

A Resistant Roosters Guide: US Infantry; Rifle Company Organization 1942 - 1945

The Rifle Company was the heart of the Infantry Battalion. Each Company was composed of a Weapons Platoon and three Rifle Platoons.

1942 through mid 1943:

The Rifle Platoon was composed of three Squads, each with twelve men at full strength. The Squad was commanded by a Sergeant, with a Corporal as an assistant. The riflemen were armed with the M1 (the standard rifle of the US Army).

Platoon HQ consisted of a Lieutenant, two Sergeants, two runners and five riflemen.

The Weapons Platoon consisted of a Mortar Section with three 60-mm mortars and a Light Machine Gun Section with two belt fed M1919 light machine guns. Transport was provided by one ½-ton and one ¾-ton truck.

The Company HQ, commanded by a Captain, provided command and administrative functions. A 1st Lieutenant served as Executive Officer. Unassigned riflemen were typically distributed among the Platoons of the Company.

1942-mid 1943 Rifle Company (6 Officers, 192 men)

- Company HQ (2 Officers, 18 men)
- Weapons Platoon:
 - Platoon HQ (1 Officer, 7 men)
 - Mortar Section (19 men)
 - Machine Gun Section (13 men)
- Three (3) Rifle Platoons:
 - Platoon HQ (1 Officer, 9 men)
 - Three (3) Rifle Squads(12 men each)

Mid 1943 through 1945:

Each Rifle Squad was commanded by a Sergeant who was assisted by a Corporal. They commanded an assault group of seven men, two of whom were designated as scouts, and an Automatic Rifle group of an automatic rifleman, his assistant and an ammunition bearer. When the M1 received a rifle grenade adapter during 1943 three were issued to each Squad.

The Rifle Platoon HQ consisted of a Lieutenant, two Sergeants, and two runners. The Platoon Commander was issued an M1 Carbine. All others carried the Garand. From 1943, one man in each Platoon was armed with an M1903A4 Springfield, bolt action rifle, which was fitted with a sniper scope. A radio was also carried.

The Weapons Platoon made up for the deficiencies in the firepower of the rifle squads. The light mortar section served three 60-mm mortars. The light machine gun section served two belt fed M1919 Browning machine guns. Weapon Platoon HQ included two Jeeps and trailers.

The Company commander was a Captain; a 1st Lieutenant serving as his Executive Officer. The remainder of HQ personnel had no assigned tasks to perform; possibly used as a replacement pool. Additionally, they could also be assigned to immediate defense if needed.

The Rifle Company had first three; and by 1944 five Bazookas for immediate antitank defense. These had no standing crew; the weapons being issued by the Company commander as needed.

Mid 1943-1945 Rifle Company (6 Officers, 187 men)

- Company HQ (2 Officers, 33 men)
- Weapons Platoon:
 - Platoon HQ (1 Officer, 5 men)
 - Mortar Section (17 men)
 - Machine Gun Section (12 men)
- Three (3) Rifle Platoons:
 - Platoon HQ (1 Officer, 4 men)
 - Three (3) Rifle Squads(12 men each)

A closing note on the usage of submachine guns: We can only guess at the scale at which the Thompson and later the M3 (aka 'Grease') gun submachine guns replaced rifles in the squad. One or two submachine guns per squad would be a reasonable number; any greater numbers would have diminished the rifle power of the squad.

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