Medi-Kit
<b>Supply Dump - 3 Resource Points</b>	<b>Pts: 136 + Vehicle/UMV 3</b>
Sergeant (NCO)	SMG, Hand Grenades
Gunner	Bren Gun, Pistol, Hand Grenades
Driver	Rifle, Hand Grenades, 15cwt Truck
5 Troopers	Rifle, Hand Grenades
<b>Options:</b>	
May have additional Resource Points for +25pts each	

\* Specialists may be attached to sections as desired, increasing the UMV of the section by +1pt.

# British Infantry Company - 1939-1940

## Rifle Platoon - 3 per Company

**Platoon HQ:** in each Company included an Officer armed with a pistol. He was aided by a Platoon Sergeant armed with a STEN (if he was lucky!), 2 Runners (one of which was the officer's batman) and a two man team for the Platoon's 2-inch mortar. The batman and runner carried the Platoon's only anti-tank rifle.

<b>Platoon HQ</b>	<b>Pts: 62/UMV 2</b>
Officer (CO)	Pistol, Hand Grenades
Sergeant (NCO)	SMG, Hand Grenades
1 Trooper	Rifle, Hand Grenades
2 Runners	Anti-Tank Rifle, Pistol, Rifle, Hand Grenades
1 Trooper	2" Mortar, Pistol, Hand Grenades

**Rifle Sections (3 per Platoon):** The rifle section of the 1940 campaign were eight men strong, and consisted of a Section commander, either a Corporal or Lance-corporal, and seven men, each man armed with a rifle. The British Army began the Second World War using much the same rifle it had concluded the First World War with. The Lee-Enfield Mk III was a bolt action weapon with a ten round internal magazine that proved both reliable and highly accurate. Two men in each Section acted as gunner and loader for the Section's single Bren light machine gun. The Bren was derived from the Czech ZB26 and began to enter service in 1938, replacing the previous Lewis gun, another Great War veteran. The adoption of the Bren would prove to be an inspired choice.

In April 1940, the War Office gave approval to increase the size of the Rifle Section from eight to eleven men. Each Section was to be commanded by a Corporal, with an additional three riflemen added. Units did not have the opportunity to enact this amendment since, barely a month later, the Wehrmacht would sweep into France and the Low Countries at a time when the BEF was still bringing units up to strength on the previous establishments.

<b>Rifle Section - 3 per Platoon</b>	<b>Pts: 65/UMV 1</b>
Corporal (NCO)	SMG, Hand Grenades
4 Troopers	Rifle, Hand Grenades
<b>Gun Group - 1 per Section</b>	
	<b>+1 UMV if Gun Group is deployed independently</b>
Lance Corporal (NCO)	Rifle, Hand Grenades
Gunner	Pistol, Hand Grenades, Bren Gun
Trooper	Rifle, Hand Grenades

# British Infantry Company - 1941-1942

The first major reorganisation of the British Infantry Battalion, incorporating lessons learned during the Dunkirk campaign, took place during late 1941. The overall structure of the Battalion remained unchanged, with a Headquarter Company and four Rifle Companies.

<b>Company HQ</b>	<b>Pts: 85/UMV 3</b>
Major/Captain (CO)	Pistol, Hand Grenades
Lieutenant (CO)	Pistol, Hand Grenades
Gunner	Pistol, Hand Grenades, Bren Gun
1 Sniper	Sniper Rifle, Hand Grenades
4 Troopers	Rifle, Hand Grenades
<b>Signals Section*</b>	
	<b>Pts: 100 (25 Each)/UMV 1 Each</b>
4 Signallers	Rifle, Hand Grenades, Field Radio
<b>Medical Section*</b>	
	<b>Pts: 30 (15 Each)/UMV 1 Each</b>
2 Medics	Pistol, Hand Grenades, Medi-Kit
<b>Sniper Section*</b>	
	<b>Pts: 20 (10 Each)/UMV 1 each</b>
2 Snipers	Enfield Sniper Rifle, Hand Grenades
<b>Light Mortar Support Section - 2 per Company HQ</b>	
	<b>Pts: 40 (20 Each)/UMV 2 per Section</b>
1 Trooper	Pistol, Hand Grenades, 2" Mortar
2 Troopers	Rifle, Hand Grenades
<b>Supply Dump - 3 Resource Points</b>	
	<b>Pts: 136 + Vehicle/UMV 3</b>
Sergeant (NCO)	SMG, Hand Grenades
Gunner	Pistol, Hand Grenades, Bren Gun
Driver	Rifle, Hand Grenades, 15cwt Truck
5 Troopers	Rifle, Hand Grenades
<b>Options:</b>	
May have additional Resource Points for +25pts each	

\* Specialists may be attached to sections as desired, increasing the UMV of the section by +1pt.

# British Infantry Company - 1941-1942

## Rifle Platoon - 3 per Company

**Platoon HQ:** HQs were now to be commanded by a 1st or 2nd Lieutenant (known as a Subaltern), with a Platoon Sergeant, and 2 batmen, a three man team for the 2-inch mortar, and finally a driver for the Platoon's 15-cwt truck. Each Platoon also had an anti-tank rifle (normally issued to the batmen), the Boys, named after the officer who supervised its design and introduction. The 'Boys' fired a heavy .55-inch round capable of penetrating around one inch of armour. By mid-war however, it was clear the anti-tank rifle was completely outclassed in its intended role and the Boys proved more of an encumbrance than an asset.

<b>Platoon HQ</b>	<b>Pts: 73 + Vehicle/UMV 2</b>
Officer (CO)	SMG, Hand Grenades
Sergeant (NCO)	SMG, Hand Grenades
1 Batman Runner	Rifle, Hand Grenades
1 Batman Runner	Hand Grenades, Anti-Tank Rifle
Driver	Rifle, Hand Grenades, 15cwt Truck
1 Trooper	Pistol, Hand Grenades, 2" Mortar
2 Troopers	Rifle, Hand Grenades

**Rifle Sections:** These were commanded by a Corporal, and consisted of a rifle group of six men, and a gun group with a Lance-corporal, gunner and loader. The Section commander was among the first to replace his rifle with the US supplied Thompson submachine gun. The 'Tommy Gun' was a heavy, complicated weapon, but the stopping power of its .45 calibre ammunition made it a popular weapon among allied troops. The six men of the rifle group continued to be armed with the bolt action Short Magazine, Lee Enfield, while the gun group served the Section's single Bren light machine gun. The three members of the gun group were also armed with rifles, though there was no realistic way the gunner could carry his along with the Bren gun and its associated kit.

<b>Rifle Section - 3 per Platoon</b>	<b>Pts: 75/UMV 1</b>
Corporal (NCO)	SMG, Hand Grenades
6 Troopers	Rifle, Hand Grenades
<b>Gun Group - 1 per Section</b>	
	<b>+1 UMV if Gun Group is deployed independently</b>
Lance Corporal (NCO)	Rifle, Hand Grenades
Gunner	Pistol, Hand Grenades, Bren Gun
Trooper	Rifle, Hand Grenades

# British Infantry Company - 1943-1945

The Company was commanded by a Major, with a Captain as his second-in-command. The Rifle Platoons lost their individual trucks in the 1943 reorganisation. Company transport now became three 15-cwt trucks, while a Universal Carrier was added, with a Bren and 2-inch mortar on board, to provide support to the transports. Throughout this period, every Rifle Company HQ included an attached Light Mortar Section, Supply Section, Signal Section and Medical Section. The HQ commanded 3 Platoons each comprised of four three squads.

<b>Company HQ</b>	<b>Pts: 55/UMV 3</b>
Major (CO)	Pistol, Hand Grenades
Captain (CO)	Pistol, Hand Grenades
4 Troopers	Rifle, Hand Grenades
<b>Additional Equipment</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From 1944 add three PIATs for 60pts - may be allocated amongst the platoons as desired</li> </ul>	
<b>Signals Section*</b>	<b>Pts: 50 (25 Each)/UMV 1 Each</b>
2 Signallers	Rifle, Hand Grenades, Field Radio
<b>Medical Section*</b>	<b>Pts: 30 (15 Each)/UMV 1 Each</b>
2 Medics	Pistol, Hand Grenades, Medi-Kit
<b>Sniper Section*</b>	<b>Pts: 10/UMV 1 each</b>
2 Troopers	Sniper Rifle, Hand Grenades
<b>PIAT Specialists*</b>	<b>Pts: 75 (25 Each)/UMV 1 Each</b>
3 Troopers	Pistol, Hand Grenades, PIAT
<b>Light Mortar Support Section - 3 per Company HQ</b>	<b>Pts: 45 (15 Each)/UMV 2 per Section</b>
1 Trooper	Pistol, Hand Grenades, 2" Mortar
1 Trooper	Rifle, Hand Grenades
<b>Transport Section</b>	<b>Pts: 24 (6 Each) + Vehicles/UMV 1 (UMV 2 for the Carrier)</b>
3 Drivers	Rifle, Hand Grenades, 15cwt Truck
Driver	Universal Carrier w/Bren Gun
<b>Supply Dump - 3 Resource Points</b>	<b>Pts: 136/UMV 3</b>
Sergeant (NCO)	SMG, Hand Grenades
Gunner	Pistol, Hand Grenades, Bren Gun
Driver	Rifle, Hand Grenades, 15cwt Truck
5 Troopers	Rifle, Hand Grenades
<b>Options:</b>	
May have additional Resource Points for +25pts each	

\* Specialists may be attached to sections as desired, increasing the UMV of the section by +1pt.



# British Infantry Company - 1943-1945

## Rifle Platoon - 3 per Company

**Platoon HQ:** Platoon HQs were now to be commanded by a 1st or 2nd Lieutenant (known as a Subaltern), with a Platoon Sergeant, Runner, Signaller and orderly, and a two man team for the 2-inch mortar.

<b>Platoon HQ</b>	<b>Pts: 85/UMV 2</b>
Lieutenant (CO)	SMG, Hand Grenades
Sergeant (NCO)	SMG, Hand Grenades
Runner	Rifle, Hand Grenades
Signaller	Rifle, Hand Grenades, Field Radio
Medic	Pistol, Hand Grenades, Medi-Kit
Trooper	Pistol, Hand Grenades, 2" Mortar
Trooper	Rifle, Hand Grenades
<b>Additional Equipment</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From 1944 add one PIAT for 20pts</li> </ul>	

**Rifle Sections:** Each Rifle Section was commanded by a Corporal, and consisted of a rifle group of six men, and a gun group with a Lance-corporal, gunner and loader. The six men of the rifle group were each now armed with the bolt action Rifle No.4, more easily produced version of the previous Lee-Enfield, still firing the powerful .303-inch round. While a perfectly sound weapon, like all bolt actions rifles it was handicapped by its relative slow rate of fire - especially in comparison with its semi-automatic US contemporary. The gun group served the Section's single Bren light machine gun. The Bren proved to be a superb weapon in all conditions and climes, and provided the section with its base of firepower.

<b>Rifle Section - 3 per Platoon</b>	<b>Pts: 75/UMV 1,</b>
Corporal (NCO)	SMG, Hand Grenades
6 Troopers	Rifle, Hand Grenades
<b>Gun Group - 1 per Section</b>	
	<b>+1 UMV if Gun Group is deployed independently</b>
Lance Corporal (NCO)	Rifle, Hand Grenades
Gunner	Pistol, Hand Grenades, Bren Gun
Trooper	Rifle, Hand Grenades

# British Paratrooper Platoon - 1941-1945

Impressed by the German Fallschirmjäger in the early years of the war, On 22 June 1940, Winston Churchill called for the formation of a similar elite Corps of troops for the British Army during World War II. The Parachute Regiment was created and by the end of the war would form 17 battalions.

Perhaps the most famous airborne operation of history is Operation Market Garden of September 1944, in which 35,000 troops of the First Allied Airborne Army were dropped 100 miles behind the German front lines in an attempt to create a path across the Netherlands including the bridge over the Rhine at Arnhem. Three complete airborne divisions, the 1st Airborne Division (United Kingdom), and the 82nd Airborne Division (United States) and 101st Airborne Division (United States), and the 1st Independent Parachute Brigade (Poland) from the Army were used. The units were dropped at various points along Highway 69 in order to create a "carpet" over which the XXX Corps (United Kingdom) could rapidly advance. German opposition was some three times that expected, including two very experienced panzer divisions. Although the operation had partial success in the end the British 1st Airborne division was all but destroyed in the Battle of Arnhem and the final bridge remained in German hands.

An interesting story arises from this episode - upon finally surrendering in the ruins of Arnhem, with no ammunition and virtually starved, a German officer reputedly said to a British officer.

"I fought at Stalingrad on the eastern front but I have never seen troops as good as you at city fighting - where did you learn this?" to which the British officer replied "Well it was our first time - but we'll try to do better next time!"

## Paratrooper Special Rules

**Marksman, Night Attacker, Mole Men.**

**The Best and the Brightest:** There was a determination during their conception that the British Paratrooper be taken from the best and the brightest the army had to offer. They were then trained under harsh conditions where their shared suffering helped breed a strong bond of trust and camaraderie that held them in good stead during their combat missions. British Paratroopers gain the 'Well Drilled' Morale Effect for free and can always choose to upgrade to 'Hardened Veterans' (provided they pay the relevant cost - see Points Costing Document)

**Access the Equipment:** Parachute units were more likely to gain access to equipment not normally available to the basic line trooper. Morale Monitors should ensure that when supervising missions involving these troops there is adequate provision to increase the allocation of specialist equipment (STEN guns, PIATS, Demo Charges, Anti Tank Mines etc).

# British Paratrooper Platoon - 1941-1945

## Paratrooper Rifle Platoon

**Platoon HQ:** Platoon HQs were commanded by a 1st or 2nd Lieutenant (known as a Subaltern), with a Platoon Sergeant, Runner, Signaller and orderly. In addition two troopers were attached from Company level.

<b>Platoon HQ</b>	<b>Pts: 81/UMV</b>
Lieutenant (CO)	SMG, Hand Grenades
Sergeant (NCO)	SMG, Hand Grenades
Runner	Rifle, Hand Grenades
Signaller	SMG, Hand Grenades, Field Radio
Medic	SMG, Hand Grenades, Medi-Kit
2 Troopers	Rifle, Hand Grenades

**Rifle Sections:** Each Rifle Squad was commanded by a Corporal, and consisted of a rifle group of six men, and a gun group with a Lance-corporal, gunner and loader. The six men of the rifle group were each now armed with the bolt action Rifle No.4, more easily produced version of the previous Lee-Enfield, still firing the powerful .303-inch round. While a perfectly sound weapon, like all bolt actions rifles it was handicapped by its relative slow rate of fire - especially in comparison with its semi-automatic US contemporary. Also included in the Rifle Group was a 2" mortar, designed to give fire support and suppression capability. The gun group served the Section's single Bren light machine gun. The Bren proved to be a superb weapon in all conditions and climes, and provided the section with its base of highly accurate firepower.

<b>Rifle Section - 3 per Platoon</b>	<b>Pts: 80/UMV</b>
Corporal (NCO)	SMG, Hand Grenades
2 Troopers (Weapon Crew)*	Rifle, Hand Grenades, Manning 2" Mortar
4 Troopers	Rifle, Hand Grenades
<b>Gun Group - 1 per Section</b>	
	<b>+1 UMV if Gun Group is deployed independently</b>
Lance Corporal (NCO)	Rifle, Hand Grenades
Gunner	Pistol, Hand Grenades, Bren Gun
Trooper	Rifle, Hand Grenades

\*The Platoon's 2" Mortar teams may be combined into a separate section, deployed together, independently of their parent sections.