

FOCUSED FIREPOWER

A WWII Wargame for Heroes

German Infantry Company

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The heights from which the German Army fell between September 1939 and May 1945 are truly spectacular. By 1942, Nazi Germany had invaded nine sovereign democracies and occupied swathes of Communist Russia. The Afrika Korps was also threatening to cut a path to the vast oilfields of the Middle East. Yet within two years Germany would be fighting a defensive war on three disparate fronts, and have seen thousands of its own civilians perish in allied air raids which it was believed impossible for the Reich to suffer.

The swift fall of so many nations was seen as proof of German superiority, and that's when the real rot set in; complacency. German industry had never really mobilised for 'total war' during the early years, but it was on a higher footing than her enemies. The crushing of Belgium and Holland, Denmark and Norway were all too easy and larger nations like Britain and France were ill-prepared for war. Even Russia, who suffered more than any at the hands of Nazi Germany, initially offered no real opposition.

The German Army stood almost motionless as regards the development of new weapons up until 1942. Her surviving enemies did not. New tanks and planes and anti tank guns poured out of allied arsenals. Thankfully too late, the Germans attempted to catch up. In the last two years of the war, new and groundbreaking weapons were introduced which influenced many post-war designs. But efforts were spread too thin, anything which seemed interesting was pursued, no matter how fanciful or farfetched. Precious resources were drained in a profusion of projects. And the most irreplaceable resource, German manpower, had already been squandered in the snows of the Eastern Front.

The 'movie' image of the German Army in the last twelve months of the war in Europe troubles me. It is sometimes portrayed as an army on the verge of collapse, bereft of manpower and equipment, almost destroyed by its exertions in the East.

If that is an accurate description, then why did it take the allies almost a year to overcome them? What forces opposed the eighty odd American, British and Canadian Divisions in the West, and the five hundred plus Russian in the East; seven men and a bicycle mounted machine gun?

The German Army did not disintegrate overnight. Its men suffered a terrible attrition, but the Army had already reached gargantuan proportions. The exact number is hard to define, but over five hundred Divisional formations were maintained. Much is made of the parlous state of these units, but was it any worse than that of the allies they faced?

The German Army in the last few years of the war resembles an old heavyweight boxer. It was tired, out of condition, and found itself challenged by younger and keener opponents. But it still had the ability to land a terrible blow, and while it no longer had the advantage of mobility, if it

was able to connect with accuracy, the results could be devastating.

The price paid by the German Army is staggering. Perhaps three million men died during the campaigns of conquest and the nightmare of retreat into Germany itself. The Fatherland was virtually flattened, over three quarters of a million civilians perished. As a nation, Germany practically ceased to exist. Her eventual salvation and redemption was, with true irony, accomplished only in partnership with her former foes.

German Infantry Company

German Special Rules

Military Indoctrination: Germany's build up to the start of the war involved a mass indoctrination of its populace. Highly effective organisations such as the Hitler Youth were used to train from an early age, the basics of teamwork and military doctrine, ensuring the German army had no shortage of capable soldiers to bolster its ranks.

- Up until February 1945 all German Elements gain the Well Drilled Morale Ability for free. In addition, any Elements may be upgraded to Hardened Veterans at +2pts per Trooper for Infantry Elements, or +5pts per vehicle for Vehicle Elements.
- From February 1945, all German Elements suffer from the Fractured Chain of Command Special Rule. Elements fighting as part of the Battle for Berlin and/or Eastern Retreat may take the Fanatic Special Rule for free.
- All German Master Sergeants exert a Command Range equal to Officers.
- German Command Tanks may be upgraded to Tank Ace for +25pts each.

Kampfgruppe Tactics (1942-1945): Whilst the Wehrmacht was as large and unwieldy as any of the other powers, the German High Command identified early the need for flexibility in their Divisional and Regimental structure. The subsequent fluidic nature of their combined arms tactics allowed their armoured battle groups to combine elements from various military wings without the normal restrictions in organisation and communication.

Unlike other mixed vehicle formations, Kampfgruppe Formations do not automatically suffer from the 'Fractured Chain of Command' Special Rule.

Expert Concealment (1944-45): The Germans created a network of defences that were both intricate and ingenious. Each ploy was designed to stall the Allied advance by placing doubt and fear into their forces. The hope was that by slowing their enemies, they would give their beleaguered forces back in Germany time to recover and re-supply the front line.

In games where the German player is the scenario's Defender and where the Germans have access to Prepared Defences, they may purchase Total Concealment for any vehicle, field gun or infantry element for half the cost listed in the Terrain Rules.

Over-Reliance on Machine Gun Weaponry (1944-1945): The German Army instilled in its troopers the importance of their firepower advantage over the Allies. Whilst their machine guns were indubitably devastating, such reliance had a negative effect since the loss of such weapons was a greater blow to German morale than other casualties.

German Machine Gun elements (i.e. HMG Squads and detached LMG Sections) are counted as Specialist and as such add a further +1 to their individual morale as well as to the army.

German Infantry Company - 1939-1942

Company HQ: The Command Squad was normally led by a Captain, although the fluid nature of German Command structure means the company commander may be of greater or lesser rank. The large command unit size was indicative of the German Army's top heavy command structure for much of the war.

Company level fire support was provided by the Anti-tank Rifle Section. Its NCO commanded three teams, each of a gunner and loader serving a single Panzerbuchse 38/39. The anti-tank rifle was an outmoded idea from a previous era, effective against only the lightest of armoured fighting vehicles. The ironic reality was that many German Infantry units did not even have the rifles until the invasion of Russia, in which theatre of war they were infinitely outclassed by the heavier Soviet tanks. But, as in the British and Red armies, they remained in use long after they should have to provide the infantry soldier with some means to engage armour in the absence of the necessary towed guns.

Company HQ provided the usual command functions. The supply role was handled by the substantial Company Train, which included a large number of horse drawn vehicles. The Company Train also included four Field Medics, one being routinely attached to each Platoon HQ with the remaining Medic attached to the Company HQ (although this would not always be the case).

Company HQ	Pts: 134 + Vehicle/UMV 3
Captain (CO)	Pistol, SMG and Hand Grenades
Master Sergeant (NCO)	Pistol, SMG and Hand Grenades
2 Signallers	Radio, Pistol and Hand Grenades
4 Troopers	Rifle and Hand Grenades
4 Runners	Rifle and Hand Grenades
Driver	Pistol, Hand Grenades, 2-ton Opel Blitz truck
Special Rules:	
Both Signallers are Artillery Trained	
Anti-Tank Section	Pts: 75/UMV 2
Lieutenant (CO)	SMG, Hand Grenades
3 Anti Tank Teams comprising;	
2 Troopers (Gun Crew)	Pistols, Rifles and Hand Grenades - Manning a Pb38/39 AT Rifle
Company Medical Support*	Pts : 100 (25 Each)/UMV 1 Each
4 Field Medics	Field Medical Kit
Supply Train - Up to 6 Resource Points	Pts: 297/UMV 2+1+2* OR 1
Sergeant (NCO)	Pistol, SMG and Hand Grenades
7 Troopers	Pistol, Rifle and Hand Grenades
2 Troopers (Gun Crew)	Pistols and Hand Grenades - Manning an MG34 LMG
2 Drivers	Pistol, Hand Grenades, 2-Horse Wagons
8 Troopers (assigned to wagons)	Pistol, Rifle and Hand Grenades
Options:	
- The Horse Drawn Wagons may be replaced with 2-ton Opel Blitz trucks for +15pts each	

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

German Infantry Company - 1939-1942

Infantry Platoon - 3 per Company

Platoon HQ: The four Squads were directed by a Platoon commander aided by an NCO, three runners and a supply wagon driver. The commander was armed with a machine pistol and a semi-automatic pistol, while the NCO was unusually authorised just a pistol. The three runners carried rifles, as did the wagon driver. One of the runners was the first to be equipped with a telescopic sight for his rifle. The wagon driver was responsible for the Platoon supply vehicle, a horse drawn affair which transported the bulk of the unit's equipment. Increasingly during 1942, it became common for the Platoon Commander to be a senior NCO rather than a commissioned officer.

Platoon HQ	Pts: 64/UMV 2
Captain (CO)	Pistol, SMG and Hand Grenades
Sergeant (NCO)	Pistol and Hand Grenades
Runner	Pistol, Sniper Rifle, Hand Grenades
2 Runners	Pistol, Rifle and Hand Grenades
Driver	Pistol and Hand Grenades, 2-Horse Wagon
Options:	
- The Horse Drawn Wagon may be replaced for a 2-ton Opel Blitz truck for +15pts	

Light Mortar Section: The Light Mortar Section was the same as the British equivalent, an NCO, gunner and loader. The 50mm light mortar was not a popular weapon. Unlike the British, who used the 2 inch mortar more for smoke than effect, the Germans intended the 5cm to bridge the gap between maximum grenade range and minimum safe artillery range. It was not a success, being too heavy a weapon for too small an advantage. It fell out of use quickly once the campaign in the East began.

Light Mortar Section - 1 per Platoon	Pts: 30/UMV 1
Corporal (NCO)	Rifle, Hand Grenades
2 Troopers (Gun Crew)	Pistols, Hand Grenades - Manning a 5 cm leGrW 36

Infantry Sections: The Squad was made up of an NCO, a six man rifle element and a three man light machine gun team. The NCO was originally armed with a rifle, but as sufficient stocks became available adopted the MP40 machine pistol. The MP40 was the world's first mass produced submachine gun, and was constructed from pre-fabricated metal stampings and plastic. It fired the usual 9-mm round, and became a highly sought after allied trophy. Some one million were eventually produced. The men of the rifle group were all armed with the Mauser bolt action rifle, an amended model of the 1898 weapon fielded during the Great War. One of the riflemen also acted as assistant leader. The Germans based the firepower of the squad around a single light machine gun. The MG34 was served by a gunner and loader, each man armed with a pistol, while a third man acted as an ammunition bearer and carried a rifle. The original weapon was the revolutionary MG34. The Germans believed a gunner would only have seconds to engage exposed enemy infantry before they naturally took cover. The MG34 had an exceptionally high rate of fire for the period, enabling even the shortest burst to unleash a tremendous volley. During 1941 each Squad received a rifle grenade launcher, used to propel a variety of high explosive and more often anti-tank rounds, providing a much more flexible weapon.

Infantry Section - 4 per Platoon	Pts: 75/UMV 1
Sergeant (NCO)	Pistol, SMG and Hand Grenades
6 Troopers	Pistol, Rifle and Hand Grenades
Machine Gun Group - 1 per section	
	UMV*
Corporal (NCO)	Pistol, Rifle and Hand Grenades
2 Troopers (Gun Crew)	Pistol and Hand Grenades - Manning an MG34 LMG
Options:	
- From 1941 the squad may take a Rifle Grenade Launcher for +5pts	

*Machine Gun Groups may be deployed independently, counting as UMV 2, or as part of the parent section, increasing the parent section to UMV 2.

German Grenadier Company - 1943-1945

The Panzerschreke was designed to provide the basic infantryman a powerful weapon against the Allied armour numerical superiority. The weapon was based on the US Bazooka and fired an armour piercing anti tank round that, whilst relatively ineffective against infantry, proved to be deadly against vehicles - easily a match for any Allied tank of the period (...provided the firer could get close enough that is.....!).

The Company train reduced greatly, with half the previous levels of troops and movers. It could be argued that the emphasis on supply - a factor so important to the success of the earlier Blitzkrieg victories, was now forgotten. The troops previously engaged in supply duties no doubt found themselves on the front line as the situation became more desperate.

Company HQ	Pts: 54 + Vehicle/UMV 3
Captain (CO)	SMG, Hand Grenades
Master Sergeant (NCO)	SMG, Hand Grenades
3 Runners	Rifles, Hand Grenades
Driver	Rifle, Hand Grenades, 2-ton Opel Blitz truck
Signals Attachments*	
	Pts: 100 (25 Each)/UMV 1 Each
4 Signallers	Rifle, Hand Grenades, Radio
Anti-Tank Team	
	Pts: 40/UMV 2
2 Troopers (Gun Crew)	Rifle, Hand Grenades - Manning a Panzerschreke
Supply Train - Up to 6 Resource Points	
	Pts: 252/UMV 2+2+1+1
Sergeant (NCO)	SMG, Hand Grenades
7 Troopers	Rifle, Hand Grenades
2 Troopers (Gun Crew)	Pistols, Hand Grenades - Manning an MG34 LMG
2 Drivers	Rifle, Hand Grenades, 2-Horse Wagons
Additional Equipment:	
One trooper may also carry a Panzerfaust	
Options:	
- One Trooper may be given a Panzerfaust for +10pts	
- Both wagons may be replaced with a single Famo Field Tractor for +40pts (crewed by both Drivers)	
- The MG34 may be upgraded to an MG42 for +15pts	

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

Heavy Machine Gun Section: Having learned the lessons from previous re-organisations, the control of the Battalion's Heavy Machine guns was again placed in the hands of the Company commanders. The defensive mindset of the Wehrmacht at this time suggests the distribution of these weapons were to such a micro level was more an act of desperation than one of military planning.

Heavy Machine Gun HQ Section - 1 Per Company	Pts: 32/UMV 1
Sergeant (NCO)	MP40, Hand Grenades
2 Runners	Rifles, Hand Grenades
2 Troopers	Rifles, Hand Grenades
Heavy Machine Gun Team - 2 per Section	
	Pts: 65/UMV 2 Each
Sergeant (NCO)	SMG, Hand Grenades
5 Troopers	Rifles, Hand Grenades
2 Troopers (Gun Crew)	Pistols, Hand Grenades - Manning an MG34 w/ Tripod

German Grenadier Company - 1943-1945

Rifle Platoon - 3 per Company

Platoon HQ: The Infantry Command gained a number of serious upgrades at the start of 1944, most noticeably the issuing of the MP44 Assault rifle and a second MG42. The main command squad was considerably smaller than its predecessors as many of the troopers were moved up in Company Command level to be placed into separate units. Platoon HQ had a Commander, two runners, a stretcher bearer, and two supply wagon drivers. The Platoon Commander could now be either an Officer or a senior NCO, and there was no longer the equivalent of a Platoon Sergeant to assist him. The absence of an Officer points to the desperate situation the Germans find themselves in, as newly promoted Master Sergeants are forced into a full command role. Each Platoon had a two horse wagon, and a one horse wagon with trailer. The commander carried a MP40 and pistol, the runners and drivers all rifles.

Another addition to the Platoon HQ's arsenal was a second MG34. Platoon commanders took the opportunity to organise the two weapons into separate units in an attempt to create greater firepower flexibility.

Platoon HQ	Pts: 99/UMV 2
Master Sergeant (NCO)	Pistol, SMG, Hand Grenades
2 Runners	Rifle, Hand Grenades
Stretcher Bearer	Rifle, Hand Grenades
Driver	Rifle, Hand Grenades, 2-Horse Wagon
Driver	Rifle, Hand Grenades, 1-Horse Wagon with Trailer
Options:	
- The Master Sergeant may be replaced with a Captain or Lieutenant for +5pts	
- Both horse drawn wagons may be replaced by a single Opel Truck for free (crewed by both Drivers)	
Machine Gun Group - 2 Per Section	UMV 2 Each
2 Troopers (Gun Crew)	Pistol, Hand Grenades - Manning an MG34 LMG

Infantry Sections: With the German army moving towards the use of machine guns at micro level, a trooper from each squad was moved to crew a second light machine gun in the Platoon HQ. Despite this the basic squad weaponry remained the same, although laterally the Sergeants were issued a newer MP44 to replace their MP40s. The Light Machine Gun was normally an MG34, however as stocks became more plentiful the much improved MG42 was issued to basic squads.

Infantry Section - 3 per Platoon	Pts: 70/UMV 1
Sergeant (NCO)	MP40, Hand Grenades
5 Troopers	Rifles, Hand Grenades
Options:	
- 1 Trooper may replace his Rifle with a Scoped Gewehr43 for +10pts	
- 1 Trooper may replace his Rifle with a Support Gewehr43 for +5pts	
- 2 Troopers may be equipped with Panzerfausts for +10pts each OR 2 Troopers may replace their Rifles with Panzerschreke for +20pts; becoming a separate Weapons Team with UMV2.	
Machine Gun Group - 1 per section	UMV*
Corporal (NCO)	MP40, Hand Grenades
2 Troopers (Gun Crew)	Pistols, Hand Grenades - Manning an MG34 LMG
Options:	
- The MG34 may be upgraded to MG42s for +15pts	

*Machine Gun Groups may be deployed independently, counting as UMV 2, or as part of the parent section, increasing the parent section to UMV 2.

German Grenadier Company - 1943-1945

1944 Infantry Section Amendments

With the Allies pushing from all sides, German Platoon Organisation went through drastic changes during mid 1944. With the issuing of the Sturmgewehr 44, also known as the MP44 and Stg45, the Wehrmacht hoped to give the German trooper an advantage in close assault. The weapon was designed only for short ranges of up to perhaps 500 m, which allowed the weapon to fire on fully automatic while retaining controllability. It was fed from a thirty round magazine. The rifle was never produced in sufficient quantities to affect the revolution in squad tactics it promised; that was left to the post war Kalashnikov which it inspired. However, the German Army did issue a revised Company organisation to embrace the new weapon.

The two revised infantry sections are detailed below. Note that Section 2 remained unchanged.

Altered Platoon Section 1: The first squad in each Platoon was almost entirely rearmed with the MP44, and issued varied Demolition and Anti-Tank charges (to be used to booby trap positions and assault enemy armour.)

Infantry Section 1	Pts: 50/UMV 1
Sergeant (NCO)	SMG, Pistol, Hand Grenades and Anti-tank Mines
8 Troopers	SMG, Pistol, Hand Grenades and Anti-tank Mines
Options:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 Trooper may replace his MP44 with a Scoped Gewehr43 for +10pts - 1 Trooper may replace his MP44 with a Support Gewehr43 for +5pts - 2 Troopers may also equip with Panzerfausts for +10pts each OR 2 Troopers may replace their MP44 to form a separate Panzerschreke Team for +20pts. This new unit has a UMV of 2 	

Altered Platoon Section 3: The altered third squad became a fire support unit, with two MG42 light machine guns. There is no evidence to suggest these were ever split into separate weapon teams, instead they were most likely deployed together to provide intense firepower to a limited front. The inclusion of a Master Sergeant hints towards the heavy casualty rates within the German Command structure during this period.

Infantry Section 3	Pts: 110/UMV 2
Master Sergeant (NCO)	SMG, Pistol, Hand Grenades
2 Troopers (Gun Crew)	Pistol, Hand Grenades - Manning an MG42 LMG
2 Troopers (Gun Crew)	Pistol, Hand Grenades - Manning an MG42 LMG
4 Troopers	Rifle, Pistol, Hand Grenades

Fallschirmjager (Paratroopers) ORBAT - 1944-45

Fallschirmjager have the Hardened Veterans and Well Drilled special rules.

Company HQ	Pts:99/UMV 3
Captain (CO)	SMG, Hand Grenades
Master Sergeant (NCO)	SMG, Hand Grenades
Signaller	Radio, SMG, Hand Grenades
Runner	SMG, Hand Grenades
Medic	SMG, Hand Grenades
Trooper	SMG, Hand Grenades

Mortar Section	Pts: 291/UMV 9
Sergeant (NCO)	Rifle, Hand Grenades
Corporal (NCO)	Rifle, Hand Grenades
Signaller	Rifle, Hand Grenades, Radio
3x 3 Troopers (Weapon Team)	Rifle, Hand Grenades, Kz 8 cm GrW 42
6 Troopers	Rifle, Hand Grenades
3 Runners	Rifle, Hand Grenades

-From Heavy Company

Field Howitzer Platoon HQ	Pts: 91/UMV 2
Lieutenant (CO)	Rifle, Hand Grenades
Sergeant (NCO)	Rifle, Hand Grenades
Signals Sergeant (NCO)	Rifle, Hand Grenades, Radio
Runner	Rifle, Hand Grenades
Medic	Rifle, Hand Grenades
Field Howitzer Section - 2 per Platoon	Pts: 169/UMV 4
Corporal (NCO)	Rifle, Hand Grenades
5 Troopers (Gun Crew)	Pistols, Hand Grenades - Manning a 7.5cm le.IG 18F
4 Troopers	Rifle, Hand Grenades
Runner	Rifle, Hand Grenades

Fallschirmjager (Paratroopers) ORBAT - 1944-45

Infantry Platoon - 3 per Company

Platoon HQ	Pts: 158/UMV 5
Lieutenant (CO)	SMG, Hand Grenades, Demo Charges
Sergeant (NCO)	SMG, Hand Grenades, Demo Charges
2 Troopers	SMG, Hand Grenades, Demo Charges
Sniper	K98 Sniper Rifle, Hand Grenades, Demo Charges
Medic	SMG, Hand Grenades, Demo Charges
2 Runners	SMG, Hand Grenades, Demo Charges
2 Troopers (Gun Crew)	Pistols, Hand Grenades - Manning an MG42 LMG

Rifle Squad - 3 Per Platoon	Pts: 177/UMV 2
Sergeant (NCO)	SMG, Hand Grenades, Demo Charges
7 Troopers	SMG, Hand Grenades, Demo Charges
2 Troopers (Gun Crew)	Pistol, Hand Grenades - Manning an MG42 LMG
2 Troopers (Gun Crew)	Pistol, Hand Grenades - Manning an MG42 LMG