



104th Infantry Regiment

26th Infantry “Yankee” Division WWII Historical Re-enactment Group

26YDHRG By-Laws, ARTICLE II, Section 1, Sub Section A. Paragraph 3:

Each and every Unit Member will be assigned to a position within Company B in accordance with the 1944 Table of Organization and Equipment (TO&E), or will be attached to the Company in a supplemental tactical capacity or attached to the Company for individual administrative and logistical support. Some examples of attached personnel would be an Army medic, an Army military policeman, an Army Chaplain, an Army nurse, an Army war correspondent or photographer, a civilian war correspondent or photographer, a female soldier (WAC), an American Red Cross (ARC) volunteer, a French resistance fighter, etc.

U.S. Army Rifle Company TO&E 1944

Part of: Infantry Battalion, Infantry Regiment

Type: Light Infantry

Time Frame: Feb 1944-June 1945

Personnel: 6 Officers, 187 Other Ranks

These were the U.S. Army's light infantry companies during the North West Europe Campaign and action in the Pacific through late 1944 and early 1945. This is what would have been active for Operation Overlord (the invasion of Normandy). The Rifle Company was part of the Infantry Regiment's Infantry Battalion. Each battalion consisted of 1 Battalion Headquarters, 1 Headquarters Company, 3 Rifle Companies (this) and 1 Weapons Company.

Company Headquarters (2 OF, 33 OR)*

Command Group

- 1× **Company Commander**, Captain, armed with 1 M1 Carbine
- 1× **Company Executive Officer**, First Lieutenant, armed with 1 M1 Carbine
- 1× **Company First Sergeant**, First Sergeant, armed with 1 M1 Carbine
- 1× **Communications Sergeant**, Sergeant, armed with 1 M1 Rifle and M7 Grenade Launcher
- 1× **Bugler**, Private/Private First Class**, armed with 1 M1 Carbine and M8 Grenade Launcher
- 3× **Messengers**, Private/Private First Class, armed with 1 M1 Carbine each

Administrative Group

- 1× **Supply Sergeant**, Staff Sergeant, armed with 1 M1 Carbine
- 1× **Company Clerk**, Corporal, armed with 1 M1 Rifle
- 1× **Armorer-Artificer**, Technician 5th Grade, armed with 1 M1 Rifle
- 17× **Basic Duty Privates**, Technician 5th Grade, armed with 1 M1 Rifle each

- 1× **Mess Sergeant**, Staff Sergeant, armed with M1 Carbine
- 2× **Cooks**, Technician 4th Grade, armed with 1 M1 Rifle each
- 2× **Cooks**, Technician 5th Grade, armed with 1 M1 Rifle each
- 2× **Cook's Helpers**, Private/Private First Class, armed with 1 M1 Rifle each

**The Company HQ was allotted five Bazookas for issue at the company commander's discretion (enough for local tank defense of the HQ and each platoon). Six M1918A2 BAR automatic rifles and six M1A1 Thompson submachine guns were added to this weapons pool on 30 June 1944.*

**Six SCR-536 "handie-talkie" radios were allotted to the Company HQ. One was issued to each Platoon Headquarters to keep them in contact with the Company Commander. These could only talk to other handie-talkies within the company.*

***104 of 150 Privates (including Technicians) in the Rifle Company were meant to be Privates First Class.*

3× Rifle Platoons (1 OF, 40 OR each)*

Platoon Headquarters

1× Platoon Leader, Second Lieutenant/First Lieutenant, armed with 1 M1 Carbine

1× Platoon Sergeant, Technical Sergeant, armed with 1 M1 Rifle

1× Platoon Guide, Sergeant, armed with 1 M1 Rifle and M7 Grenade Launcher

2× Messengers, Private/Private First Class, armed with 1 M1 Rifle each

3× Rifle Squads

1× Squad Leader, Staff Sergeant, armed with 1 M1 Rifle

1× Assistant Squad Leader, Sergeant, armed with 1 M1 Rifle and M7 Grenade Launcher

1× Automatic Rifleman, Private/Private First Class, armed with 1 M1918A2 Browning Automatic Rifle

1× Assistant Automatic Rifleman, Private/Private First Class, armed with 1 M1 Rifle

1× Ammo Bearer, Private/Private First Class, armed with 1 M1 Rifle

2× Rifle Grenadiers, Private/Private First Class, armed with 1 M1 Rifle and M7 Grenade Launcher each

2× Scouts, Private/Private First Class, armed with 1 M1 Rifle each

3× Riflemen, Private/Private First Class, armed with 1 M1 Rifle each

**The Rifle Platoon had one M1903A4 Springfield sniper rifle available to issue to one soldier in the platoon.*

Weapons Platoon (1 OF, 34 OR)

Platoon Headquarters*

1× Platoon Leader, Second Lieutenant/First Lieutenant, armed with 1 M1 Carbine

1× Platoon Sergeant, Technical Sergeant, armed with 1 M1 Carbine

2× Light Truck Drivers, Technician 5th Grade, armed with 1 M1 Rifle and M7 Grenade Launcher each

2× Messengers, Private/Private First Class, armed with 1 M1 Carbine each

**Platoon HQ mounted in two 1/2-ton trucks (Jeeps) with trailers acting as weapons/ammunition carriers. One was armed with an M2HB heavy machine gun for local anti-air defense.*

**Contained three Bazookas for local anti-tank defense until 30 June 1944 when they were shifted to the company weapons pool.*

Mortar Section

Section Headquarters

1× **Section Leader**, Staff Sergeant, armed with 1 M1 Rifle

1× **Messenger**, Private/Private First Class, armed with 1 M1 Carbine

3× Mortar Squads

1× **Squad Leader**, Sergeant, armed with 1 M1 Rifle

1× **Gunner**, Private/Private First Class, armed with 1 M2 60mm Mortar and M1911A1 Pistol

1× **Assistant Gunner**, Private/Private First Class, armed with 1 M1911A1 Pistol

2× **Ammo Bearers**, Private/Private First Class, armed with 1 M1 Carbine each

Light Machine Gun Section

Section Headquarters

1× **Section Leader**, Staff Sergeant, armed with 1 M1 Rifle and M7 Grenade Launcher

1× **Messenger**, Private/Private First Class, armed with 1 M1 Carbine

2× Light Machine Gun Squads

1× **Squad Leader**, Sergeant, armed with 1 M1 Rifle and M7 Grenade Launcher

1× **Gunner**, Private/Private First Class, armed with 1 M1919A4 Medium Machine Gun and M1911A1 Pistol

1× **Assistant Gunner**, Private/Private First Class, armed with 1 M1911A1 Pistol

2× **Ammo Bearers**, Private/Private First Class, armed with 1 M1 Carbine each

The **Rifle Company** was the close combat element of the U.S. Army Infantry Battalion during World War II. It consisted of a Company Headquarters, three Rifle Platoons and a Weapons Platoon, with a maximum strength of six officers and 187 non-commissioned officers and junior enlisted. The macro-structure of the company remained constant during the war, but minute changes were made to its internal structure almost every year of the war.

The **Company Headquarters** was the command and logistics element of the company. At the time, it was split into a Command Group and Administrative Group. The Command Group included the Company Commander (ranking Captain), Executive Officer (ranking First Lieutenant) as the second-in-command, First Sergeant, Communications Sergeant, Bugler (with a grenade launcher for signalling), and three Messengers. Usually, the Executive Officer was delegated leadership of the command post and the company's logistics, but could also take over control of the company or a platoon if necessary. The First Sergeant meanwhile would usually act under the Executive Officer and handle administrative and personnel matters, but could also take over leadership of the company command post or a platoon if needed. The Administration Group meanwhile contained the Supply Sergeant, Company Clerk, Armorer-Artificer, mess personnel, and 17 Basic Duty Privates. The 17 Basic Duty Privates meanwhile were essentially in-unit replacements; a strategy employed to give each company an organic source of replacements and an intermediate step of orientation for newcomers before they were put in combat units. When not used as replacements, they'd be used for miscellaneous tasks such as "guard duty, work details, assisting the mess team, and service as additional Messengers or ammunition bearers" (Sayen).

Depending on the role, the personnel of the Company HQ would be located in different places during combat. The mess personnel, for example, were usually co-located with the regimental trains and placed under the supervision of the regimental Service Company. The Company Clerk operated under the regimental Personnel Section. The Armorer-Artificer, as a maintainer and procurement personnel, would be with the battalion or regimental trains, but the Supply Sergeant would be located forward to aid the Company Commander in solving supply problems.

The **Rifle Platoon** was the close combat element of the Rifle Company. It consisted of a Platoon Headquarters and three Rifle Squads.

The Platoon HQ consisted of a Platoon Leader (ranking Second or First Lieutenant) and a Platoon Sergeant (ranking Technical Sergeant) as its leadership. The latter was a senior NCO, equivalent to the modern Sergeant First Class, who acted as second-in-command, generally handled administrative matters and discipline, and took over for the Platoon Leader if they became a casualty. They also allowed for the platoon to be split into two distinct elements should terrain force the platoon to occupy two defensive positions some distance away, with the Platoon Leader leading one element and the Platoon Sergeant the other. The platoon also had a Platoon Guide (ranking Sergeant) who was essentially an assistant Platoon Sergeant, being mainly responsible for maintaining concealment, discipline, ammunition replenishment, and preventing stragglers on the march. The Platoon HQ lastly had two Messengers. Usually once in combat, one of these Messengers would be located at the Company Command Post.

Each Rifle Squad meanwhile consisted of 12 personnel under a Squad Leader (ranking Staff Sergeant) and an Assistant Squad Leader (ranking Sergeant). It further consisted of an Automatic Rifleman manning an M1918A2 BAR, an Assistant Automatic Rifleman, Ammunition Bearer (for the Automatic Rifleman), two Rifle Grenadiers and five Riflemen (two designated as Scouts). Except for the Automatic Rifleman, everyone in the squad was armed with an M1 Garand Rifle while the Assistant Squad Leader and Rifle Grenadiers also had an M7 Grenade Launcher each. This replaced the previous early-war standard whereby each squad had a single Rifle Grenadier with an M1903 Springfield. Following changes made in 30 June 1944, the Company Headquarters gained a weapons pool that it could distribute to platoons as the commander sought fit. This included six M1918A2 BARs, six M1A1 Thompson submachine guns or M3 Grease Guns, and five Bazookas. This meant theoretically, six of nine Rifle Squads could be augmented with a BAR and Thompson, while each Platoon HQ could have a Bazooka for anti-tank defense and anti-structure work. However, additional weapons were commonly acquired in the field outside the parameters of the TO&E.

The roles of the squad positions are explained in-depth below:

- **Squad Leader** — Overall leader of the Rifle Squad. Generally the lead man in a column, only preceded by the Scouts. Primarily responsible for executing the orders of the Platoon Leader and controlling the squad.
- **Assistant Squad Leader** — Assistant to the Squad Leader. Delegated authority by the Squad Leader, such as leading a portion of the squad or supervising ammunition replenishment. The most common example of the former was the Assistant Leader leading the assaulting element. Advanced at the rear of the squad column in the march to prevent straggling. Took over command of the squad if the Squad Leader was absent or became a casualty. Could use Grenade Launcher in the anti-tank defense.
- **Automatic Rifleman** — The squad's base of fire. Armed with the M1918A2 Browning Automatic Rifle, which provided automatic fires while still allowing the Automatic Rifleman to keep up with the rest of the squad.
- **Assistant Automatic Rifleman** — Aided the Automatic Rifleman and carried additional ammunition for the Automatic Rifleman.
- **Ammunition Bearer** — Carried additional ammunition for the Automatic Rifleman.
- **Rifle Grenadiers** — Primarily responsible for anti-tank defense and the duties of Riflemen.
- **Scouts** — Operated in pairs to provide attacking platoons with early-warning. Usually came from first echelon squads. Could also act under the squad preceding the Squad Leader if the squad was acting alone. If they came under enemy fire, they determined the location of the enemy and marked targets with tracer fire. May have also acted as flank guards. After the platoon/squad became decisively engaged, the scouts were usually integrated into their squad's base of fire element with the BAR team (if the squad was split into two equal-sized fire and maneuver elements). They would then constitute the maneuver element of the team and precede the BAR team during bounding moves to determine routes for and the placement of the base of fire.
- **Riflemen** — Did not man a specialty weapon. Were tasked with closing with and destroying the enemy via fire and maneuver using their rifles, bayonets, and grenades. The use of rifle fire was preferred in situations that called for it to conceal the existence and position of the Automatic Rifleman.

Generally speaking, if the squad was divided, it was divided into half-squads of six men (although it could be divided into any combination all the way down to single soldiers depending on the situation). These divisions were usually colloquially referred to as the Rifle Team (with the Assistant Squad Leader, Rifle Grenadiers, and Riflemen) and the BAR Team (with the Squad Leader, Scouts, Automatic Rifleman, Assistant AR, and Ammo Bearer). Although Googling the Rifle Squad's organization will give you graphics showing an Able (SL/Scouts), Baker (BAR Team), and Charley (Riflemen) three-team structure, this was more reflective of the squad's order during the march than close combat. Documentation on the topic suggests that Able would join Baker, which reflects the more common half-squads used for fire and maneuver. Still, there is little evidence that the Able, Baker, and Charley terminology was actually used by units in the field. Teams were also not considered "basic units" and were more situational concepts than the squad generally.

In addition to the full-strength organization, provisions were made in doctrine for the understrength operation of the squad. The relevant manual specifically references squads as small as 5 men (with a Squad Leader, Automatic Rifleman, Rifle Grenader, and two others) as being able to fulfill the basic functions of the squad. In fact, the average strength of Rifle Squads during the war was more in the 6 to 10 men range. However, squads that small (7 men or less) were noted by post-war studies to be unable to take any sort of attrition and stay

combat effective, making them undesirable in the long-term. Being that understrength, compounded by the associated attrition, likely hampered squads' ability to actually conduct fire and maneuver by themselves during the war. Based on the findings of the 1946 Infantry Conference, doctrinal notions of squad-level fire and maneuver were generally not all that practical due to the scale of maneuvers (involving much higher echelons), limited training, and inexperienced NCOs (the result of attrition). Thus, Platoon Leaders would typically maneuver squads as whole units.

The **Weapons Platoon** provided the company with indirect fire support and tripod-mounted medium machine guns (later bipod-mounted). It consisted of a Platoon Headquarters, Mortar Section and Light Machine Gun Section. The Platoon HQ included the Platoon Leader and Platoon Sergeant as expected, but also contained two Jeeps with drivers for carrying the platoon's weapons and ammunition. On the march, these carriers would be positioned at the rear of the company column and would aid in ammunition resupply in combat. One would be armed with an M2HB heavy machine gun for local anti-aircraft defense.

The Mortar Section consisted of a Section HQ (with a Section Leader and Messenger) and three Mortar Squads. Each five-man squad manned an M2 60mm mortar, providing the company with a limited indirect fire capability. They would allow the company to engage enemy targets too close to friendly forces to employ larger systems, with a minimum safe distance of 100 yards recommended.

The Light Machine Gun Section meanwhile consisted of a Section HQ and two LMG Squads, each serving a tripod-mounted M1919A4 medium machine gun (later the bipod-mounted M1919A6). Generally, doctrine recommended that the Company Commander use these machine guns in a centralized manner with both engaging a single target in short intervals. This was done to make up for their limitations with regard to sustained fire and ammunition consumption. It should be noted that the use-case of the light machine gun in U.S. Army field manuals from the time listed them as a *supplement* to rifle fires. This was opposed to German and British doctrine, where rifle fires supplemented the fire of the MG-34/MG-42 and Bren gun respectively. In the pursuit or in situations where a single Rifle Platoon was to act as an advanced guard for the entire company, most of the Weapons Platoon's squads could be attached to bolster its firepower.

Sources:

- FM 7-10 "Rifle Company, Infantry Regiment" (18 March 1944)
- Table of Organization 7-17 "Infantry Rifle Company" (26 February 1944 plus changes dated 30 June 1944)
- Sayen, John. (2001) "Battalion: An Organizational Study of the United States Infantry." Working paper, Marine Corps Combat Development Command
- 1946 Infantry Conference findings

Distribution:

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Respectfully,

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