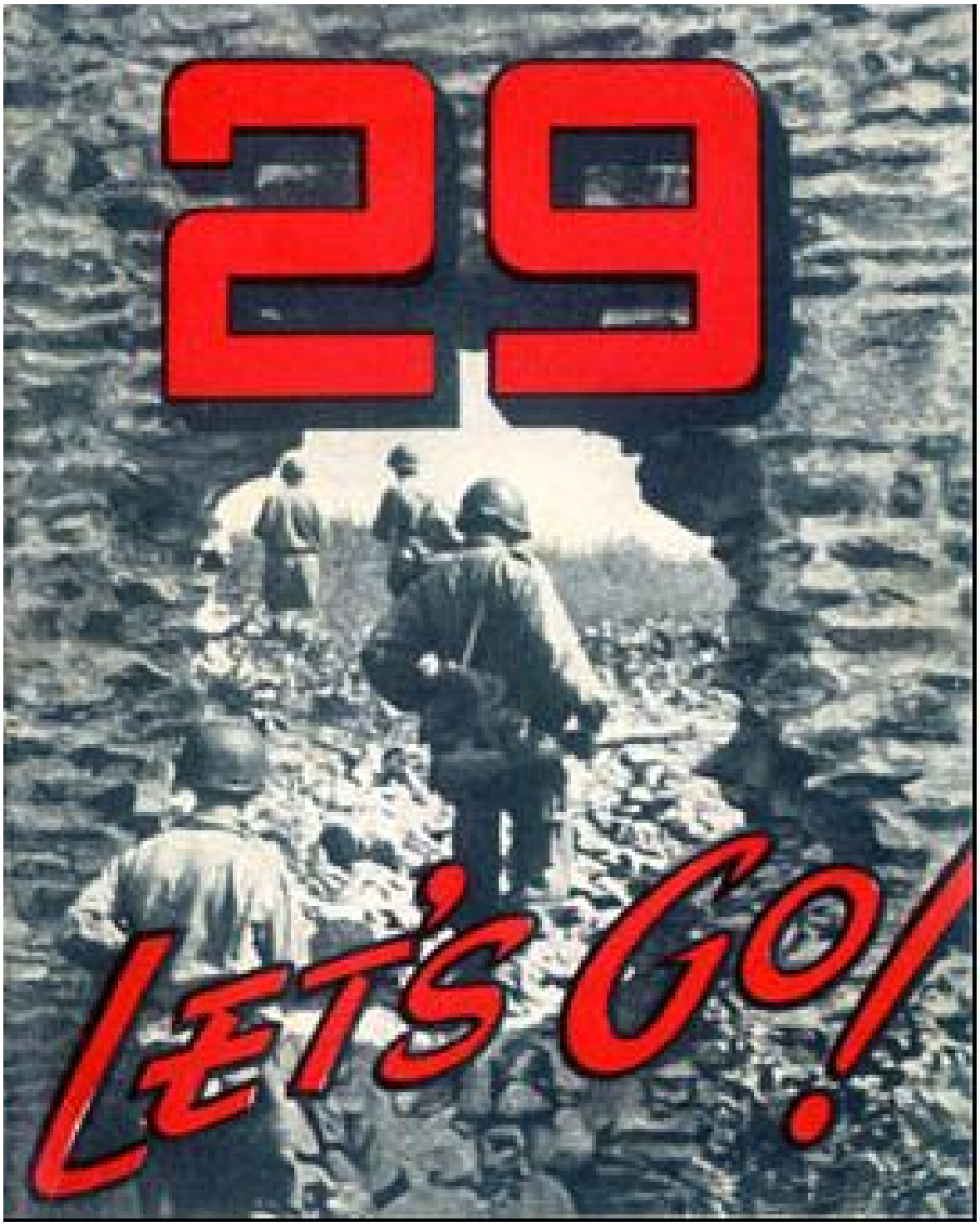
# 29th Infantry Division
# World War II
# Living History

# UNIT HANDBOOK

*Guidelines, Requirements and Information*
*for Members of the 29th Infantry Division (Reenacted)*

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LET'S GO!

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# Section A

## Welcome to the 29th Infantry Division


# WELCOME TO THE 29TH!!!

Welcome to the 29th Infantry Division WWII Reenactment unit. If this is your first foray into the reenacting hobby, there is a lot to learn, especially if you have never had real world military experience. If you have reenacting experience in another timeframe (e.g., Civil War), you already know the basics of reenacting but you will have to unlearn all of the previous time-frame's tactics and skills and learn WWII.

# HISTORY OF THE 29TH IN WWII


The 29th Infantry Division was a Maryland-Virginia-DC National Guard unit. The 29th Infantry Division was inducted into 1 year of Federal service on 3 February 1941 at Fort Meade, MD. In February 1942 the War Department instructed the division to convert from its square configuration to a triangular arrangement best suited for fighting a modern opponent. The old formation was designed to generate frontal attacks against prepared positions akin to the trenches of World War 1. The new design cut the division by eliminating brigade headquarters, reducing the infantry to three regiments and the artillery regiments to four battalions. The support elements shrank to company or battalion size. This procedure made efficient use of men and equipment, and, when coupled with a plentiful supply of new vehicles, turned an infantry division into a highly flexible team capable of rapid movement. The 29th carried out its conversion at Fort Meade on 12 March 1942.

Between April and September 1942, the 29th Division conducted training in Maryland, Virginia, the Carolinas, ending up at Fort Blanding, Florida. They then moved secretly by train to a staging area at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, for deployment overseas. Most of the Blue and Gray Division left the port of New York aboard the ocean liner Queen Mary on 26 September for an unescorted high-speed run across the Atlantic. The balance followed on the Queen Elizabeth on 5 October. The troops landed in Scotland and were transported to Tidworth Barracks, in southern England, where an intensive training program began.

While at Tidworth the European Theater of Operations created a provisional unit within the 29th Division, the 29th Ranger Battalion. The Army's lone ranger battalion had recently demonstrated its worth in North Africa and planners in London wanted a similar elite group in England to prepare for the invasion of Europe. The picked men learned specialized assault tactics by training with British Commandos and detachments accompanied their instructors on three hit-and-run raids in Norway and in the English Channel. The 29th Rangers also performed well in allied pre-invasion exercises in England.

A policy decision by the War Department awarded the ranger mission to others, forcing London to disband the battalion in October 1943. Fortunately for the Blue and Gray, many of the men the men returned to their former units and passed on their skills.

In May 1943 the division moved to the Devon-Cornwall peninsula and started conducting simulated attacks against fortified positions. Assault landing practice followed at the theater' 5 amphibious training center at Slapton Sands. In July 1943 while in Devon the 29th changed commanders with Maj. Gen. Charles Gerhardt. "Uncle Charlie" and his dog "D-Day" would become familiar sights to all who served in the Blue and Gray.

Five stretches of French coastline in Normandy were selected as the sites for the landings that the allies intended as the primary effort to defeat Hitler on the western front. One of these, code named "Omaha," became the responsibility of the Regular Army's 1st Infantry Division and the 29th on the morning of 6 June 1944. The 116th Infantry received the mission of leading the division ashore, the only National Guard regiment to participate in the first wave on that historic day. The 16th Infantry of the 1st Division landed to their left and the 2d Ranger Battalion was assigned to capture the cliffs on their right. The 29th had responsibility for a section of beach 3,000 yards long but containing only two passages inland. The unit had the task of opening both routes so that succeeding units could drive inland.

Planners counted on heavy naval and air bombardment to neutralize the defenses just before the boats carrying the first wave hit shore. Intelligence expected the Germans to use inferior quality troops along the coast and keep their best divisions inland to counterattack. On D-Day, however, fate had placed a crack unit on the cliffs overlooking Omaha as part of a training exercise. This

development cost the 29th dearly. The first assault wave of the 116th consisted of Companies A, G, F and E. They loaded into landing craft at 4:00 in the morning. Difficulties began as soon as the small boats started towards shore and encountered large waves. At 6:30 the first craft approached the beach and came under fire from German gunners. Some boats suffered direct hits or sank when near misses flooded them with seawater. Obstacles stopped others offshore and forced the men to wade in while exposed to fire, often at locations far from their assigned sectors. Company A was hit hardest. They suffered more losses getting ashore than any other unit of the 116th. Forty-six guardsmen from Bedford were in the company, but only twenty-three survived that day. Within ten minutes every officer in the company was a casualty and the survivors found themselves pinned down by Germans shooting from the tops of nearby cliffs. The other three companies in the first assault group fared somewhat better, in part because many of their boats were pushed off course or because smoke from fires started by naval gunfire hid them from the defenders. The second wave started landing troops at seven. These companies encountered many of the same problems and also became pinned down. Maj. Sidney Bingham, commander of the 2d Battalion, finally organized men in the center of the zone and captured a large stone house dominating the beach near Les Moulins draw, but heavy fire again blocked further movement.

The third wave came ashore twenty minutes later and benefited from the sacrifices of those who had gone before. This element, mostly from the 1st and 3d Battalions and the attached 5th Ranger Battalion, finally fought their way to the crest of the bluff between the beach's two draws and, led by Company C, became the first element of the 29th Infantry Division to penetrate the first zone of defenses. Shortly thereafter a second force punched through further east. Ten minutes after the third wave landed the last elements of the regiment started reaching shore, including Col. Charles Canham who remained in command despite a painful wound. The 1l6th's artillery support on D-Day was supposed to come from the dozen howitzers of the 111th Field Artillery Battalion. Unfortunately, all of the amphibious trucks (DUKWs) transporting the guns to the beach either swamped or suffered hits. The dazed survivors struggled ashore near Les Moulins at 8:30 and were told by Lt. Col. Thornton Mullins "To Hell with our artillery mission, we're infantrymen now!" A sniper soon killed the colonel, but his troops assisted their fellow Virginians in the drive inland. By nightfall American forces controlled the key terrain at Omaha and plus the cliffs on the right. The drive for their next objective began, the communications and traffic crossroads in the city of St. Lo. The Germans tenaciously defended and forced the Americans to fight for each

hedgerow. During this combat Tech. Sgt. Frank Peregory of Charlottesville's Company K, 116th Infantry, earned his Medal of Honor by capturing an enemy strongpoint single-handed. Unfortunately, he was killed a few days later.

The 29th took five weeks to reach St. Lo. Just before the final drive captured the city Maj. Thomas Howie, commander of the 3d Battalion, 116th Infantry, promised his men "I'll see you St. Lo." He was killed immediately afterwards but General Gerhardt ordered the column to carry his body into the town square. A New York Times correspondent's story of the incident immortalized the "Major of St. Lo." The division's Task Force Cota, a strike team led by the assistant division commander, Brig. Gen. Norman Cota, finally gained the objective and raised the division flag over the rubble before all the fighting ceased. The Blue and Gray's attack continued on to Vire in late July where the 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry won a Presidential Unit Citation for its role in the capture of Hill 219. The Allies' need for ports to sustain the invasion led to the 29th's next assignment. Trucks shifted the division south to Brest where a bypassed German garrison was stubbornly fighting to protect a submarine base. Siege operations reminiscent of the battles of Yorktown and Petersburg started on 24 August and ran until 18 September when the battered garrison finally surrendered. The men of the Blue and Gray deserved a rest, but after only six days they moved by train across France and Belgium to a part of Holland near the German border.

During the rest of the war the 29th Division clawed its way into western Germany. The men missed Hitler's Ardennes offensive (the battle of the Bulge) but by keeping up pressure on their own sector of the line freed other units to counterattack and defeat the Germans' last threat. In the spring the Blue and Gray finally broke through, capturing a number of cities and thousands of prisoners. München-Gladbach fell to the division on 1 March 1945 which then found itself supporting other American forces mopping up resistance in Germany's industrial heartland, the Ruhr "Pocket." This operation involved little combat as everyone realized that the war was about to end. On 24 April the 116th became the first unit in the 29th Infantry Division to reach the Elbe River where the Americans halted to await their Russian allies advancing from the east. The first Soviet unit (5th Guards Cavalry Division)

reached the 29th's sector on 2 May. The following day Brig. Gen. Sands, Division Artillery commander, crossed the river to greet them. With Germany's surrender the men of the Blue and Gray moved west again to assume occupation duties in the region around the ancient city of Bremen and its port, Bremerhaven, where they remained until it was time to ship home.


The 29th Infantry Division (Light) was deactivated after the war, but on 6 June 1984 the United States Army announced its reactivation as the 29th Infantry Division (Light) of the National Guard. Units of the Blue and Gray Division still serves proudly in missions of homeland defense and in combat in Afghanistan.

# ORGANIZATION and CONDUCT

## *The "impression"*

What is an "impression"? For those new to living history, this is a critical concept. You are not an actual soldier of any war, so you will be doing your best to recreate the soldier of that war. The impression is not just a uniform. It includes knowledge, skills, and attitude. Your knowledge of the time and the soldier's place in it must be deep and accurate, your performance must honor the soldier and educate the public, and your attitudes – as an individual and as a part of the team – do a great deal to determine the fidelity and value of your total impression.

Our primary impression is of the 29th Infantry Division, especially the 116th Infantry, as of June 1, 1944. This may sound odd but we picked that moment for several good reasons. The 29th Division met its baptism of fire in WWII on Omaha Beach, June 6, 1944. We have built a program around the preparations the 29th Division went through to prepare for D-Day, so in order to participate in this activity, you need to have the equipment they had at that time. The uniforms and equipment they had then were pretty much standard up to that point – everyone had basically the same kit and it is how they went into combat. In addition, these items would be used from then till the end of the war.

After D-Day, through the campaign through France, they had many replacements coming in with all the new equipment. In addition, during this time frame, the Army changed/modified its uniforms and equipment and it can be confusing trying to figure out just when something became available and whether you can use it or not; the result is people trying to make up stories about why they have this item or are wearing that uniform. Authenticity and uniformity is what we are after; a uniform is called a uniform for a reason. So, if the standard was "anything WWII", then you would run the gamut of clothing and equipment. We have included an appendix on uniform standards and procedures – it is worth a careful read.

By picking a specific timeframe it actually makes it a bit easier because you can focus and know what equipment and uniform items to look for when you are shopping. This way you won't have to worry about trying to determine when some of the later gear was adopted and issued or waste you money on things you don't need or can't use. (Trust us – we've all wasted money!)

Does that mean you shouldn't buy some of the later gear? No, especially if it is a good price. You will find this hobby a bit addictive and once you start, you'll want to get at least one of everything. And there may be times when we may want to show the later uniforms and equipment. But our focus is as of June 1, 1944, and *that's what you should buy first*.

The uniforms and equipment needed for this impression should be that which was authorized and available up to that date. As such, certain items are not used with this unit. Mainly, anything dated 1945 is not to be used. In addition, anything that is documented as being adopted after June 1944 is not to be used. The only exception to this rule is if the event we are doing is specifically a later (Post June 1944) time frame or covers the entire war period (such as a display). The important thing to note is that the equipment and uniforms from the earlier part of the war can be used for the entire war period, whereas the later dated items can only be used for a late war event. This means that you do not have to buy double of everything to cover the entire war period. Specifically, this means that the "Ike" jacket, the M-1943 Field jacket and the double buckle boots are not standard items required for this unit.

These guidelines are not "hard nosed" but are what is required to participate in this hobby. Do not be intimidated by them. But be warned up front, this can get a bit expensive. Your basic kit can cost you $500 or more, plus the cost of a weapon ($600-$1000). Whether you

are new to living history or coming to us from other periods and/or units we will make every effort to assist you. Not only with consultation, advice and training, but also with the loan of equipment to get you started, as well as guidance in purchasing equipment. It is our hope that these guidelines, along with dedication and training, will assist you as a member of the platoon in presenting the most accurate portrayal of the American soldier during World War II possible.

## *Other impressions*

When we are out in the field in a battle situation, we are all pretty much infantry. But there are instances, particularly in display or living history events, where other impressions and skills are needed. These are not just show and tell impressions. You need to provide the service of that specialty to the unit not only during events but in support of the unit outside of the events. If you would like to tackle any of these impressions, you must first get approval from the CO. You will be required to do the research, provide most of your own equipment and supplies to portray these specialties. Once you take on this specialty, you should obtain the DI/DUIs (as applicable) of that unit and wear the appropriate branch color cord on your overseas cap. Some of these areas may already be covered by some members but we always need others to learn or be part of that specialty in case others cannot make an event.

**104th Medical Battalion:** In order to portray a medic, we require that you have training and/or certification as an EMT, first responder, or combat/military medical training/experience. This allows us to provide our own emergency medical treatment/first aid for accidents and injuries that may occur at an event. You will also need to track/identify the medical/health issues that our members may have. You'll need to provide WWII-era medical equipment and supplies for display, plus you'll need to provide real-world medical supplies to attend to any real emergency or injuries.

**29th Quartermaster Company:** As we have a lot of "company equipment," this impression requires that you maintain the inventory of this equipment and assist in identifying sources of needed item.

**29th Signal Company:** This impression would assist in setting up communications for the unit at any events we do. This includes wired phones, radios and other signal communications methods. The unit, or in most cases, individuals in the unit, have much of the communications gear such as the EE-8s, switchboards and wire, BC-611 handy talkies, and other radios. You would be responsible for

developing the communications plans, coordinating with owners of the comm gear and setting up for the events, as needed. You will need to have a working knowledge of the equipment, how it works and how to fix any problems to allow us to have effective communications at an event. You would be the communications liaison to other units we would be interacting with at various events.

**729th Ordnance Light Maintenance Company:** To be part of this group, you have to have an intimate working knowledge of all weapons we utilize for our events. You would be responsible for identifying problems that arise with all of the weapons and developing a solution for remedying those problems so that the weapon can be safely utilized during an event.

**29th Military Police Platoon:** Occasionally, we need to provide guards or security for our displays; sometimes for real, sometimes just for show as part of the program. In order to do this impression, you will have to provide your own correctly marked MP helmet, brassard and other equipment to complete the impression.

**121st Engineer Combat Battalion:** This impression would be responsible for displaying and demonstrating the demolition gear (most of which the unit owns) and other engineering gear of the period. During field events, you may be required to perform mine clearance, demolition deactivation or placement of our mines and demolitions.

**Administrative/Company Clerk:** As a unit, just like in the real army, we have lots of paperwork to deal with, some of it as a working display, some of it in real life. The real life administrative duties include maintaining the unit roster, attendance records, dues payment, and other administrative work as needed. The historical impression would require having period office supplies and paperwork in order to provide the administrative element at an event. This would include duty rosters, announcements, schedules, and other paperwork consistent with a functioning unit.

**Cook:** This impression provides meals for the unit at both living history and field/battle events. This would require obtaining the necessary field kitchen equipment to provide a sanitary mess operation for 40+ people. (While we currently [2016] have some members who provide this service, which includes having all of the kitchen equipment necessary to provide food for 40+ people, we always could use personnel in the kitchen. This could be an impression for those who, for one reason or another, may not be able to fully participate as an infantryman in a field/battle event.)

**Motor Pool:** Some of our members own military vehicles. At some of the living history event, a motor pool area may be set up where the vehicles are parked and some minor maintenance can be done. While this impression will probably be done by the vehicle owners, if you would like to participate, you would need to get permission of the owners of the vehicles.


## *Events*

We participate in many "re-enactment" events throughout the year. There are basically three different types of events: Field/tactical, Living History/Display, and Ceremonial.

### *Field/Tactical*

For these events, we sleep either in the field (in tents) or in barracks and then participate in battles against the German re-enactors. Everything we use is either original or reproduction items. Modern camping gear and such is not allowed. Usually there are no public or spectators involved in this event. We participate because it is enjoyable and challenging, and because our experiences contribute to a deeper knowledge of the soldiers' lives and challenges and because the improved knowledge and skills contribute to a quality "product" for public education.

### *Living History/Display*

For these events, we do demonstrations to the public on the life of the WWII soldier. These can range from table top displays of items to a full encampment with field demonstrations. Some are geared towards the 29th Division specifically, such as displays we've set up for the 29th Division Association's convention, and some are more generic, such as tactical demonstrations as sometimes done at field events.

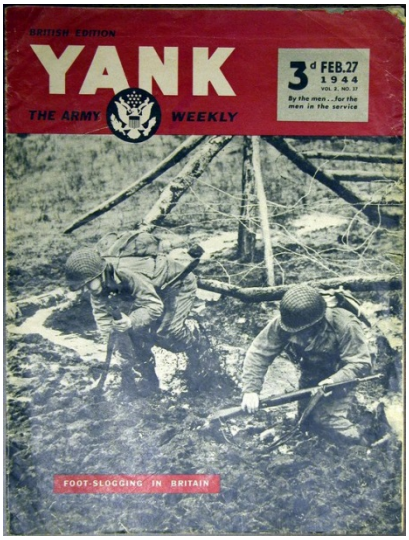
In some cases, the field and living history type of events are combined. We may have some private battle time with no public and then do a demonstration for the pubic.

***Ceremonies***

These events are parades, honor guards or color guards for various events.

You can choose which events or types of events you would like to participate in. Minimum participation to maintain membership in this group is one event per year. For all of these events, the proscribed uniforms will be identified ahead of time. To fully participate in any event, you will need to obtain the required uniforms and items needed for these events.

## *Conduct, tradition, and attitude*




Before we move into a listing of the uniforms and equipment needed, the point of who and what we are representing and how you represent them needs to be understood. During its active service in World War II the 29th Division established many traditions. Traditions of devotion to duty, self sacrifice, versatility, dependability, and loyalty to both unit and country. A pride in one's self and unit became instilled in every soldier. Gaining an understanding of this hard earned, but well deserved pride is paramount to be able to represent these soldiers of our past. When we as members of this unit present ourselves in front of the public this pride and confidence must manifest itself in each members conduct, bearing, and attitude. Without it you can not adequately and truly represent these soldiers. Remember, preserving these traditions, and the memory of the men who made them, is what we are all about.

The historical military impression is not only a question of having the right clothing and equipment, but of proper attitude and conduct. The clothes and equipment don't make the soldier, how you wear them and conduct yourself does. You are representing a soldier, so be prepared to act like one! You should be well versed in the period military customs and courtesies, and use them. You should be familiar with your equipment, how to pack it, wear it, and display it. You should be aware of the types of uniforms and the proper method of wearing them, and not look like a "civilian in surplus clothing." You should

be familiar with your weapon, its nomenclature, and how to field strip it. You should know and be able to perform the basics of close order drill and the manual of arms for the period. In short, you need to become familiar with all the basic skills that a soldier of the period would know and be able to apply them. To do any less is a disservice to the public we are trying to educate and the veteran we are representing.


The soldiers we portray were drilled every day and did not have to study hard to be a soldier. Skills were learned through constant and repetitive training and through experience. We do not have this luxury. It is the responsibility of each member of the platoon to study and practice on his own. We will teach, and every effort will be made to get together to train, but each member must take the initiative to do his own research, and put forth the effort and desire to learn and become skilled in his job as a soldier. The most important thing to remember, especially if you don't have prior military service or experience as a historical interpreter, is to listen, learn, and practice. You will be depicting yourself as a U.S. soldier of the 29th Division during World War II, and not just wearing a 'costume'. You also have to act accordingly.

To borrow a concept from today's Army, we have three goals: BE, KNOW, and DO.

BE: Technically and tactically proficient. Commit to character, commitment, competence, and conduct that honor the 29th Division veterans of 1944 – and today.

KNOW: Unit history, soldier skills; your weapon and equipment; the details of your impression.

DO: Set the example for others; respect the rules and standards of the 29th Division living history unit; help build the team.

## *Platoon Organization*

The basic unit of the infantry is the 12-man rifle squad. That is how we will be organized when doing any event other than a display. The more people we have, the more squads we will have. When we get to three squads, we will activate the platoon organization. The platoon's organization is based on the U.S. Army Table's of Organization and Equipment (TO&E) as of (December 1943). It consists of a headquarters section and three to four rifle squads:

| | |
|---|---|
| Headquarters Section | |
| 1 - platoon commander | (Lieutenant) |
| 1 - platoon sergeant | (Technical Sergeant) |
| 1 - platoon guide | (Staff Sergeant) |
| 1 - orderly/runner | (PFC, Pvt.) |
| | |
| Rifle Squads (3) | |
| 1 - squad leader | (Staff Sergeant) |
| 1 - asst. squad leader | (Sergeant) |
| 1 - automatic rifleman | (BAR) (PFC) |
| 8 - rifleman | (PFC/Pvt.) |
| 1 Asst. Automatic Rifleman | (PVT) |

On occasion (as at larger tacticals) we will go with smaller squads, in the 7-9 man range. This is a reflection of practicality, but also of realism. From 0700 on 6 June 1944 until replacements began arriving, most rifle companies in combat had to operate despite many casualties; hence, smaller squads are not a compromise of accuracy.

## *Grooming Standards*

Another important aspect of the impression is how you wear your hair. Your hair will be close cropped and off the ears, sideburns short, and tapered up the back. Look at the period photographs, your haircut should look proper and stylish for the '40s, not the '90s. For example, the “high and tight” haircut worn by servicemen today was not seen in the 1940’s; hair tended to be longer on top than in today’s military units. One of the requirements of the Commanding Officer was that you shaved every day! Absolutely no beards! If you are one of those guys that has to have a mustache because you’ve had it since you were 6 years old, you need to either trim it to a very thin style (both in thickness and width) as was the style in WWII (again, look at pictures – think “Clark Gable”) or shave it off. Nothing ruins a WWII impression faster than a big bushy modern mustache. And don’t worry, it will grow back!

In particular, we do *not* permit the disheveled “Kelly’s Heroes” look. This sometimes appears in photographs, but only those of men who have been in sustained combat for long periods without relief. It is certainly not representative of our June 1, 1944 impression.

### *Rank & Responsibility within the Platoon*

We pride ourselves on following the TO&E of WWII. We don't want to become one of those units that has a Colonel, a major, four top sergeants, six technical sergeants and 2 Privates (don't laugh, they are out there). There are only limited slots within the platoon TO&E for NCOs. No one coming into the detachment should wear any rank unless appointed by the Platoon Commander. Remember that we are representing rifle squads of line "grunts" as they were in WW2. In 1943 the US Army decided that a Staff Sergeant would lead Infantry squads and the assistant squad leader would be a Sergeant rather than a Corporal. They were in charge of a squad of 12 men.

The NCO positions are positions of responsibility, just as they were and are in the active Army. Each squad and section leader has a responsibility to those they are leading, to look after their men's needs, comfort and welfare before their own. The 29th's NCOs must know their jobs, both as re-enactors and leaders. Above all they must be able to lead and to teach *and, above all, to set the example*.

***WE WILL NEVER DISGRACE THE AMERICAN SOLDIER.***

# CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT


In the reenacting hobby, you'll hear the word "authenticity" used in just about every other sentence. What this means is that everything your wear or use or do in this hobby should be authentic to the time period. For WWII, there are still plenty of original items available and in the past 10 years, quality reproductions have become available. There is a lot to learn about uniforms and equipment of WWII. Just because something is Army issue, is green and has US stamped on it, doesn't mean it is appropriate for this impression. Don't run down to your local surplus store and expect to find WWII stuff just lying around. Just because it is an M-1 Helmet, doesn't mean it is a WWII M-1 helmet (yes, there is a difference). So before you go rushing off to buy everything, wait and have one of us assist you so you won't spend a lot of money on things you can't use (we will assign a sponsor to help you in this difficult buy very enjoyable project). It will actually cost you less to do it right the first time than to try and get by with something that is not correct and you can't use.

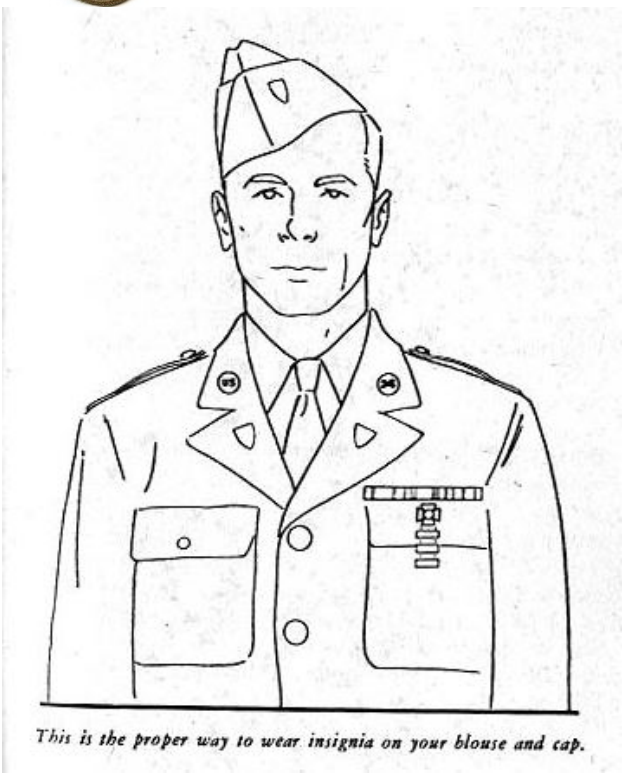
Authenticity means having the correct uniforms and gear, not "close enough". All uniforms, equipment, and weapons will be appropriate to the 29th Division during their service in World War 2 up to June 1, 1944. Any modifications of the standard uniform and equipment will be made accordingly for each specific event and time frame being portrayed. The impression we are trying to put forward is that of the average line grunt, we are not an elite specialty unit.

The following listed uniforms and equipment are the essentials required for the basic impression. This may seem like a lot of equipment and uniforms, and it is. But it is the basic kit of what the soldier would have had issued to him. If you are new to this hobby, do you need to go out and buy everything for your first event? No, however, you need to have the basic field items, which would be the OD wool uniform, boots, leggings, jacket, web gear, rifle, and helmet. (Items marked with an *.) You can acquire the other things as you find them. The good thing about Army items is that they were all dated. When buying WWII items, you need to buy things that are dated 1944 or earlier. Some items that are dated later can be used but you have to know what they are and some things dated 1944 you can't use. Research is the key to this hobby. We have a lot of experience people in this group that are more than willing to help out.

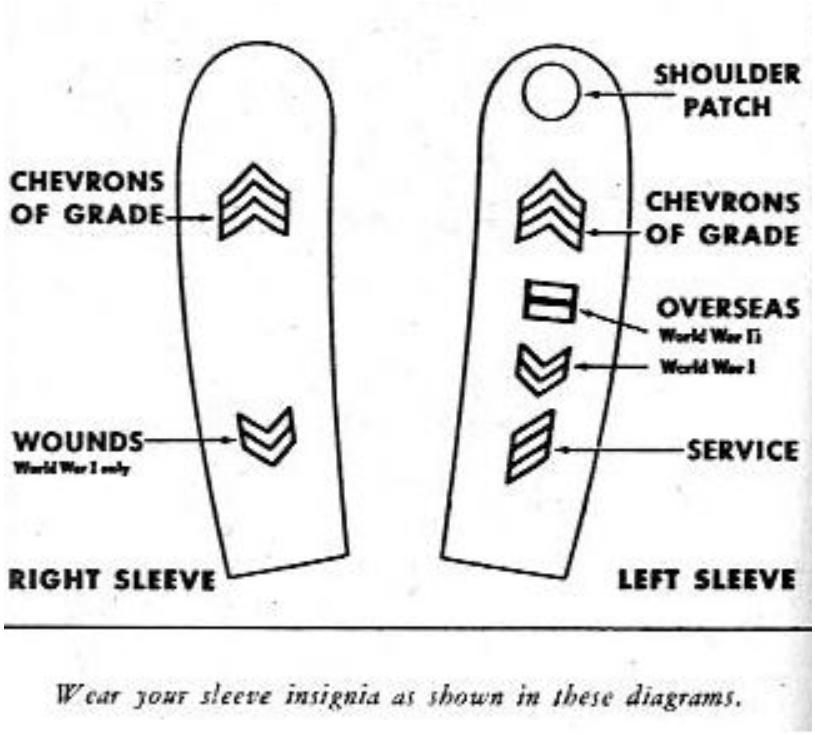
## *Uniforms*

As a rule, we wear the olive drab (OD) wool uniforms. You should eventually get two sets of the OD wools; one for the field and one for dress. The HBT (cotton herringbone twill) fatigue uniform is only worn on certain work details. With the selection of reproduction uniforms available, not to mention original uniforms, it should be no problem putting together a complete kit of US Uniforms. Although originals are available, if you are a large person (42 chest, 38 waist or above) you will probably only find reproductions in your size. All jackets and shirts will have the 29th Div. patch on the left sleeve. The patch should be approximately 1/2 inch from the shoulder seam vertically oriented on the sleeve with the blue field facing to the front. (* = required.)

| QTY | ITEM |
|---|---|
| 1* | Belt, trouser, khaki web w/ open frame buckle |
| 1* | Cap, Overseas, OD wool w/ infantry blue piping |
| 1 | Coat, service, OD wool, w/ all appropriate insignia including regimental DIs (e.g., 115th, 116th, 175th) |
| 1* | Necktie, khaki |
| 1* | Jacket, Field, M-1941 pattern (repros available) |
| 1pr*. | Leggings, M-1936 Army pattern |
| 2 pr.* | Service shoes / boots (one pr. for field use, the second for barrack/dress wear) |
| 2* | Shirt, OD wool, enlisted pattern (repros available) |
| 6 pr. | Socks, OD cotton and/or wool, |
| 2* | Trousers, OD wool serge, M-1937 or M-1942 (repros available) |
| 2* | Undershirts, tank type, OD or white cotton |
| 1 (set) | Enlisted Brass for service coat (one "US" Disc and one Infantry Disc) |



*This is the proper way to wear insignia on your blouse and cap.*




*Wear your sleeve insignia as shown in these diagrams.*


***Reproduction Vendors:***

WWII Impressions, Inc (www.wwiiimpressions.com)

At the Front (www.atthefront.com)

What Price Glory (www.whatpriceglory.com)

## *Decorations and awards*

This is a touchy subject in the reenacting world. Some people like to get every ribbon, qualification badge and other shiny object and put them on their uniforms. Others feel that since you were not in WWII and didn't earn anything, you shouldn't wear anything. We kind of split the difference on this these two extremes. Since we are trying to accurately and historically represent the normal, average WWII soldier of the 29th Division, we allow certain ribbons or awards to be worn as long as it is historically accurate. What we don't want is to have a private with three rows of ribbons on his chest, or jump wings or pilot wings or whatever. Just what a basic infantryman would have had.

There will be times when we wear the dress or "class A" uniform. And people always ask (or don't) what ribbons or other insignia they should/could wear. Since we are depicting the 29th Division as of June 1, 1944, and they did not see combat on the whole until June 6, 1944, you should not wear any combat ribbons on your Class A uniform coat. The only generally authorized ribbon to be worn is the European, African, Middle Eastern (EAME) Campaign Ribbon (or ETO Ribbon) with no battle stars. If your persona is of a National Guardsman or draftee who was activated/drafted in 1941, then you would be eligible to wear the American Defense Ribbon.

Marksmanship badges can be worn if you earned them in service or qualify as a reenactor. In the past, we have had live fire practice at a firing range. You are welcome to come to these and shoot for score to earn these badges.

Service stripes (worn on the left sleeve) indicate completion of three years in the Army. With some exceptions, the most service stripes one would wear is one (if you went in in 1941, you would be eligible for one in 1944).

Overseas Bars (also worn on the left sleeve above service stripes) indicates 6 months of overseas service. These were authorized 30 June 1944. The 29th probably wouldn't have seen these til 1945.

Any other ribbons or awards will be authorized on a case-by-case basis. There will be occasions where we will be depicting a late war 29er. At that point other ribbons, battle stars, commendation ribbons can be worn. However, personal achievement awards, such as the Silver Star, Bronze Star, Purple Heart, CIB, etc., will *only be worn if you have personally earned this award in the real military.* Members who have served or are serving and have decorations should wear only those appropriate for the impression at a given event. For example, most modern soldiers will have earned the Good Conduct Medal; if so, it is appropriate for a 1 June 44 impression.

## *Regimental Distinctive Insignia*


As a whole, we do not depict any specific regiment within the 29th Infantry Division. You are free to choose whichever regiment (infantry or divisional artillery, medical, MP, Quartermaster units, etc. etc.) you want to portray. If you wear DI's, they must be of units that were a part of the 29th Division during WWII. The DI must also be the proper pattern for WWII. Some of the current unit DI's are the same as the WWII pattern, but some are not. So, do your research before you buy. In addition, the Army stopped all production of DI in 1943 to save on the metal and the time it took to design new DIs. So not all soldiers had DIs during WWII. Very few 29ers wore DI's once they got to England.

## *Equipment*

All canvas web gear and other equipment should be dated 1944 or before. Helmets should be the WWII M-1 pattern with sewn-on khaki web chinstrap, either with fixed chinstrap bales (preferred) or swivel bales. Helmets made post-1950, and/or with clip on chinstraps are not acceptable. Helmets are to be marked with the correct 29th Div. emblem on the front. NCOs should mark the back of their helmets with a white horizontal bar approximately 4 inches long by 1 inch tall. Officers should mark the back or their helmet with a white vertical stripe approximately 1 inch wide by 4 inches tall. (* = required.)

| QTY | ITEM |
|---|---|
| 1* | Canteen, cup and cover, 1910 pattern |
| 1* | Cartridge belt, dismounted pattern 10 pocket |
| 1* | Entrenching tool, M-1910 pattern "T" handle, w/cover or 1943 folding entrenching tool or pick with handle |
| 1* | First aid pouch, with field dressing |
| 1 | Gas mask w / MI VA I carrying (kidney) bag, khaki canvas |
| 1* | Haversack (pack), w/ meat can pouch, 1928 pattern |
| 1* | Helmet, M1, w/liner |
| 1* | Mess kit (meat can) w/ knife, fork, and spoon |
| 1 | Rifle cleaning kit, complete, for M1 rifle |
| 1 | Shelter half, khaki or OD canvas w/buttons |
| 5 | Tent pegs, wood |
| 1 | Tent pole, folding |
| 1 | Tent rope |
| 1-2* | Bandoleers, ammunition, khaki, unmarked |

## *Weapons*

The U. S. Rifle, Cal. .30, M1 semi-automatic rifle or Garand rifle, was the standard arm carried by an infantryman during WWII. The 1903 Springfield rifle may be used if that is all you have available but the M1 is preferred. Specialized weapons such as the M1 carbine, or 1911A 1 automatic pistol will not be used unless authorized by the platoon commander. One Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR) is authorized for each rifle squad. (* = required.)

| QTY | ITEM |
|---|---|
| 1* | Rifle, M-1 semiautomatic (Garand) w/ M-1907 leather or M-1 web sling |
| 1* | Bayonet, M-1942 10 inch, with scabbard |
| 1 | Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR) |

## *Personal Effects and Barracks Items*

From the beginning, the 29th ID has been the leader in living history impressions. We are known for a quality barracks impression, which is why we recommend and encourage you to obtain a full kit. Many of the programs that we do involve the life of the soldier in the barracks as well as the field. The following listed items are required for a barracks impression. These items will enhance your impression and will help increase your personal comfort as well. Many of the personal hygiene disposable items such as toothpaste and shaving soap can be period commercial (civilian) items.

| QTY | ITEM |
|---|---|
| 2 | Blanket, M-1934 OD wool |
| 1 | Bag, clothing (Duffel), green canvas, or Bags, duffel (2: A & B), blue denim |
| 1 | Bag, laundry, khaki, OD, or Denim |
| 1 | Foot locker, period pattern w/tray |
| 4 | Handkerchief, OD cotton |
| 1 set | Identification tags, WWII army pattern |
| 1 | Manual, FM 21-100, The Soldiers Handbook |
| 1 | Pillow |
| 1 | Sewing kit, |
| 2 | Period hygiene kit, to include:<br>Safety razor, mirror, shaving soap, razor blades<br>Foot powder, comb |
| 1 set | Sheets, white, flat, single bed (2), pillow case (1) |
| 1 | Shoe brush, and brown polish |
| 1 | Towels, set, plain, white or OD cotton, bath, hand, wash cloth |
| 1 | Tooth brush, and tooth paste or powder |

Additional uniform items

| QTY | ITEM |
|---|---|
| 1 | Cap, Knit wool |
| 1 | Cap, overseas, khaki cotton w/blue piping |
| 1 | Cap, fatigue OD herringbone twill (Daisy Mae style) |
| 1 | Gloves, OD wool, leather palm |
| 1 | Sweater, high neck, knit wool 1943 pattern |
| 1 | Overcoat, OD wool, M1939 or M1942 pattern |
| 1 | Raincoat, rubberized or synthetic resin coated, issue pattern |
| 1 | Scarf, OD knit wool |
| 1 | Shirt, herringbone twill, 1941 or 1942 pattern, light or dark green shade |
| 1 | Shirt, long sleeve khaki cotton, no epaulets |
| 1 | Trousers, khaki cotton (repros available) |
| 1 | Trousers, herringbone twill, 1941 or 1942 pattern, light or dark green shade |
| 3 pr. | Under drawers, button front, OD or white cotton (repros available) |
| 1 | Netting, helmet, OD/green |

## *D-Day Items*

We have established a living history program to show what the first wave of troops (Assault Boat Team) that assaulted Omaha Beach on June 6, 1944 wore. These items were generally issued to the 116th Infantry Regiment, who made the initial assaults on D-Day. These items are only required if you want to participate in this demonstration.

| QTY | ITEM |
|---|---|
| 1 | Assault Jacket |
| 1 | M1926 Pneumatic Life Belt |
| 1 | M7 Assault Gas Mask Bag |
| 1 | M5 Assault Gas Mask |
| 1 | Pliofilm Bag (for protecting weapon) |
| 1 | Gas Detection Brassard |

Other items may be required, depending on the team you belong to, like Bangalore torpedoes or satchel and pole charges. The M5 Gas Mask, which goes into the M7 Gas Mask Bag is an expensive, and somewhat scarce item. It is a nice to have, if you can afford it or find it really cheap, but not required. In the meantime, stuff something into the rubber bag and hope there are no gas attacks.

### *Small Things*

Sometimes it's the small things that can make or break an impression. Sometimes it things so simple we forget about them.

Watches – Should be regular dial faced watch with 1940's style watch bands (you can research these in 1940's magazines). Plain simple Timexes work.

Glasses – If you wear glasses, consider wearing contacts for the day (if you don't already). If you can't wear contacts, you need to get a set of frames that are similar to Army issue or Civilian purchase. You can buy old frames and get your prescription put in. Again, research the pictures of the time period. There are some optometrists that specialized in re-enactor eyeglasses. Modern frames won't work.

## KNOWLEDGE AND TRAINING

As you begin your quest to be a WWII soldier of the 29th Division, there are a lot of things you will need to research and learn. Don't be afraid to ask questions. To get you started, there are two books you are required to get and read. The first is the War Department Basic Field Manual 21-100 (FM 21-100) dated 1941. This is the basic manual for the soldier. This gives you the instruction on how to do just about everything you need to know as a soldier. The second book is *Beyond the Beachhead* by Joseph Balkoski. Not only is it the WWII history of the 29th Division up to the Battle for St. Lô, it is also a good primer on the organization, weapons and tactics of both the US and German Infantry. Other good descriptions of the Normandy campaign are *Clay Pigeons of St. Lô,* a first-person account by Colonel Glover S. Johns, and Balkoski's *Omaha Beach*.

There are several books and other references (internet) on the history of the 29th Infantry Division during WWII. In order to portray a 29er, or to talk to the public about them, you need to read and do research on the division. At a minimum, you need to know its basic WWII history, from 1941-1945, the commanders, the units that made up the Division.

You also need to know the life of a soldier during that time frame. If you have current-day, real life army or military experience, you have the knowledge of the military culture and how things kind of work. However, in order to portray a WWII soldier, just like those coming from other re-enacting time periods, you will also have to unlearn certain things, some terminology, some tactics, and such and learn the WWII way.

In other words, this hobby requires a lot of research. You are not going to learn all of this overnight. It will take some time. We have people who have been doing this for more than 15 years and they are still learning things.

## *Training opportunities*

At most events, members of the 29th will prepare special training programs to improve performance and impression. Never miss an opportunity to learn!

## *Units in the 29th in World War 2*

115th Infantry Regiment
116th Infantry Regiment
175th Infantry Regiment
121st Combat Engineer Battalion
110th Field Artillery
111th Field Artillery
224th Field Artillery
227th Field Artillery
104th Medical Battalion
29th MP Platoon
29th QM Company
29th Signal Company
729th Ordnance Light Maintenance Company

## *Drill and formations*

Mastering the basics of close order drill and the manual of arms is integral to developing discipline and precision. A well-drilled unit generates an image of discipline and proficiency, and a pride in themselves, to anyone that sees them. The first thing that any soldier learns, regardless of branch of service, nationality, or period in history, is the fundamentals of drill. It is the foundation upon which all the aspects of being a soldier are built.

As stated in a manual on Military Discipline, Courtesies, and Customs of the Service, dated 1943, "Among the drills and exercises that comprise 'disciplinary training', the most important are physical drill, close order drill, and the ceremonies. Such exercises should be executed with accuracy, precision and promptness. A great many look upon this work as drudgery and a waste of time. In truth there is no greater aid to obtaining a high standard of discipline in an organization than the drill and ceremonies mentioned above."

## *Close Order Drill, and the Manual of Arms*

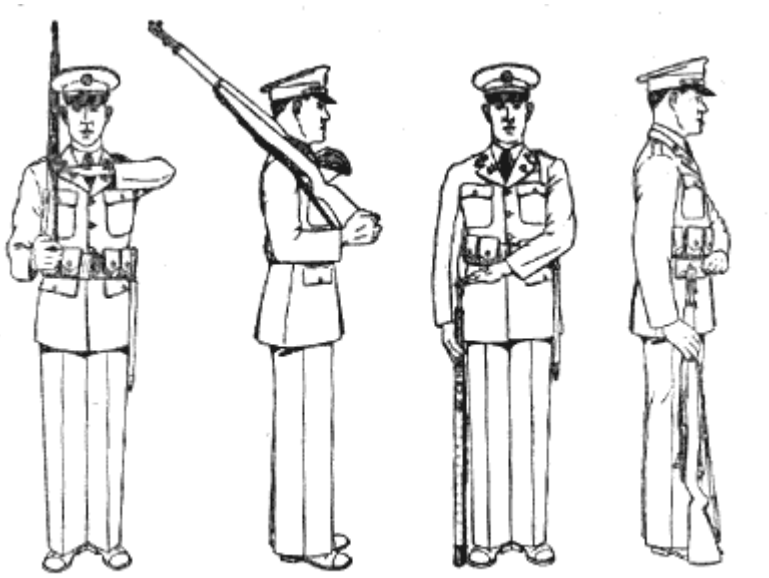


Plate 12. Rifle Salute at Right Shoulder Arms and at Order Arms.

We will not go into any detail on the various movements of drill for the individual, squad, and platoon here. There is enough material on the subject to fill a book, and in fact has filled several. (The Soldier's Handbook, *FM 21-100*, 1941, or Infantry Drill Regulations, *FM 22-5*, 1941 are two primary source books.) We merely wish to point out the fact that each member within the platoon must take the responsibility to learn the basics of individual of movements. The more proficient each man can become in performing the individual movements, the easier it will be for him to mesh with the team when the platoon is functioning together. If you need help in mastering some of these skills, all of the NCOs in the platoon are willing to help. Remember, the soldiers we portray learned through daily repetitive training. We don't have that luxury. Training and practice doesn't begin and end at each event or program. Each man on his own between events must carry it on.

Listed below are some of the first basic movements without arms that each man should strive to gain proficiency in:

Position of Attention
Parade Rest
Stationary Facings - Left, Right, About.
The Hand Salute.
Marching Facings:
- Left Flank
- Right Flank
- Obliques
- To The Rear
- Column movements

Drill with the rifle, referred to as the Manual of Arms, is the next level that each individual soldier must accomplish. Gaining proficiency and "snap and pop" in performing these movements, both as an individual and when functioning as part of the platoon, will ultimately develop pride, confidence, and trust in both yourself and your fellow soldiers. Nothing looks sharper than a platoon performing the "Marching Manual", with every hand and every weapon moving as one. But, to get there, each man

must first learn and become proficient in the basics. Some of the first basic rifle movements that you should learn are:

Order Arms (includes position of attention, and moving to the order from any position)
Trail Arms
Port Arms (to include being able to move to port from any other position)
Present Arms
Right Shoulder, and Left Shoulder Arms
Secure Arms
Parade Rest
Rifle Salutes

There are many more things that you will have to learn as a member of a squad and platoon, but if you master the basics listed above, learning the rest, and blending as part of the team will come easily.

# SUMMARY

Our unit maintains a high level of pride in themselves and the unit, knowing that we present the most accurate and professional impression possible. Our goal is to preserve the proud heritage and traditions of the 29th Infantry Division and the American soldier during World War 2. We also strive to educate the American public about the many sacrifices that have been made by these G.I's. Sacrifices that helped earn and preserve the freedom and privileges we now enjoy.

You may also be somewhat intimidated by what appears to be a rather substantial investment. Not all of the equipment listed needs to be purchased immediately before you may participate.

If you are new to the WWII re-enacting hobby, we recommend that you don't run out and buy, site unseen, without consulting with one of the platoon's senior members. Ask your NCOs! One of the biggest mistakes that a new member can make (and we have all made them) is to buy something that they know very little about. What looks like a bargain could wind up costing money for an incorrect piece of equipment. Now that you have a better insight into the impression, we hope that you are ready to continue on. Come join us in preserving the memory and traditions of the 29th Infantry Division and the American infantryman in World War 2.

## *29 LET'S GO!*

For further information or assistance contact your chain of command (SL, PL SGT, PL LDR).

# REFERENCES

The following reference works will help you better understand and recognize the uniforms and equipment you will be acquiring, and provide study manuals for the necessary training. This is, by far, not a complete bibliography but a basic a listing of books to help get you started.

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## *TRAINING*


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*Scouting, Patrolling and Sniping.* FM 21-75, War Department Basic Field Manual, 6 February 1944.

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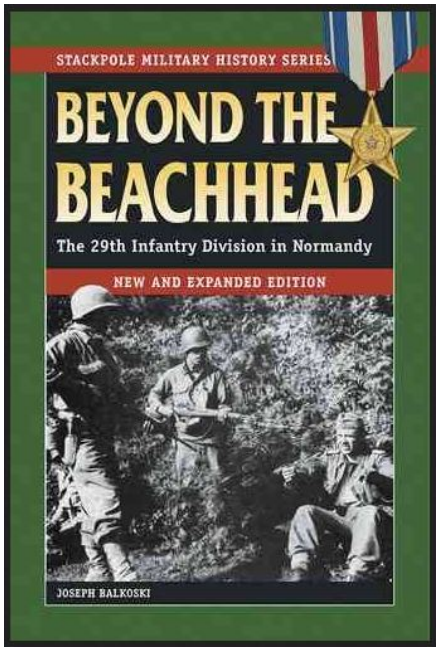
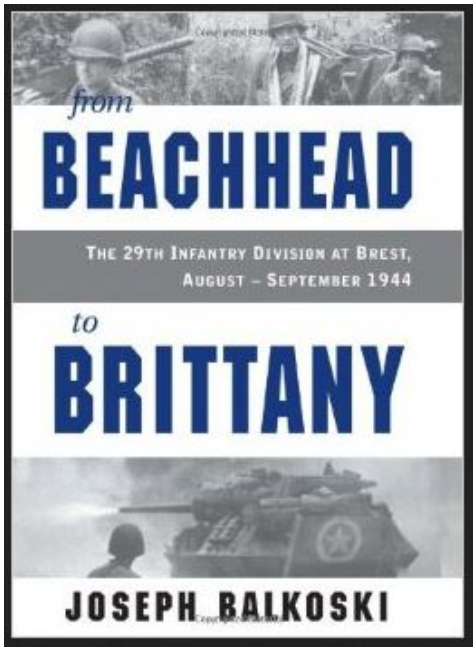
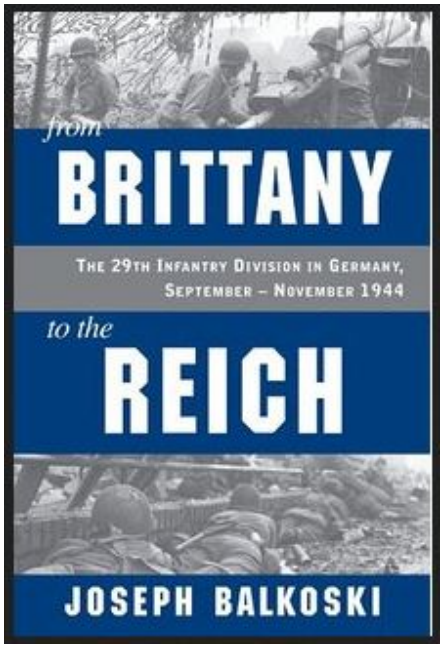


# Section B

## Uniform SOP


# UNIFORM SOP

## *General Specifications*

The following specifications prescribe the uniform to be worn for each type of activity commonly scheduled for the 29th. We expect each member to make every effort to meet these standards.

1. Garrison, duty (Class B). This is the uniform worn in garrison (e.g., at Indiantown Gap while in the cantonment area); for roll call formations, in the mess hall, etc. This is the "default" uniform.

Wool shirt and trousers, tie, garrison cap, service shoes, belt. This is the "Class B" uniform, and represents what soldiers wore when not assigned to special duty (fatigue, guard, drill).

Shirt and trousers should be clean and pressed, tie worn whenever on duty in garrison. When not on duty or at "rest" (e.g., hanging around the barracks but on call), tie may be removed. Shoes should be polished – buffed and brushed or spit-shined. In Class B, soldiers wear the service shoe, not the roughout or buckle boot.

Note that soldiers were careful about wrinkling their Class A-C uniforms. If they were hanging around and not on duty, they often wore skivvies to preserve their good uniforms (particularly since lack of a clean set might (would) risk denial of a pass.

When weather is cold, the M41 jacket is worn; when very cold, the wool overcoat. NOTE: There will obviously be exceptions (while the 41 is preferred, the M43 field jacket may be substituted; not all have the overcoat). When wearing the jacket, all buttons will be buttoned. *An effort should be made to have all soldiers dressed alike in formation.*

*NOTE: The knit wool "jeep cap" is an abomination in the eyes of the Lord God and to every real soldier. It should be worn ONLY as padding under the helmet in the field in cold weather. It is NOT a Class B cap. It may be used for night patrols when in wool field uniform.*

2. Garrison, drill (Class B). This is the uniform worn for close order drill. There are many ways of doing this, but most pictures and records suggest the following:

Class B (as 1 above), with garrison cap, cartridge belt without suspenders with first aid pouch and bayonet attached. Bayonet hangs from the left rear hip. Unless the drill field is muddy, leggings are not generally worn. If weather is cold, the M41 jacket may be prescribed; if very cold, the wool overcoat with cartridge belt on the outside.

3. Garrison, drill (Class A). This is a special case, generally reserved for formal ceremonies. Uniform is as for Class B drill, above, except that the service coat is worn. The service cap or garrison cap is acceptable, with the stipulation that all soldiers in the formation wear the same headgear.

4. Garrison, Class A: As (1) above, but with the service coat. Garrison cap or service cap may be worn, but in formation all should be alike to the extent possible. For social occasions, either cap is acceptable. Garrison belt is optional. Footwear is either garrison shoe or low-quarters, polished. Brass on service coat should be polished.

5. Field uniform: Class B with appropriate load carrying equipment. For most soldiers, the M1928 pack is appropriate. In the field, 2-buckle boots are acceptable, but roughouts or service shoes and leggings are preferred. In cold and wet weather, shoepacks or rubber galoshes are acceptable. Jump boots are discouraged, on the grounds that an actual airborne infantryman might remove them from your feet after killing you. M1 helmet is worn under most circumstances; on night patrols, soft caps (this is one acceptable use for the knitted jeep cap; helmets are not worn on night patrol because of noise) or no headgear are worn. At the commander's discretion, haversacks may be dropped and stored in the rear, soldiers wearing only cartridge belt and bayonet. We will seldom carry full field pack.

6. Summer khaki (Class C): This is the summer or tropical equivalent of Class B, a garrison uniform. The khaki uniform may be worn with or without leggings for drill, but when worn for social occasions, meals, etc., it is worn with garrison shoes and without leggings. The tie is always worn with the khaki uniform unless otherwise specified; the footwear is polished garrison shoes or low-quarter shoes. Members may wear the overseas cap or the service cap, but only the khaki versions. In formation, all will wear the same headgear.

7. Fatigue uniform (Class D): Worn only for work details as specified in the daily schedule (e.g., loading, KP). HBT trousers and coat with HBT cap ("Daisy Mae" style preferred because the mechanic's hat was a later addition). Pre-1942 blue denim fatigues are acceptable but not preferred.

Additional notes:

It is easy to improve appearance simply by understanding how soldiers dressed in the 1940's. They were not making individual fashion statements or trying for a "Kelly's Heroes" look; if they did, they would enjoy the stockade or at least a little NCO justice.

1. Avoid mixing uniforms. For example, Class B is worn with the overseas cap, not the HBT headgear or the wool "jeep cap".

2. Avoid poorly fitting uniforms. Trousers should fit comfortably around the waist (the waist in WWII was around the bellybutton), not pinching and not hanging open. Cuffs of sleeve and trousers should be the correct length.

3. Correct wear of the cap or hat. No uniform hat is made to be worn on the back of the head. The service cap, wool or khaki, is worn square on the head with the visor two fingers above the ridge of the nose. The overseas cap is worn tilted slightly over the right eye, square on the head and not "mashed down".

4. Exceptions to the standing uniform are made consistent with weather conditions and other special circumstances; however, the decision is for the commander, not the individual.

5. Shoes should be properly polished unless they are dubbed roughouts. Roughouts or buckle boots are not to be worn with Class A or Class B – they are "field only."

Smooth out shoes (service shoes type I and low-quarters) can be brushed and buffed or water-shined, but

should in either case appear clean and lustrous. Note: For inspection or pass, it was customary for shoes to be water ("spit") shined. A spare toothbrush should be used to apply polish along the sole edges and over the upper sole stitching (without waterproofing, the stitching will rot).

NOTE: Do not use the same applicator brush for polish and dubbing. The results will be disappointing and the brush will be useless afterwards for either task.

6. Brass should be polished. This includes removal of lacquer preservative. Most brass items are issued with a coat of lacquer that must be removed by brisk polishing.

7. Dangling belt tabs. The belt with hollow buckle ("beer bottle opener") and keeper, black anodized, should be adjusted to the soldier's waist so that the black tip is just exposed beyond the buckle – not hanging out 4-5 inches.

8. The placket shirt front of the wool shirt or khaki shirt should be aligned with the edge of the fly so that there is a straight line from collar to crotch, and the left edge of the belt buckle also aligned. This is called the "gig line". Yeah, obsessional; but it's "Army".

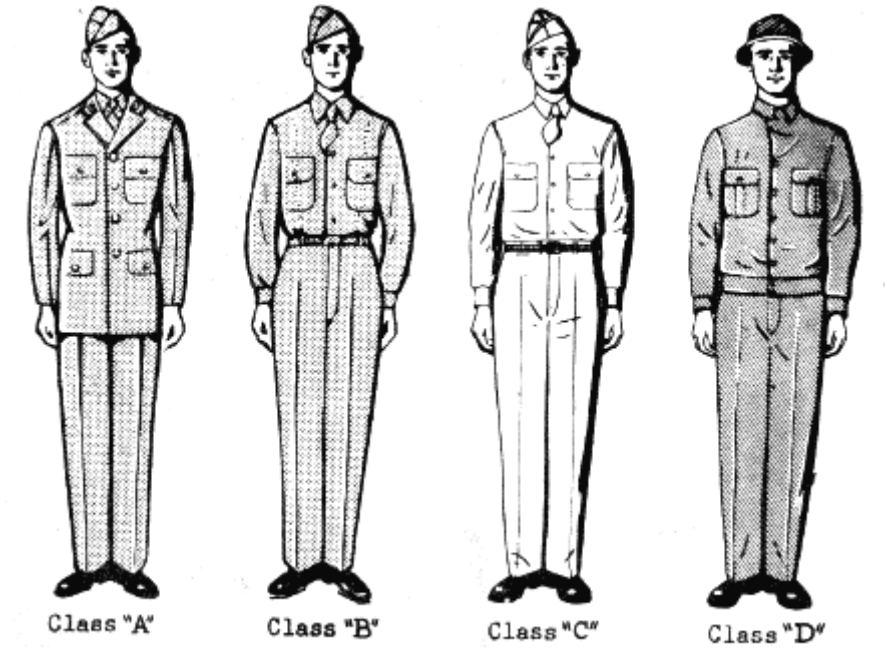
9. When worn as a fatigue uniform, the HBT trousers are not generally worn with leggings; when worn for drill or as a combat uniform, leggings are commonly worn.

10. Hats are not worn inside unless the soldier is on guard duty, in which case they are always worn. Hats are not placed on the dining table or the bar.

11. When the overcoat is worn, so are gloves.

12. An important issue is that of buttons. All pockets and cuff closures are buttoned at all times (and sleeves are *not* rolled on the Class B or Class C garrison uniform). Most soldiers simply stitched the pocket flaps of their service coats shut, since the appearance was neater and they would not be tempted to put stuff in the pockets. (Why, you ask, have pockets on the uniform if they are not to be used? Answer – to tempt soldiers to put things in the pockets so NCOs can make their quotas of corrections and pass rejections.)

Obviously there would be exceptions. Under combat conditions, sleeves might well be rolled up. When wearing the Class D (fatigue) uniform, there are many conditions under which sleeves would be rolled as well (e.g., peeling potatoes; washing pots and pans on KP). Khakis worn in the tropics as a combat uniform might be subject to relaxed standards (no ties, for example, or rolled sleeves), though the 29th Division did not serve in the tropics so the matter is moot. The question here is whether such informalities were permitted as a rule; in fact, they were not.




CLASSES OF UNIFORMS

***Uniform classes***. Note that the tie is worn for Class A-C. This is almost always the case in garrison (and in combat in some cases – General Patton imposed fines in 3rd Army zone for failure to wear them, even under fire!). These soldiers also have straight "gig lines" and caps are correctly tilted.

## *Uniform Table*

| Class | Uniform | Headgear | Tie (Y/N) | Boots | Inclement Weather |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | Wool shirt and trousers, service coat | Garrison or service cap* | Y | Field shoes, smooth out or low-quarter | Overcoat or raincoat |
| A (drill) | Class A with cartridge belt, bayonet hung left rear. | As for Class A | Y | Leggings may be specified | Overcoat or raincoat |
| B | Wool shirt and trousers | Garrison cap | Y | Field shoes, smooth out or low-quarter | Field jacket, overcoat, or raincoat* |
| B (drill) | Class B with cartridge belt, bayonet on left rear of belt | | Y | Field shoes, smooth out** | Field jacket |
| B (field) | Class B with cartridge belt, canteen, first aid pouch, M1928 haversack, bayonet | Garrison cap, M1 helmet | N | Service shoes or, rough outs, with leggings, preferred; buckle boots acceptable | Field jacket, overcoat, raincoat; sweater may be worn, but not as outer garment* |
| C | Khaki shirt and trousers | Garrison cap (khaki) or service cap (khaki)* | Y* | Service shoes, smooth out or low quarters | Raincoat |
| D | HBT (preferred) or blue denim | Fatigue hat ("Daisy Mae" preferred)*** | N | Field shoes, rough out | Raincoat |

* All should wear the same in any formation.

** As specified by the commander. For example, if drill is in muddy conditions, roughouts may be substituted.

*** In the prewar Army, soldiers typically acquired a second campaign hat for fatigue on the grounds that the fatigue hat was too ugly for any real soldier to be caught dead in. This does not apply to us.

## *How to "spit shine" shoes or boots*

Unless you are a law enforcement officer or have military experience, the art of spit-shining (really, "water shining") is largely forgotten. Since the soldiers we honor did it, we should learn it as well. It is also a zen-like experience that allows for long periods of meditation and a general character-building experience.

This shine would be applied for inspection (in garrison, usually on Saturday) or for pass, when soldiers would be inspected again to verify that they were presentable to the public before being released from the company area. After that, they were the problem of the provost marshal. If they passed out in the gutter of the nearest town or got caught in a cathouse raid, at least their shoes would be impeccably shined.

***You will need:***

-- Smooth-out shoes or boots (service shoes or low-quarters); don't bother trying to spit-shine roughout footgear.
-- Tin of brown or russet wax polish (brown kiwi will do well enough).
-- Soft rag; old cotton t-shirt material will do very well.
-- Toothbrush; this should not be the brush you use to clean your weapon or – important health tip – your teeth.

***Preparation:***

Remove all dust and mud from shoes; they should be as clean as you can make them. Use the toothbrush to clean the inside of the soles (where they join the uppers). After brushing, wash the bristles to remove grains of mud or dirt.

Remove the top of the polish can; fill the top with tap water and place it in a handy location next to the part with the polish.

Take a deep breath, and repeat three times: "This is worth it."

***Applying a base:***

The first step is to apply what is called “the base”. This is the hardest part, and beginners usually quit in disgust before they have finished the job. What you will be doing is applying very thin layer after layer of polish, using water to extract the oil and leave the wax, until the pores of the leather are filled and a layer of wax polish is in place.

Wrap the shine rag around your right forefinger (if you are right handed; otherwise, your “other right”) and dip it in the water so it is damp on the tip. Keeping it on your finger, put some polish on the wet part and apply it to the smooth leather of the shoe. In applying the base, you may put on fairly large amounts each time.

As you apply the polish, move your fingertip (with rag) in small, circular motions over the area to be polished. You should do this until the area appears smooth. Keep adding polish and water in small amounts, dipping your finger into the water and then into the polish and applying with the small circular movements. Keep this up with each application until the droplets of water disappear; then add more water and more polish. Continue this all over the surface of the shoe. [NOTE: the cap toe of the service shoe and the forward toe area of low quarters, along with the stiff part of the heels, will take the best shine. This is because these areas are rigid and will not bend when walking, cracking the polish.]

Continue this for as long as necessary until the surfaces begin to gleam. It may take 30-40 minutes of busy polishing before this magical transformation begins to gain momentum. When the entire surface is well-polished, you have created a “base”.

***Polishing***:

Once the base is there, each shining session thereafter will be shorter; barring major damage to the shine (a good reason to have roughouts for the field!), a few applications of very small amounts of polish and water should restore the finish. Just dust off the shoes with the soft rag and apply a new layer using a small amount of water and polish for each application.

Use the toothbrush to apply polish to the crease between the sole and the upper, and use the cloth to apply it to the sides of the soles.

The effect is very sharp and soldierly.

NOTE: Some troublemakers may insist on using cotton balls and coating the whole thing with Johnson’s clear floor polish after the wax polish is perfect. This technique results in a surface suitable for the Hubble Space Telescope; however, it is not a period technique and not worth the effort.

ALSO NOTE: Be sure to dry the lid of the polish tin after each use, or it will quickly rust.

## *How to polish brass*


Brass accoutrements are typically issued with a protective lacquer coating to prevent tarnish. Before brass can be properly shined, the lacquer must be removed. This takes a bit of work, but the service uniform will never look quite right until the metal is exposed and properly polished.

The original discs for the enlisted service coat are easier to polish than modern ones. This is because the old versions were issued in four pieces: the disc, the insignia ("US" or insignia of branch), locking screw, and keeper. Modern discs are cast in one piece and have two brazed pins on the back to lock into clutches.

The problem is that the lacquer is tough and requires a lot of elbow grease to remove. The cast or brazed ("brazed" is a term that described how brass pieces are attached, similar to solder or weld) discs have crevices that are hard to get to; the old ones could simply be taken apart and shined in detail.

There are reported to be shortcuts to removing lacquer. You can use a 30,000 RPM Dremel tool with a buffing attachment and Brasso (wear goggles and old clothes!). You can use naval jelly, a noisome phosphoric acid compound useful for removing rust, bluing, or – I am told – brass lacquer, though I can't say I ever tried it.

Be a man: take it off the old-fashioned way. You will need a can of Brasso and a terrycloth rag (yeah, I know). Place a little Brasso on the rag and place the rag on a flat, hard surface (one that does not have a surface vulnerable to damage, like a finished table top). Place the disc face down on the rag over the polish, put your finger in the middle (watch out for the clutch pins), and vigorously buff the thing back and forth, adding polish and moving the buffing spot, until you are thoroughly sick of the whole thing.

Brasso consists of a petroleum distillate solvent and a clay abrasive. Using the terry rag takes advantage of the thickness of the cloth and the little cotton loops to get into the crevices. It's a pain to do, but there are no short cuts I can personally guarantee.

Same procedure will work with the eagle hat brass for the service cap; this is in two pieces, however, which makes polishing easier.

The appearance of polished brass is much nicer and more military than lacquered brass. No soldier would pass inspection or receive a pass with unpolished brass. On the other hand, once the lacquer is gone the brass must be polished regularly. Get used to it.

Buttons: You will touch the buttons of your service coat quite frequently, which means they will tarnish and need shining. This requires some care, since there is a risk of staining the fabric behind the buttons with polish (this looks awful and requires dry cleaning to correct). Make a mask of cardboard (your squad leader will show how this is done) to prevent this kind of disgrace.


# BUYING UNIFORM ITEMS

Everybody's first impulse is to go out and start buying things. Take a deep breath. Here are some fail-safe guidelines:

1. **Make sure you know what to buy before you spend money**. Read this list carefully and ask questions if there is anything you don't understand.

2. **Remember that the 29th is a unit, and we dress alike** (or, as we say, "uniform"). There are a lot of things you can buy that are "correct" for somebody at some time, but we look good because we look alike. We do this by choosing as our basic impression the 29th soldier in May 1944. There are a lot of perfectly good items that were issued later (the M1943 field jacket, two-buckle boots, etc.), and you may wish to collect them later. But your priority should be for the items I list below.

3. **Don't buy medic, MP, or other special items**. Some units are flags of convenience for individual impressions. We are not. We are all infantry. As time goes on and missions permit,

you may sometimes be able to do a specialty impression, but priority is infantry private.

4. **Prioritize.** Most of us can't afford to go out and buy everything at once, so we've listed separately the things you should get right away. Don't worry if you can't put together a full kit right away – we have loaners for just about everything to tide you over for the early events.

## *Sources*

There are two kinds of items we collect – *original* and *reproduction*. We would all buy only original things, but they are not always available (particularly uniform items, which tend to be in smaller sizes). The best source for originals is eBay. However, there are many sources for good quality reproductions. The most useful are:

- **WWII Impressions at wwiireproductions.com**. These items are generally very high quality, but sometimes pricey. We recommend them for most uniform items.
- **What Price Glory (WPG) at whatpriceglory.com**. Good quality.
- **At the Front (ATF) at atthefront.com**. Slightly narrower selections, good price. Trousers tend to be baggy and may need to be tailored.

The ultimate source for neat stuff is the *flea market* (Civil War guys – read "sutler"). Various vendors collect at large events to sell items, mostly original. The ultimate flea market is at the Indiantown Gap event in January. The major reproduction outfits (ATF, WPG, etc.) come also.

## *Initial purchases*

There are certain things you should buy first – because of size specifications and because you want to arrive at the first event in reasonable shape.

1. **Class B uniform**. This is the standard wool uniform worn in all but the hottest weather. It consists of a wool shirt, trousers, belt, service shoes, khaki tie, and overseas cap. Get this first. Any of the three reproduction sources above will do (WWII Impressions, WPG, ATF). Some tips:

a. Buy ***service shoes***, not field shoes. Service shoes are smooth-out russet leather cap-toe brogans. They can be worn in garrison (as Class B) or in the field; field shoes are good only in the field. You will want to get the field shoes later to save the shine on your service shoes.

b. The overseas cap is important. Do not buy the square "envelope" cap sometimes called (incorrectly) an "airborne" cap. The older overseas cap is curved across the top and has a full length crease. The oldest models have no trim; later ones have piping around the edges in the branch color (robin's egg blue for Infantry).

c. The vendor will ask for your waist size on the belt (to save webbing). Some idiots will send somebody who says "38" a belt exactly 38" long. You want one at least two inches longer than the circumference of your waist. It's easy to shorten a belt, impossible to make it longer.

d. Tie: This is a cotton khaki item available from most reproducers.

2. **Field gear**. You will want to get geared up for the field, and this requires additions to the basic Class B. You should find:

a. Helmet, M1. This is the classic "steel pot", a stamped steel shell and fiber liner with strapping. Correct helmets have a rough finish. Excruciatingly correct early war helmets have what's called "fixed bales." Vendors will know what this means. Do the best you can. Once you have it, you can paint on the 29th Division insignia using the instructions at the end of this article.

b. Leggings. These canvas horrors are hard to put on and take off rapidly, but it's what we wear. Check size carefully. Don't spend money on two-buckle late-war boots.

c. Cartridge belt. We all start as riflemen, so we all need the cartridge belt, which has pouches for ammo clips. There is only one size. Important for all web gear: make sure it is khaki, not late-war dark OD.

d. M1928 pack. This is your standard pack. Do not buy a musette bag or a butt pack. Again, one size; it hooks to your cartridge belt. There is a device called a "pack tail" that allows the rolled blanket and tent to be attached, but we seldom carry full field load, so that isn't a priority.

e. Canteen, canteen cup, and pouch. Get the steel kind, not the Viet Nam era plastic canteen.

f. Meat can. This is the two-piece mess kit and knife, fork, and spoon.

g. First aid pouch and Carlyle bandage.

3. **Jacket**. We wear the M1941 field jacket. This is a priority. Don't buy an M1943 jacket at first – you will seldom have an opportunity to wear it.

**4. Rifle**. Our standard weapon is the M1. Some specialty impressions carry other weapons, but we all start as riflemen. An M1 will set you back some cash – expect to fork over around $800 - $1,000 unless you have a discount source like CMP. We always have loaners for new members, so don't despair.

***5.*** **Underwear**. Yes, this is important. Soldiers were issued old-fashioned tank top undershirts – white or OD (olive drab) are acceptable. White ones are available in clothing stores (cheap at Wal-Mart or Target), though they tend to be ribbed A-shirts. Some reproduction OD shirts are available – check the sources above to see if they have them available. Best bet for shorts is white boxers.

# SUMMARY

## *First priority purchases*

1 (recommend 2) Shirt, wool, OD, enlisted pattern (officer shirts are slightly different)
1 pr (recommend 2)Trousers, OD wool serge, M-1937 or M1942
1 Belt, trouser, khaki web w/ open frame buckle
1 Necktie, khaki
1 pr. Service shoes (recommended also one pr. Field shoes)
1 Cap, overseas, OD wool with or without Infantry piping
1 Jacket, field, M-1941 pattern
6 pr. Socks, OD cotton or wool
2-3 Undershirts, tank top, cotton OD or white

We recommend buying two shirts and two pairs of trousers before your first Gap event. The Gap is a three-day event with field work, and if you have only one set of wools, they will look like hell by the time of the dinner on Saturday night. (Some have four sets, but they're picky about looking crisp and clean.)

1 pr. Leggings, M1936 Army pattern
1 canteen, cup, and cover, 1910 pattern
1 cartridge belt, dismounted pattern 10 pocket
1 entrenching tool, M1910 T handle pattern w/ cover
1 first aid pouch, field dressing
1 haversack (pack) with meat can pouch, M1928 pattern
1 helmet, M1, w/ liner (webbing should be khaki, not later OD)
1 US Rifle, cal. .30, M1

## *Second priority purchases*

After you have the basic stuff in hand, look at the following:

1 coat, service, OD wool, with US and Infantry brass disks (optional: distinguishing unit insignia – regimental crests) This is the Class A coat worn as a dress uniform. It looks great, most people are getting them now, and the price has dropped.

1 foot locker. This is a plywood trunk (other models are available on eBay from time to time).

HBT fatigue uniform. This is an OD cotton herringbone twill (HBT) work uniform consisting of a jacket, trousers, and cap (wide brimmed "Daisy Mae" style). It will save wear on your Class B uniform and is good for a lot of field training.

Gloves, knit wool; there are also good reproduction glove shells with leather palms and fingers.

Raincoat, rubberized or synthetic resin coated

Helmet net, OD ½" square

Overcoat, wool (the Gap gets COLD)

### *D-Day impression items*

Our unique specialty is D-Day, and the first wave 29ers had several special items:

Gas mask, M5 assault, with rubber case
Gas brassard, disposable
Assault jacket (not cheap)

# PAINTING THE 29TH HELMET INSIGNA

1. Get light gray and medium blue paint.

2. Find your helmet.

3. Put a mark 10 cm up the front (visor joint) of the helmet.

4. Draw a four cm circle over the mark.

5. Split the circle in four equal zones (Fig. 1).

6. Draw an 8 (Fig. 2).

7. Paint your insignia by using the 8 design (Fig. 3).

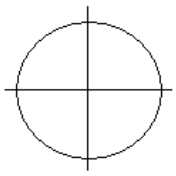


Fig.1

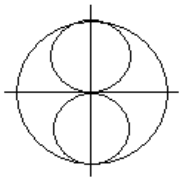


Fig. 2

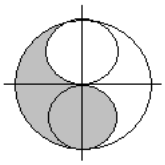


Fig. 3

# Section C

# 116th Infantry Chain of Command


# 116th INFANTRY CHAIN OF COMMAND

| | |
|---|---|
| Commander in Chief, United States Armed Forces | President Franklin D. Roosevelt |
| Secretary of War | Hon. Henry L. Stimson* |
| Chief of Staff, United States Army | General George C. Marshal |
| Supreme Allied Commander, Europe | General Dwight D. Eisenhower |
| Commanding General, 12th Army Group** | Lieutenant General Omar N. Bradley |
| Commanding General, First United States Army | Lieutenant General Courtney Hodges |
| Commanding General, V Army Corps | Major General Leonard T. Gerow*** |
| Commanding General, 29th Infantry Division | Major General Charles Gerhardt |
| Commanding officer, 116th Infantry Regiment | Colonel Charles D. W. Canham |
| Commanding Officer, Company A | Captain Taylor Fellers**** |

(NOTE: This is the complete chain of command for A/116 on D-Day. It differed at the lower end with losses and changes of organization and corps assignment. We represent different units at different events, but the chain is uniformly good through regiment.

At the Gap we will go with the actual chain of command in the company (real people).)

*"The Honorable" – cabinet secretaries are so addressed or introduced.

** On D-Day, Bradley was officially CG 1st US Army (with Hodges as deputy), part of 21st Army Group commanded by Montgomery. This was done to avoid having two bosses on the same beach. After D-Day, 3rd US Army was formed (under Patton) and combined with 1st Army to form 12th Army Group. This was always the plan.

***"Gee" Gerow was originally CG of the 29th Infantry Division; he was bumped to command V Corps and Gerhardt succeeded him.

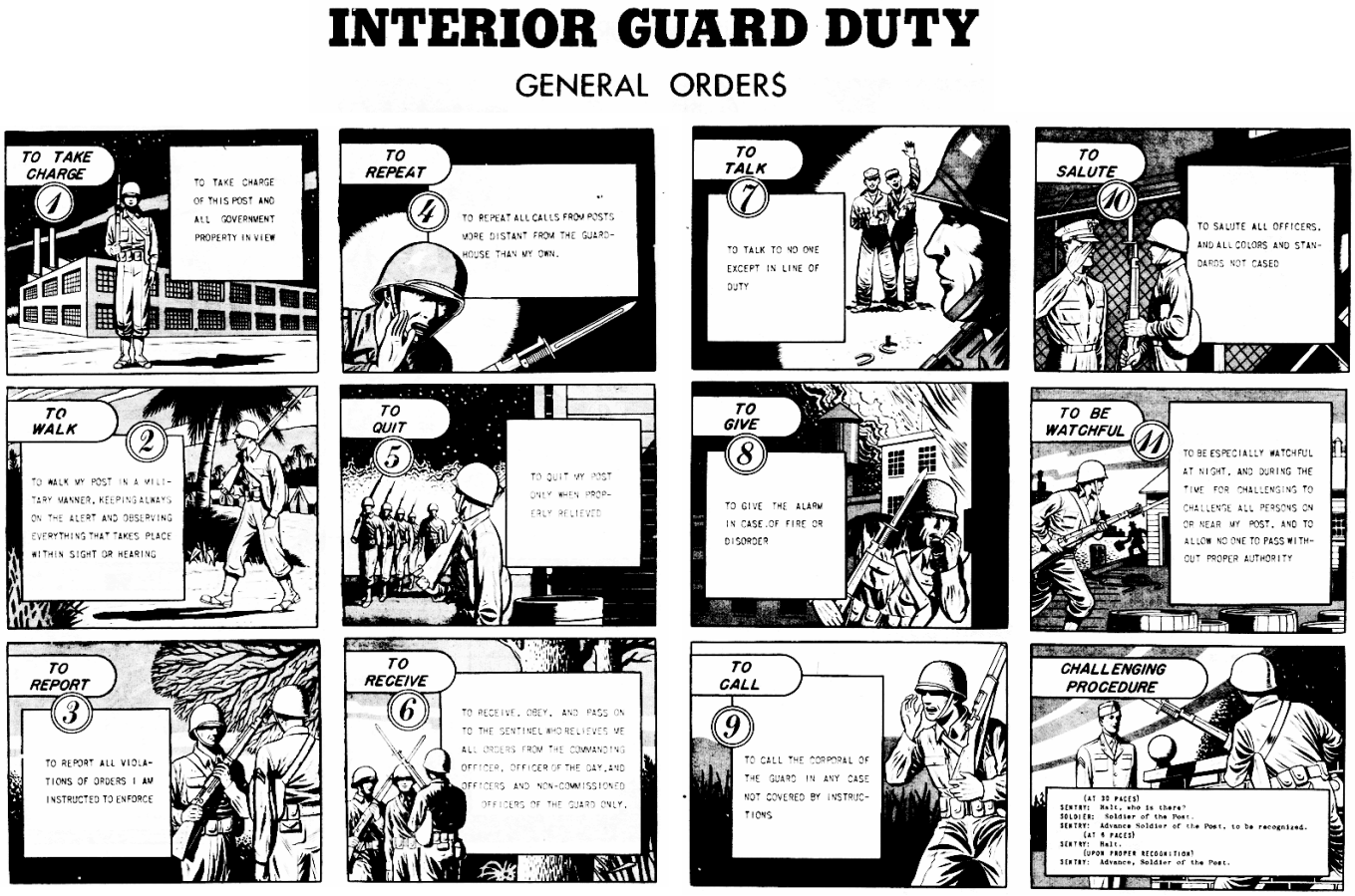
****Taylor Fellers, a resident of Bedford VA, died on D-Day.

# Section D

## General Guard Orders


# GENERAL GUARD ORDERS

1. To take charge of this post and all government property in view.
2. To walk my post in a military manner, keeping always on the alert and observing everything that takes place within sight or hearing.
3. To report all violations of orders I am instructed to enforce.
4. To repeat all calls from posts more distant from the guardhouse than my own.
5. To quit my post only when properly relieved.
6. To receive, obey, and pass on to the sentry who relieves me, all orders from the Commanding Officer, Officer of the Day, and Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers of the guard only.
7. To talk to no one except in the line of duty.
8. To give the alarm in case of fire or disorder.
9. To call the Corporal of the Guard in any case not covered by instructions.
10. To salute all officers and all colors and standards not cased.
11. To be especially watchful at night and during the time for challenging, to challenge all persons on or near my post, and to allow no one to pass without proper authority.

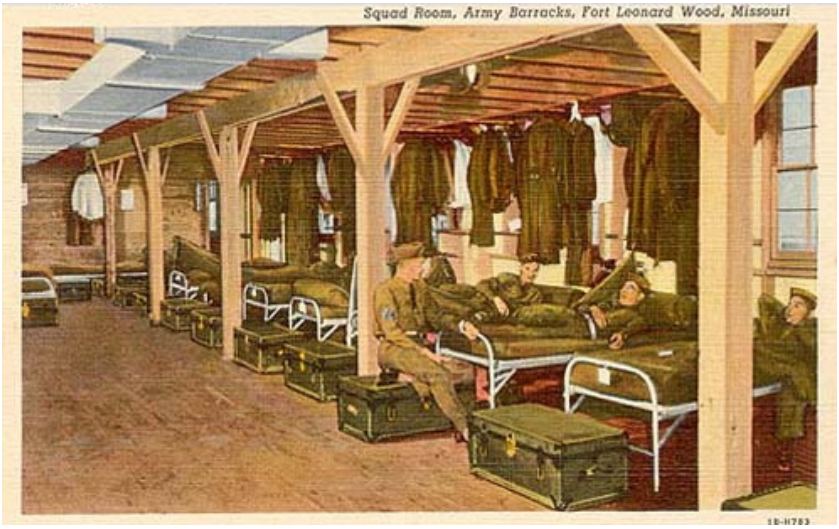


# Section E

# Barracks SOP


# BARRACKS SOP

## *Bunk & Footlocker Layout*




This SOP is for the barracks setup at Fort Indiantown Gap, with the standard bunk beds and wall lockers. If we should set up in a different barracks with different equipment, we will create a standard for that set up.

The FIG barracks are set up to house 60 people, 30 on each floor. Assuming we have the entire barracks to ourselves, we have four rooms (one person each) and an upper and lower floor. The rooms will be assigned to the Company CO, Platoon Leaders and the large room for the Company Clerk. These may be adjusted as our numbers dictate.

To the best of our ability, one platoon will be assigned to each floor and bunk areas will be assigned to each squad so that all the squad members are together.

When you arrive, check in with the Company Clerk or NCO on duty to verify your bunk assignment. Bring your gear in, make your bunk and stow away your gear before you leave to go shopping (or whatever). If you should happen to get there early before the barracks gets filled up, and want to sleep in the same area as everyone else (e.g., if you are on the second floor and everyone else is on the first floor), you may do that. HOWEVER, as other people arrive, you will be required to return to your assigned bunk.

1. BUNKS
   a. Bunks will be made using two white sheets, two WWII Army blankets, one pillow with one white pillow case.
   b. The bottom bunks will be made with the head (pillow) towards the wall.
   c. The top bunks will be made with the head (pillow) towards the center.
   d. One Blanket will be used to make up the bunk as shown in the diagram below. The second blanket will be used as a dust cover that covers the head (pillow) of the bed. The blanket is folded in half, with the folded edge placed so that it is 18" from the head of the bed. The remainder is tucked under the mattress with hospital corners just like those of the first blanket at the foot of the bed.

2. FOOT LOCKERS

a. The foot locker of the bottom bunk will be placed at the foot of the bunk in the aisle.
b. The footlocker of the top bunk will be place against the wall, under the window (i.e., between the wall lockers). (These may have to be placed with the back of the footlocker against the wall locker. We may have to adjust as we get set up.)
c. As there was no overall "ARMY" standard for the exact lay out of the footlocker tray (standards were set at lower levels, i.e., platoons, or battalions), the only standard we have is the tray should be lined with a white towel and the toiletries are on the left and socks and other personal items are on the right (most WWII issue footlocker trays were divided in two sections, although there were some that may have been divided into three parts). Items should be laid out neat and orderly. Do not make you footlocker tray look like the PX. Look at the samples we have on our web page.
d. Something that crept into the layout over the years was to put lapel pins, DI's, ribbons and such on a 3x5 card in the tray. DO NOT DO THIS.

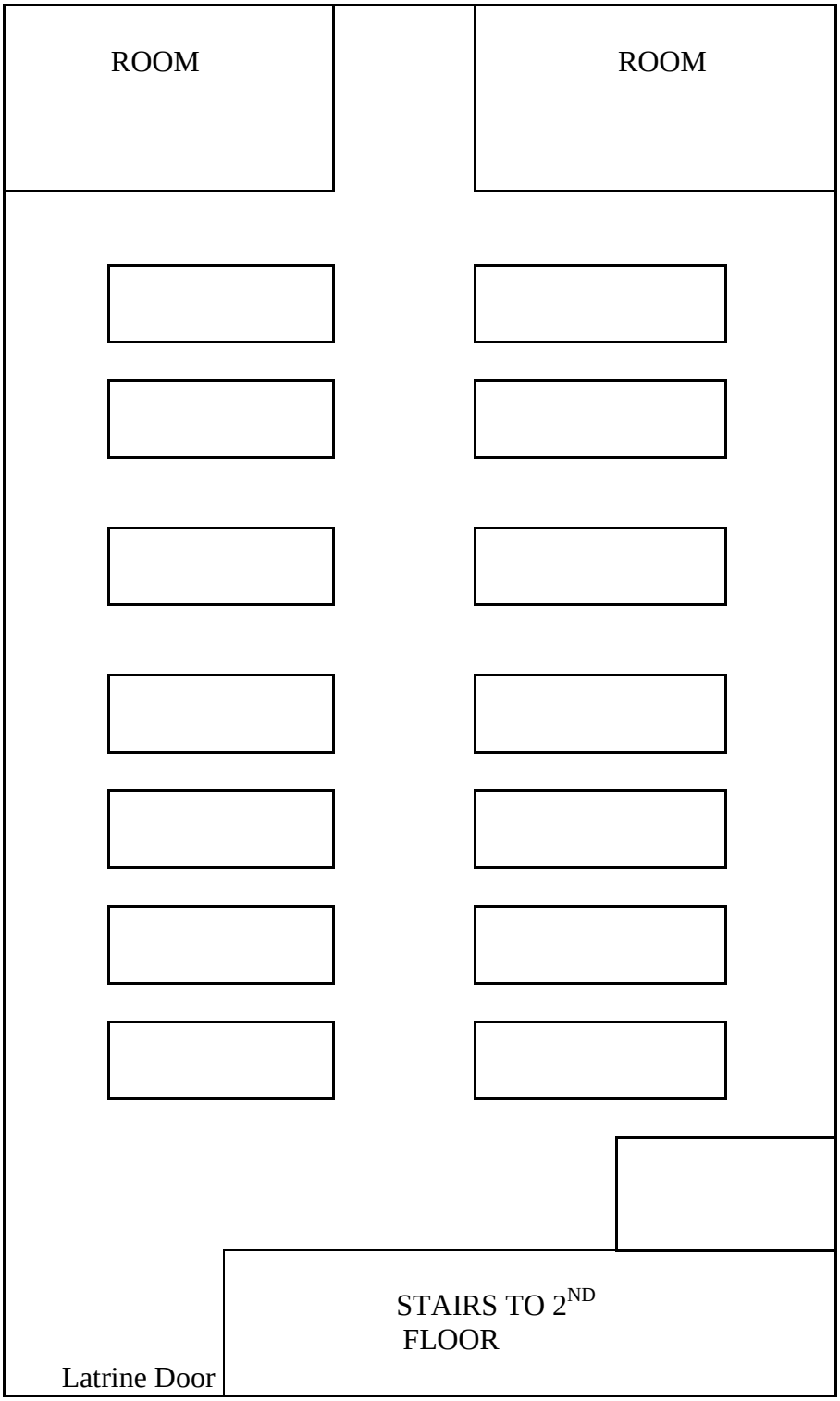
3. GEAR

a. The webgear (M1928 haversacks, cartridge belt, etc.) will be hung from the posts of the top bunk on the wall side.
b. Helmet will be placed on top of your wall locker.
c. Rifle will be kept in the wall locker. (Lock your wall and foot locker when you are not there.)
d. The gas mask bag (Kidney bag or lightweight bag only, no Assault bag) will be attached to the bunk at the intersection of the foot/head rail and the upright leg. Facing the bunks from the aisle, the top bunk will place the gas mask on the upper right corner, aisle side, and the lower bunk will place the gas mask on the lower left corner, wall side.
e. Towels will be placed at the center of the head/foot rail on the aisle side of the bunk (both upper and lower).
f. Barracks/laundry Bags will be tied on the center of the head/foot rail on wall side of the bunk (both upper and lower).
g. Shoes will be place in a line under the bottom bunk, right side for the bottom bunk, left side for the top bunk. (shower shoes will not be placed under the bed)

4. WALL LOCKER

a. Clothing will be hung in the order shown in the equipment display graphic below. One exception to the diagram is that the gas mask will be placed on the bunk as described above instead of in the wall locker. Clothing will be on wooden or wire hangers.
b. The upper shelf is to be used for placement of your hat/cap, gloves and other items.

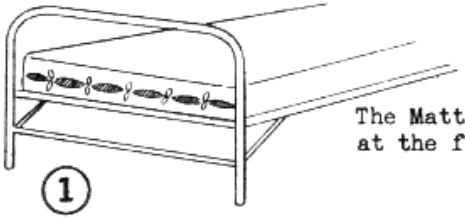
## *Barracks Layout*



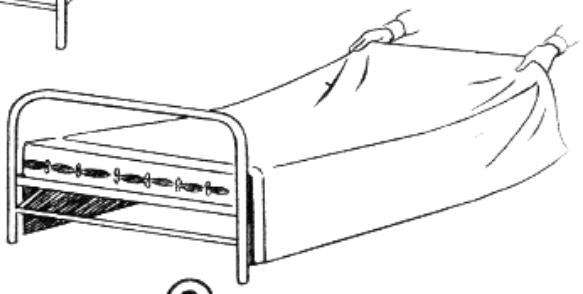
## *The Correct Way to Make Your Bunk*

From the Camp Crowder Central Signal Corps School Workbook

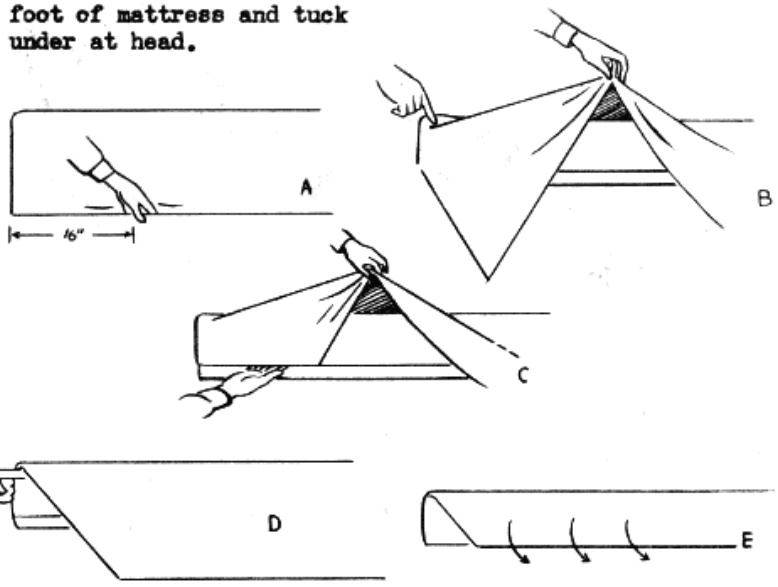
# THE *Correct Way* TO MAKE YOUR BUNK



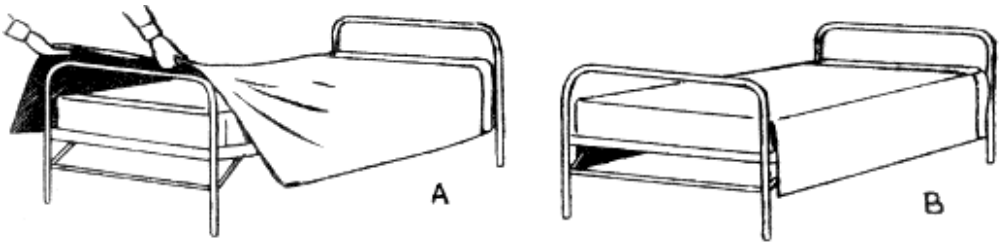
1 The Mattress Cover is tied at the foot.



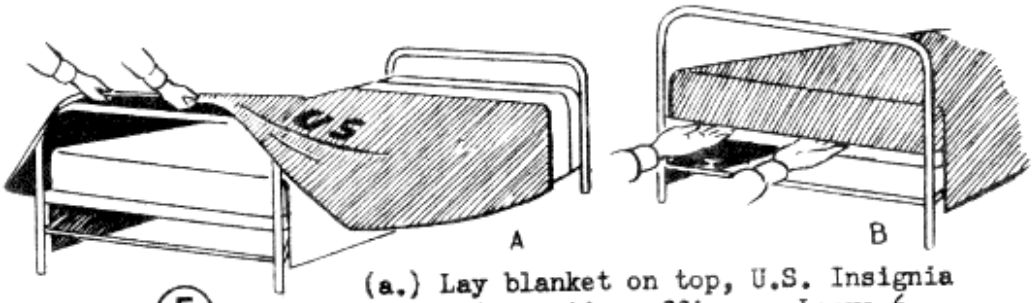
2 Pull bottom sheet even with foot of mattress and tuck under at head.



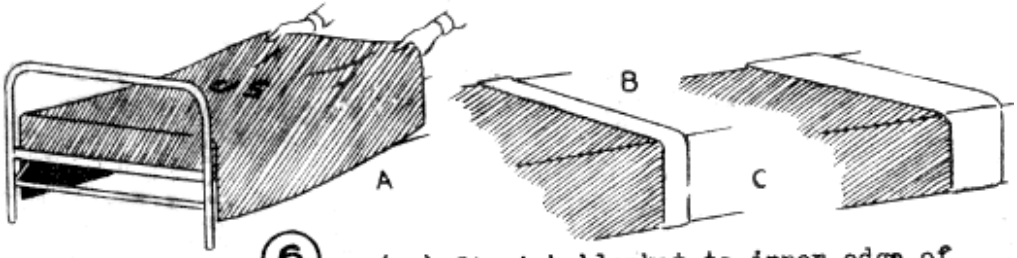

3 **Fold corners:** (a.) Hold sheet 16 inches from head of bunk. (b.) Place one finger on top of corner lifting sheet up with other hand. (c.) Tuck lower drape under mattress. (d.) Hold corner in place and bring sheet over. (e.) Tuck under.



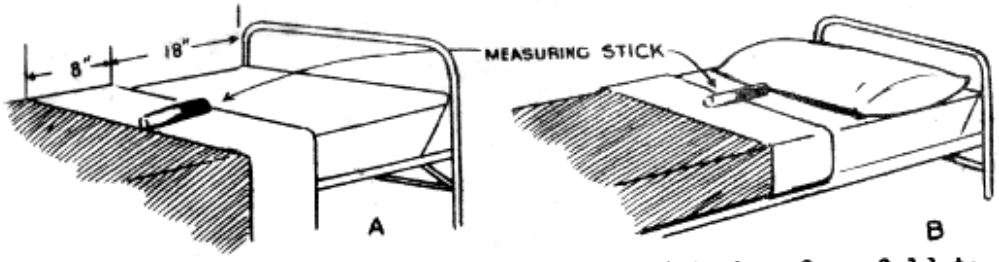

④ Top sheet is placed over bottom sheet, wide seam at head, even with top of mattress and tucked under at the foot.



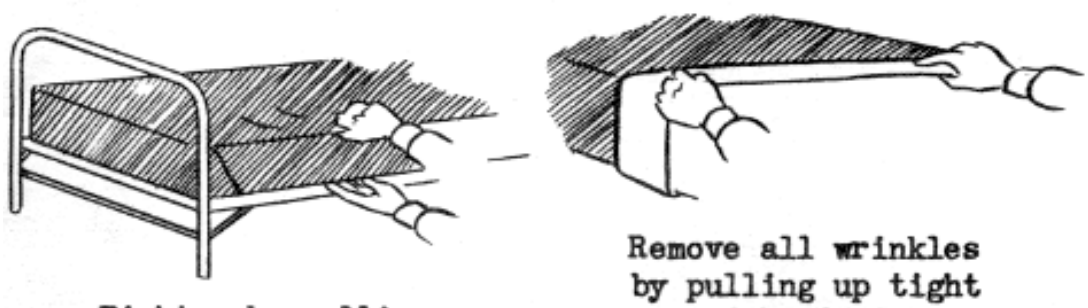

⑤ (a.) Lay blanket on top, U.S. Insignia facing inspecting officer. Leave 6 inches between top edge of blanket and sheet. (b.) Fold under same way as sheet.




⑥ (a.) Stretch blanket to inner edge of seam. (b.) Fold seam over blanket. (c.) Fold both sheet and blanket over approximately four inches.

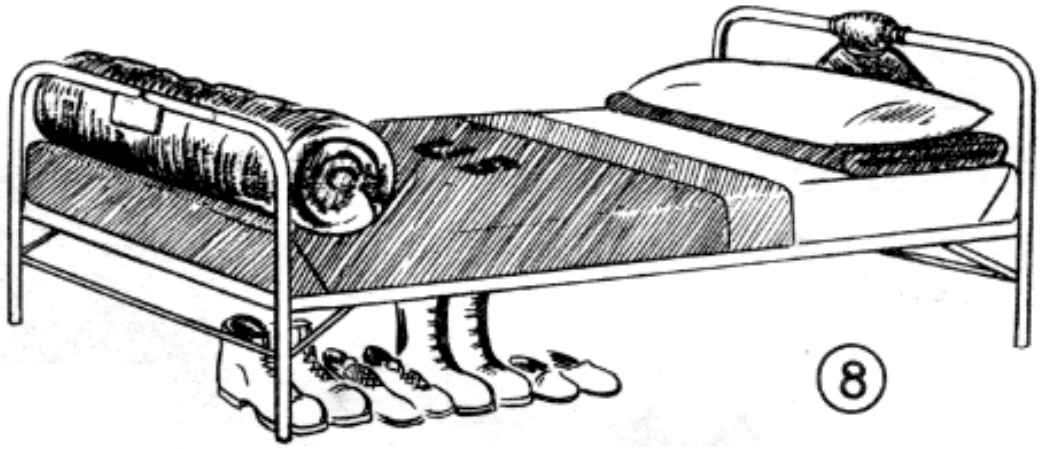



⑦ (a.) Fold over again leaving 18 inches from fold to head of mattress. Fold is 8 inches wide, 4 inches from pillow to fold. (b.) Fold corners same as sheets. Grasp sheet and cover and fold both completely under mattress.



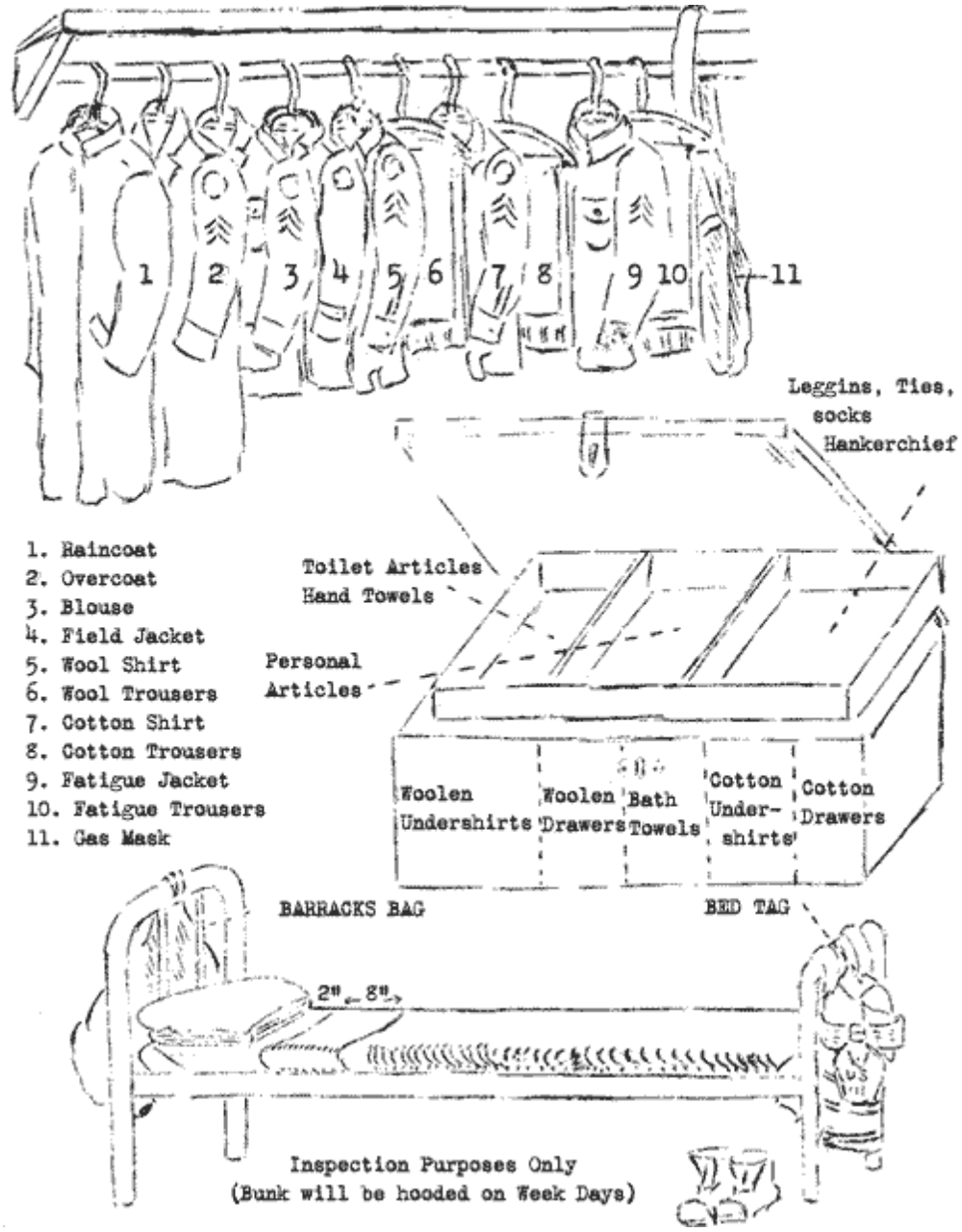
Tighten by pulling one side & taking up the slack underneath.

Remove all wrinkles by pulling up tight toward head of bunk.

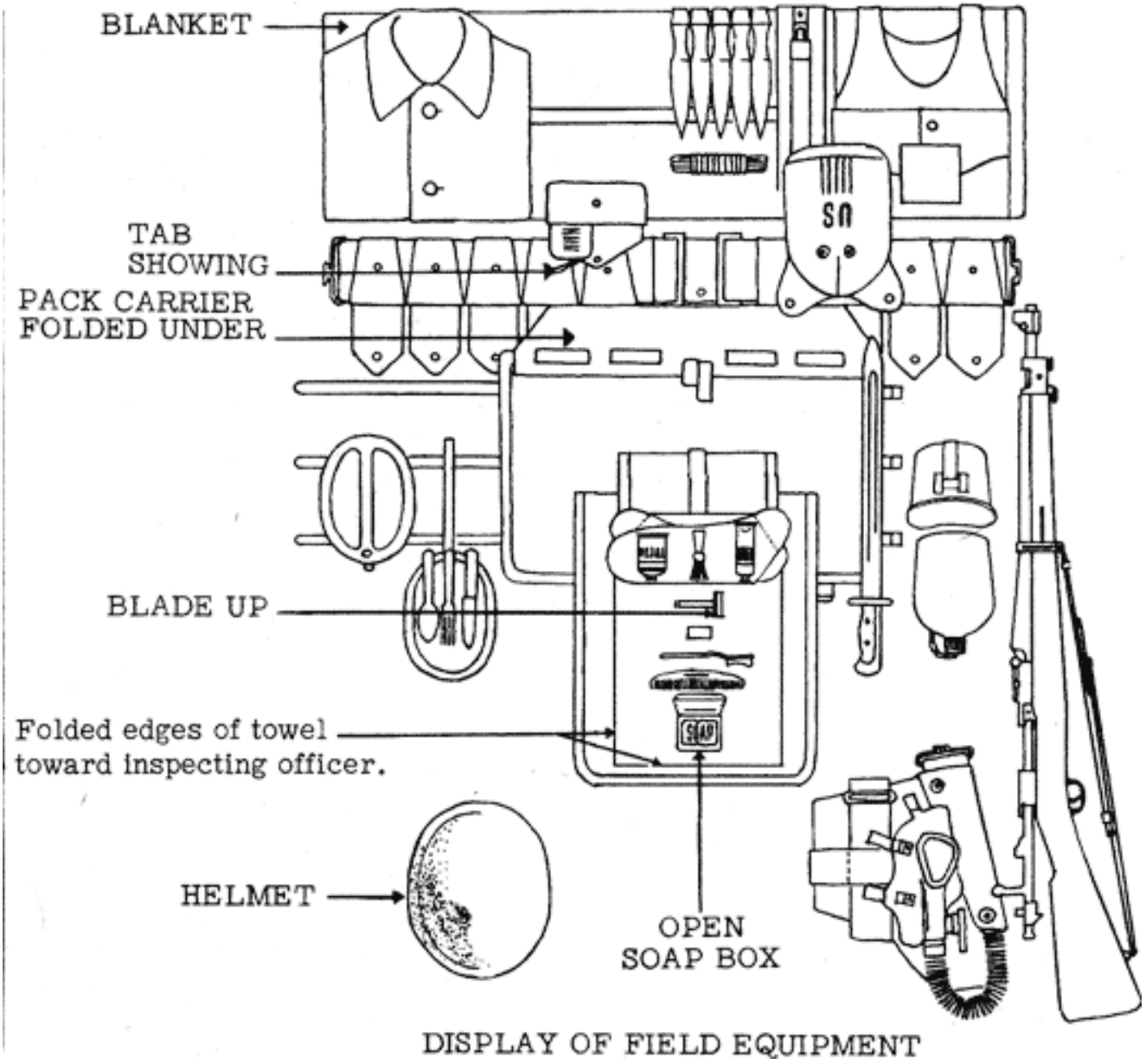



Tie Tag & Duffle-bag as indicated in picture above. Shoes laced and tied and in line. Comforter rolled.

## *Equipment Display*



***"Junk on the Bunk" Display***




DISPLAY OF FIELD EQUIPMENT

# Section F

# M1 Rifle Basic Knowledge


# The M1 RIFLE: The Standard Infantry Weapon

In our 29th Division T/O&E, the M1 Garand (called simply "M1") will be the "standard issue" weapon for all rank and file members. Everyone should have one available at all times because the M1 will be required for standard formations, drill, and all classes of any kind generally. Other weapons, such as the M1 Carbine (called simply a "carbine") can be assigned under certain circumstances, but only as required (i.e., ***permitted***), by the 1944 T/O&E. Thus, weapons personnel manning mortars or .30 machine guns may carry them, but you will frequently find, in period memoirs, that many of these personnel ditched the weapon and grabbed a stray M1 at the earliest opportunity.


## Standard Nomenclature

The U.S. rifle caliber .30, M1, is an air-cooled, gas-operated, clip-fed, and semiautomatic shoulder weapon. Collectors call it the "Garand" after its inventor, but it is officially called the "M1" and this is what we will call it.

Some information should be memorized. It is printed in heavy type. When asked to sound off with the specifications of your rifle, you will respond:

**A. "Sir, my weapon is a U. S. Rifle, caliber .30, M1. It is an air-cooled, gas-operated, clip-fed, semiautomatic shoulder weapon."**

Q. What is the weight of your weapon?

**A. "Sir, the weight of my rifle is 9.5 pounds."**

Q. What is the maximum range of your rifle?

**A. "Sir, the maximum range of my rifle is 3,450 yards."**[1]

Q. What is the maximum effective range of your rifle?

**A. "Sir, the maximum effective range of my rifle is 500 yards."**

It is not a "gun" or a "piece" or a "Garand." It is a <u>rifle</u>.

[1] We use English measure; metric had not been prescribed for the United States Army in 1944.

## Rules to learn before starting:

1. Safety always comes first.

2. Always clear your weapon before doing anything with it: open the bolt and check the receiver and the chamber for any rounds.

3. Even after the weapon has been cleared, treat it with respect. The first rule of firearms is and always has been: There is no such thing as an unloaded weapon.

4. Your rifle always takes priority. When you return from the field or when you halt for an extended period (like a night defensive position), you should inspect, field strip, and clean your weapon before you do anything else. When you return to the barracks after a tactical, check one last time to make sure the rifle is clear.

5. Always have control of your weapon. When you carry the weapon outside a formation, you will carry it at port arms. When you are under arms (carrying your rifle) you will not remove your cap or helmet – you need both hands to maintain control of your rifle.

6. Always know where your weapon is. When not in use, your rifle will be stored in your wall locker, door locked whenever you are gone.

7. You should be able to identify your rifle by its serial number. This is stamped on the rear of the receiver. Memorize it.

An infantryman is a weapon with two parts: a well-trained soldier and a well-maintained rifle. If I am poorly trained, my rifle is useless. If my rifle is not maintained, I am useless. If I neglect my weapon or fail to use it properly, I will bring disgrace upon myself, my unit, and my country. I will never cease to improve my level of skill. As an infantryman of the United States Army I will bring victory on the battlefield and honor to my country. This I swear before God and before my fellow soldiers.

## Field stripping your rifle

NOTE: This list and the accompanying illustration represent a complete breakdown and nomenclature. You will NOT disassemble the weapon completely; that is a job for the company armorer or higher echelon maintenance at the Division Ordnance Company. You will typically field strip your weapon for cleaning and maintenance. Field stripping is the minimum necessary disassembly necessary to maintain the weapon at the user (first echelon) level. Frequent disassembly beyond this level can cause unnecessary wear and increase the likelihood of malfunctions.

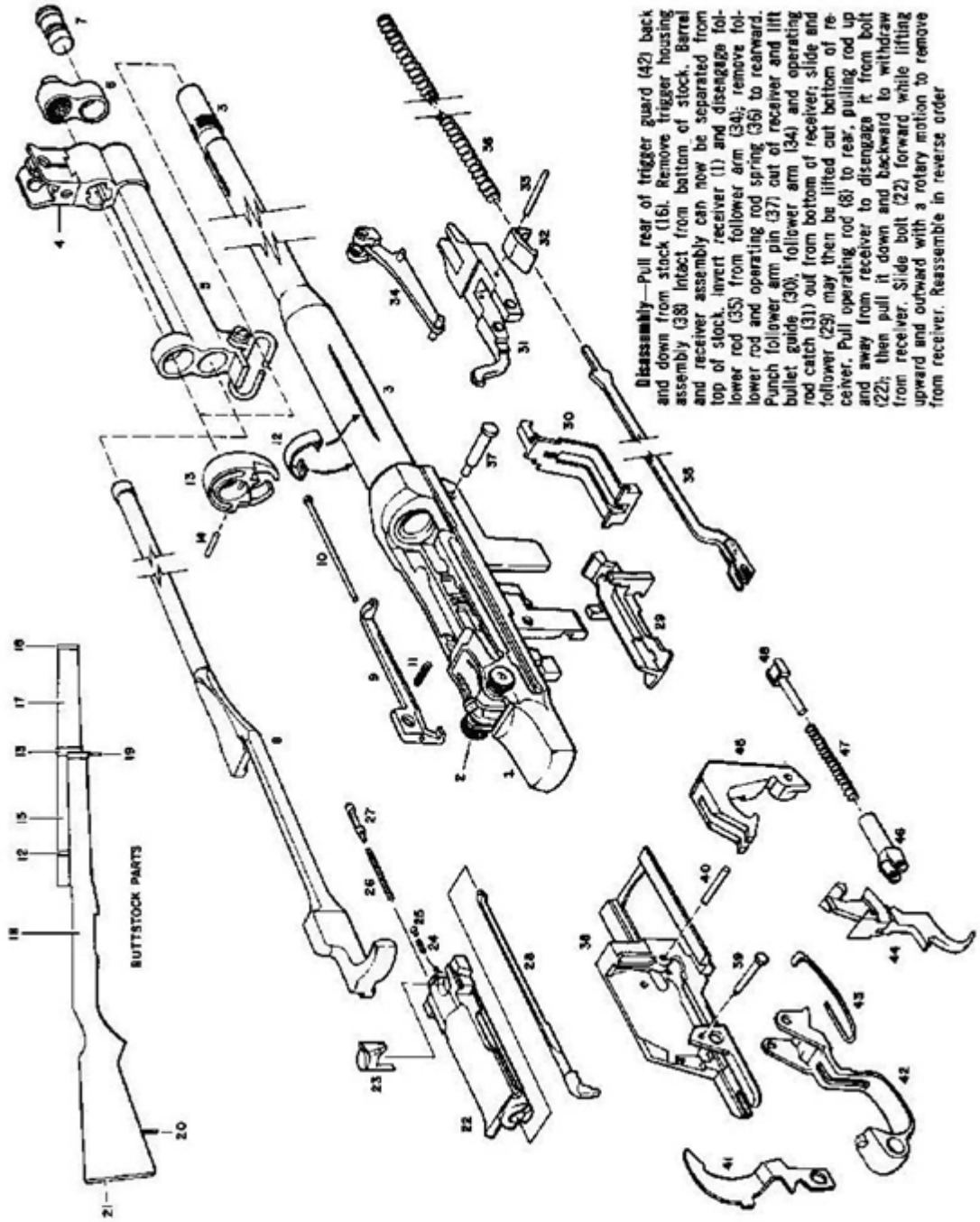
When you field strip the M1, you will break it down into three basic components: (1) stock, (2) barrel and receiver group, and (3) trigger housing group. You will then disassemble that part of the barrel and receiver group used in feeding and operation, which means:

1. Follower rod (35) and Operating rod spring (36)
2. Follower arm pin (37)
3. Follower arm (34), Operating rod catch assembly (31), Bullet guide (30), and Slide and follower assembly (29)
4. Operating rod (8) and Bolt assembly (22)

Your rifle is now field stripped.

You should remove and clean the gas cylinder no more than once a year at the normal reenactor rate of fire to avoid excessive wear.

HINT: When you field strip your rifle, always place the parts in the same place and order. Get in the habit. After a few cleanings you will be able to field strip and reassemble your rifle by touch alone if you need to do it in the dark. In fact, you should practice this procedure using a blindfold.


Parts List
1. Receiver
2. Rear Sight Assembly
3. Barrel
4. Front Sight
5. Gas Cylinder with Stacking Swivel
6. Gas Cylinder Lock
7. Gas Cylinder Lock Screw
8. Operating Rod
9. Clip Latch
10. Clip Latch Pin
11. Clip Latch Spring
12. Rear Handguard Band
13. Lower Band
14. Lower Band Pin
15. Rear Handguard (wood)
16. Stock (wood)
17. Front Handguard (wood)
18. Front Handguard Ferrule
19. Stock Ferrule & Swivel
20. Butt Swivel
21. Buttplate & Screws
22. Bolt
23. Extractor
24. Extractor Spring
25. Extractor Plunger
26. Ejector Spring
27. Ejector
28. Firing Pin
29. Slide & Follower
30. Bullet Guide
31. Operating Rod Catch
32. Accelerator
33. Accelerator Pin
34. Follower Arm
35. Follower Rod
36. Operating Rod Spring
37. Follower Arm Pin
38. Trigger Housing
39. Trigger Pin
40. Hammer Pin
41. Safety
42. Trigger Guard
43. Clip Ejector
44. Trigger
45. Hammer
46. Hammer Spring Housing
47. Hammer Spring
48. Hammer Spring Plunger
BUTTSTOCK PARTS
Disassembly—Pull rear of trigger guard (42) back and down from stock (16). Remove trigger housing assembly (38) intact from bottom of stock. Barrel and receiver assembly can now be separated from top of stock. Invert receiver (1) and disengage follower rod (35) from follower arm (34); remove follower rod and operating rod spring (36) to rearward. Punch follower arm pin (37) out of receiver and lift bullet guide (30), follower arm (34) and operating rod catch (31) out from bottom of receiver; slide and follower (29) may then be lifted out bottom of receiver. Pull operating rod (8) to rear, pulling rod up and away from receiver to disengage it from bolt (22); then pull it down and backward to withdraw from receiver. Slide bolt (22) forward while lifting upward and outward with a rotary motion to remove from receiver. Reassemble in reverse order

## Cleaning tips:

Use a light coat of oil unless you plan to store the weapon for a long time, since dirt will collect in wet places and result in poor operation and excessive wear. A light coat of oil on the weapon will appear glossy but will not feel "oily." Remember: a coat of oil just one molecule thick will prevent rust.

At cleaning time, remove all dirt and powder residue. Combustion residue is drawn from the bore every time the weapon cycles, and it will collect on most surfaces close to the chamber (the rear of the bore into which the cartridge feeds). Tough areas can be cleaned effectively with bore cleaner and followed with a light coat of oil. (Bore cleaner and lubricating oil are issued in tins of the same size; oil is in a rectangular tin, bore cleaner in a rounded tin.) Pay particular attention to the interior of the chamber (the bore brush on the M1 tool will jar combustion residue loose); buildup of crud there can cause failure to extract (the expended cartridge case jams in the chamber). The bore should be very clean – use bore cleaner to loosen residue, then dry rags passed through the bore until the patch comes out clean, then a light coat of oil. A dirty bore increases recoil and affects accuracy.

Clean out grooves and crevices with a toothbrush (not the one you use to clean your teeth!).

Grease is used to lubricate surfaces that experience heavy wear. Most important are the hollow camming surface opposite the operating rod handle, the inside of the groove along which the operating rod lug slides, and the inside of the rear of the receiver. Grease works by resisting pressure; if two adjacent metal surfaces are separated by a thin layer of grease, metal will not touch metal. Do not use excessive grease – a thin layer will do. Too much grease will combine with powder residue and dirt to create an abrasive gunk that will affect cycling efficiency and wear metal surfaces.

Clean the front and rear sights carefully; a toothbrush will do wonders.

Don't forget to remove mud and rust from the butt plate and clean out the butt well.

When you clean your weapon after firing, do it thoroughly and then set the rifle aside for a few days and do it again. Black residue will “sweat” from the parts even after cleaning and embarrass you when you KNOW you cleaned it thoroughly.

## Stoppages and immediate action

A stoppage is any failure of the weapon to cycle (that is, to fire one round and feed the next). Most stoppages occur because of dirty, worn, or broken parts, and/or lack of lubrication. Some stoppages are easily corrected by the soldier using immediate action procedures; others require a halt to field strip and clean or assistance from the company armorer.

Immediate action for a stoppage: Pull the operating handle all the way to the rear with the right hand palm up, then release it. This action should eject the old round and feed the next into the chamber. A push on the rear of the operating rod handle may be necessary.

For recruits, this will be the standard procedure to react to a stoppage. If this does not work, notify your squad leader immediately.

Note to more experienced recruits: Some of you will arrive at your first event with more knowledge than your fellow squad members. If you know what to do and how to do it, help your buddies. How skilled you are means nothing if the squad fails to perform, and the squad performs and excels by working together.

# Section G

## Other Weapons


# OTHER WEAPONS

While not typically available to the rank and file, it is worth becoming familiar with the other classes and types of weapons, simply to increase your awareness of what "tools" were available during WWII to accomplish assigned missions. Some of the below (such as the 60mm mortar) will be in the company T/O&E inventory; others, such as the M3 105mm howitzer, due to its size (not to mention its cost) will not.

## Direct fire weapons

Any weapon that allows a soldier to aim at a visible target and fire a round at it accurately is a *direct fire* weapon. It includes rifles and machineguns, but not mortars and artillery. Most of you will employ direct fire weapons. As an infantry soldier, you should be familiar with the M1, BAR, light machine gun M1919A1, Thompson and M2 submachineguns, and bazooka.

## Indirect fire weapons

These weapons engage at a high angle of sight so that rounds fall from above. The target can be engaged without the gunner actually seeing it -- fall of shot may be directed by an observer with line of sight by radio or wire back to the firing unit. You should know the capabilities of the company's 60 mm mortar and be able to serve as a loader; you should know the capabilities of the 82mm mortar and the artillery assets available to units in the 29th Infantry Division.

## Mines and demolitions

These devices use high explosives for effect, and are generally placed in a static position or launched for only a short distance. You will learn to use bulk explosives, fuses, caps, and igniters, as well as methods for probing for mines and the employment of the Hawkins mine and the Bangalore torpedo.

## The Browning Automatic Rifle (M1918A2)

Distribution: 1 per squad
Crew: Gunner, assistant gunner
Caliber: 30-06 M2
Weight: 19 lbs. empty
Length: 47.8 inches
Action: Gas operated, open bolt
Rate of fire: 300-650 rpm (selectable)
Effective range: 600 yd.
Cooling: Air
Use: The BAR provides heavy fire support for the squad.

## Light machine gun cal. .30 (M1919)

Distribution: 2 per rifle company
Crew: Gunner, assistant gunner
Caliber: 30-06 M2
Feeding: Belt, 250-round
Weight: 31 lbs
Length: 37.94 in.
Action: Recoil operated
Rate of fire: 400-600 rpm
Effective range: 1,500 yd. (maximum)
Cooling: Air
Use: The M1919 provides sustained automatic fire in support of offensive and defensive operations of the rifle company. Most effective employment is grazing fire in the defense.

## Heavy machine gun cal. .30 M1917A1

Distribution: 1 platoon, battalion heavy weapons company, rifle regiment
Crew: Gunner, assistant gunner
Caliber: 30-06 M2
Weight: 103 lbs (gun, tripod, water, and ammo; gun is 47 lbs.)
Length: 980 mm.
Action: Recoil operated
Rate of fire: 600 rpm
Effective range: 1,500 yd. (maximum)
Cooling: Water
Use: M1917A1 provided high rate-of-fire sustained grazing fire in the defense and offense and accurate plunging fire.

## Carbine, cal. .30, M1

Distribution: Variable; generally issued to or scrounged by soldiers who were unlikely to need the M1 but required a weapon, and by those whose duties and equipment load made the carbine a convenient arm.
Caliber: cal. .30 carbine
Feeding: 15-round detachable box magazine.
Weight: 5.2 lbs
Length: 35.6 in.
Range: 300 yds (maximum)
Action: Gas operated rotating bolt
Rate of fire: semiautomatic
Cooling: Air
Use: The M1 carbine is a light, simple, and reliable semiautomatic weapon widely distributed to rear-area troops and, in particular, to soldiers such as mortar crewmen whose combat load makes it difficult to carry the M1 rifle.

## Sub machinegun, cal. 45 ACP, M1

Distribution: Variable; issued as needed. There will be a sprinkling of Thompsons at rifle company level and to special troops whose missions require.
Caliber: cal. .45 ACP (45 pistol round)
Feeding: 20 round detachable box magazine (30-round box and drum mags seldom used)
Weight: 10.6 lbs. empty
Length: 32 in.
Range: 75 yds (effective)
Action: Blowback
Rate of fire: 600 rpm
Cooling: Air
Use: The M1 sub machinegun is used to provide a heavy volume of fire, particularly for suppression, within a short range.

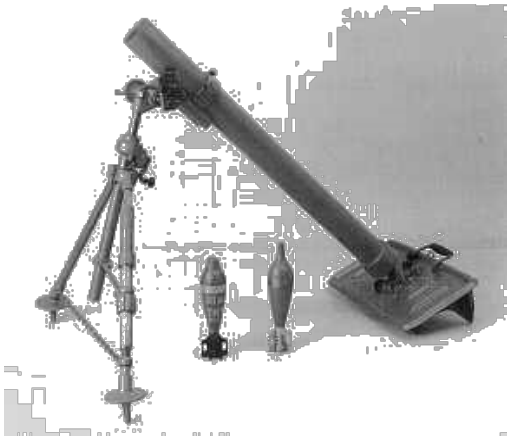
## Sub machinegun, cal. 45, M3

Distribution: Variable; intended for use by armored forces because of their short length. Unlikely to be found in a ground infantry unit.
Caliber: cal. .45 ACP (45 pistol round)
Feeding: 30 round detachable box magazine
Weight: 8.0 lbs. empty (M3A1 7.65 lbs.)
Length: 29.8 in.with stock extended
Range: 75 yds (effective)
Action: Blowback
Rate of fire: 350-450 rpm (cyclic)
Cooling: Air
Use: Introduced to supplement or replace the heavier and more expensive M1, and designed for use in close in support against enemy AT infantry teams. Issued to tank crews because a longer weapon is difficult to shift and store inside a turret or hull.

## Mortar, 60mm M2


Distribution: Three per rifle company.
Size: 60mm bore diameter
Feeding: Muzzle drop
Weight: 42.0 lbs. assembled
Length: 28.6 in.with baseplate
Range: 1000 yds (effective)
Rate of fire: 18 rpm normal; 30-35 rpm max
Sight: M4 collimator
Round: M49A2 HE; M302 WP; M83 illuminating

## Mortar, 81mm, M1



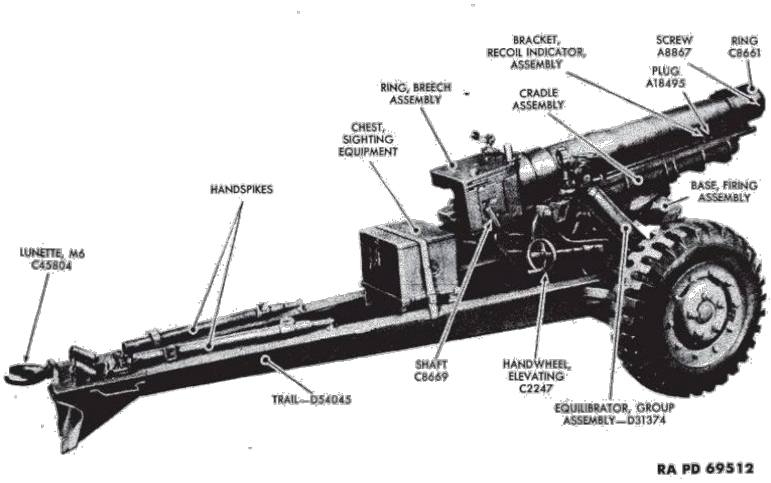
Distribution: Six per infantry battalion in heavy weapons company
Size: 81mm bore diameter
Feeding: Muzzle drop
Weight: 135 lbs. (barrel 47, bipod 42, base plate 46)
Length: 46 in.

Range: 4,400 yds
Rate of fire: 18 rpm normal; 30-35 rpm max
Sight: M4 collimator
Rounds: HE, smoke, illum.

## Launcher, antitank, 2.36 inch, M1A1 (Bazooka)

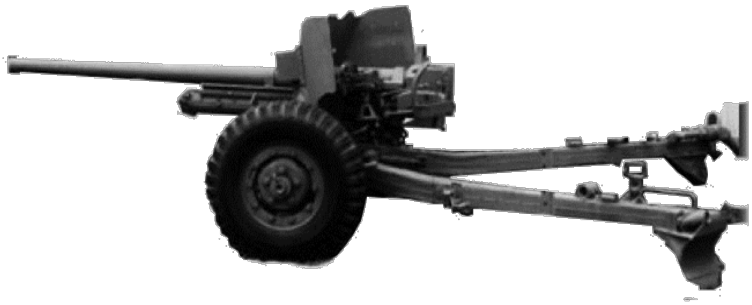
Distribution: Wide distribution.
Size: 60mm (2.36”) tube diameter
Weight: 15.0 lbs,
Length: 50 in.
Range: 150 yds. (effective); 400 yds. (max)
Rounds: M6A1 HEAT (shaped charge); training

## Howitzer, 105mm, M3




Distribution: 6 per Cannon Company of infantry regiment
Size: 60mm (2.36”) tube diameter
Weight: 2,495 lbs.
Length: 155 in.
Range: 8,300 yds. (HE) max; effective 7,500 depending on round
Rate of fire: 2 rpm sustained, 4 rpm burst
Ammunition: HE M1 shell; HEAT* M67; smoke M60 (WP)
*High explosive antitank (shaped charge)

## 57mm Gun M1, Antitank



Distribution: AT Company of 9 guns per regiment
Size: 57mm cal. 2.24 in)
Weight: 2,520 lbs.
Length: 2.82m in.
Range: 5,000 yds, yds.
Rate of fire: 2 rpm sustained, 4 rpm burst
Use: The 57mm AT gun replaced the pre-war 37mm, which was useless against anything more challenging than a light armored vehicle. The 57 could not penetrate German armor from the front, and was gradually being replaced by a 90mm version.

# Section H

# Organization of the Infantry (General)


# ORGANIZATION OF THE INFANTRY

## *Basic Formations: Regiment, Battalion, Company*

Purpose: To interpret the actions of the 29th Infantry Division in WW2, living historians must acquire an understanding of how the infantry was organized. This is a complicated subject at first, but after some study it will begin to make sense. Using this study supplement along with postings in the research section of the 29thdivision.com site will give you a clear idea of the way infantry was structured, along with some insights into tactics, equipment, and other useful knowledge.

Scope: This guide focuses on the standard infantry division and its subordinate elements, with emphasis on the regiment and below, as well as how it fits into the higher scheme. We will be concerned here with the standard infantry regiment base -- there were three other categories of infantry – the airborne (parachute), glider infantry, and armored infantry. You can find out about them on your own – for purposes of the 29th impression, we will deal entirely with the standard infantry organization.

General: The United States Army in WW2 was technically an infantry army – at least on paper. There were ten armored divisions (and two cavalry divisions, which were actually infantry), but the backbone of the combat force fielded in both theaters was heavy infantry.

I specify “on paper” because the infantry division as specified was a lean machine designed to be reinforced from an almost endless supply of separate battalions and groups of other arms. An infantry division on campaign would have tank, tank destroyer, antiaircraft artillery, and other formations attached. The regiments were usually Regimental Combat Teams (RCT) – a basic infantry regiment with a lot of extra firepower mixed in, usually for long periods of campaigning. In addition, the ground transportation assets deployed to the ETO were so large that most of the time the infantry divisions were really motorized infantry, and made their longer marches and strategic movements by truck.

In addition, it is well to remember that all US soldiers other than official noncombatants were trained to fight as infantry. This included, by the way, the artillery and engineers, who found themselves doing an infantry job more than once.

The infantry division: Commanded by a Major General, an infantry division was basically three infantry regiments plus a division headquarters and division support troops, called the “division base.” This is a standard structure for all combat formations larger than a platoon, pretty much world wide: a core command/control and support plus three maneuver elements.

The division of three regiments replaced the WW1 “square” division of four regiments, so organized to allow two regiments to man trenches while two were in reserve, the regiments rotating; in the attack, two regiments went over the top and advanced until exhausted, whereupon the other two regiments would pass through and continue the attack. This was based on the static trench warfare of 1914-18.

WW2 was seen as a war of movement, and the Army shifted to a triangular structure – the “two up and one back” plan worked better when an army was on the move, allowing maximum maneuver force forward with a reserve to exploit success and secure against surprises.

The 29th, as we know, had three regiments long associated: the 115th and 175th of the Maryland National Guard and the 116th of Virginia; upon conversion to triangular structure, the 176th having been detached.

The attached organizational chart shows the subordinate elements of the 29th as of late 1943. By TO&E (Table of Organization and Equipment – the official authorized structure), about half the manpower of the division was in the infantry regiments; the rest supported them.

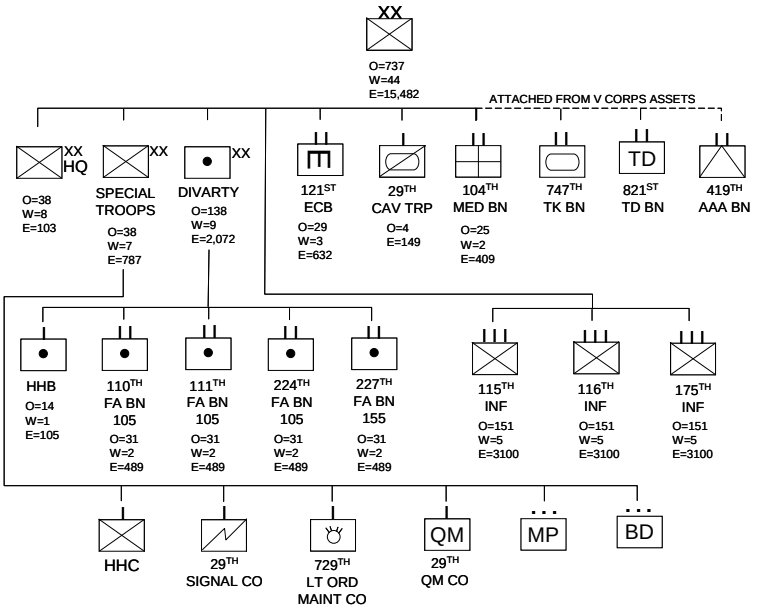
A key part of the organization was the Division Artillery. This comprised four battalions, three of 105mm and one of 155mm. The 105's were usually employed in what is called "direct support" (DS) – that is, each usually but not always supporting a regiment – while the 155's fired in "general support" (GS) of the division, a capability made possible because of their longer range. I say "usually" because the division commander could choose to mass his artillery at the critical point in the battlefield rather than diluting its power over the whole front. This is why the DS battalions weren't just attached to the regiments. (The regiments were well supplied anyway with their own 105mm assets, as we'll see shortly.)

Other critical elements in the "division base" included an Engineer Combat Battalion (in our case, the 121st), an armored cavalry troop ("troop" is cavalry-speak for "company") for reconnaissance and security armed mostly with M8 armored cars, and a medical battalion. The cavalry tended to work directly for the division commander as his eyes and ears.[1]

The rest of the special units were grouped under "Division Special Troops." These included a Headquarters and Headquarters Company Division Special Troops; a signal company; an ordnance (maintenance of weapons and vehicles plus ammunition supply) company, quartermaster company, MP platoon and, of course, the Division Band (which was chopped to the Medical Battalion in combat to act as stretcher bearers). The special troops had in common the comforting fact that they operated "in the rear with the gear."

It was a complicated organization, but there was no fat – anywhere. In most cases, the division would be reinforced with troops belonging to the Corps (which controlled 2-5 divisions). The 29th generally had a tank battalion, a tank destroyer (TD) battalion, and a "Triple-A" antiaircraft artillery battalion which was really "dual purpose" – the Luftwaffe was scarce in the skies, but the AAA guys could tear up dirt if they had to.

[1] Since the 1950's, the cavalry troop has been expanded to a cavalry squadron (battalion strength).




**The regiment** is commanded by a colonel. Like the division, the regiment had three maneuver units (battalions). Until the late 1950's, regiments stayed together, and were organized as a headquarters element and 12 companies (indicated by letters A through K – there was no J company, a holdover from the days when documents were handwritten and the common cursive uppercase "I" and "J" were too easily confused). The 1st battalion was companies A, B, and C (rifle) plus D (heavy weapons), the second E, F, G, and H, etc.

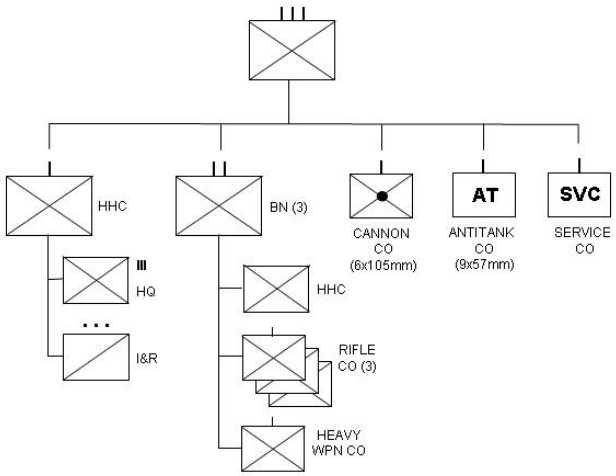
The regimental base included a Headquarters and Headquarters Company, mostly the staff and administrative support plus the infantry division's cavalry troop. There was an antitank company of nine towed 57mm guns (of limited use against German tanks but good enough for lighter armored vehicles) and "cannon company."

Cannon Company was a strange idea not seen before or since: in essence an artillery battery armed with six short-tube 105mm howitzers and manned by infantry soldiers. It was a special kind of organic artillery under the direct and permanent control of the regimental commander. ("Organic" means it belongs in the organization under TO&E – not attached.) That's a lot of pocket firepower. The Germans had a heavy advantage in machineguns at company level; the US Army was comparably rich in artillery tubes bringing steel on target. Consider that it was not uncommon to have a DS battalion of 18 105mm howitzers in support, plus 155 from divarty (division artillery) at needs, plus another six tubes from Cannon Company, all providing indirect (high-angle) fire. For direct fire it was usual for the regiments to have a company of tanks or TDs or both, plus some quad fifties from the AAA battalion attached to division, before a single rifle or light machinegun or mortar joins the argument. That's a lot of death and destruction.

The regiment also had a Service Company, which mostly provided Quartermaster and Ordnance support.

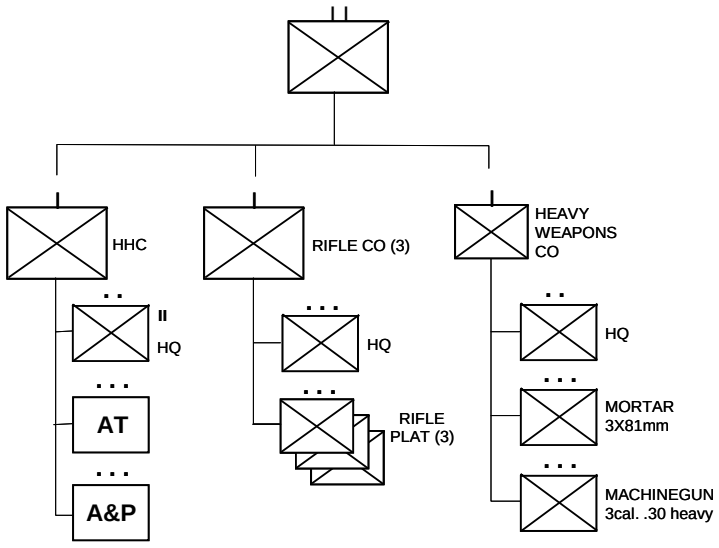
When the oft-cited attachments of armor, AAA, and such were attached to the regiment, it was magically recast as the deadly RCT, or Regimental Combat Team, configured for more or less independent action. Most regiments on line acted as RCT's in any case.

**INFANTRY REGIMENT**




**The battalion**, commanded by a lieutenant colonel, was in a sense a miniature copy of the regiment, but it had less service support. There was the HHC, which had something called an A&P (Ammunition and Pioneer) Platoon. The A&P humped ammo and did basic combat engineering and demolition work. I suspect (from bitter experience) that various rejects ended up in the A&P, but that's just a guess. There was also an AT company of 9 towed 57mm's. There were the three rifle companies, which we will examine shortly, plus a weapons company that controlled an 81mm mortar platoon and a heavy machinegun platoon. The "heavy machine guns" (M1917) were cal. 30 weapons like the "light" machineguns at company level but modified with a water jacket around the barrel that allowed a higher sustained rate of fire at the cost of considerable weight and a need for water (you didn't want to hump the thing with the barrel jacket full of water).

**INFANTRY BATTALION**



The **rifle company** will now seem familiar: commanded by a captain, it has three maneuver platoons and a company base of command/control and fire support.

The company base has a small command element – CO, executive officer (usually a 1st lieutenant), first sergeant, company clerk, supply clerk, and a couple of runners. Heavy weapons were not then organized into a separate platoon, but were held with the company headquarters: a machine gun section (light) of two squads and a mortar section of three squads. The machine guns were cal. 30, air cooled (unlike the "heavy" weapons at battalion that were water cooled). The mortars were 60mm M2. In general, the machine guns were controlled directly by the CO, so important were they in both attack and defense. The mortars could be fired in battery, but were commonly distributed one per rifle platoon. The rifle company was also supplied with two trucks, ¼ ton 4x4 –jeeps – with ¼ ton trailers.

The rifle platoons were commanded by lieutenants,[2] and were organized very simply. There was the platoon leader, the platoon sergeant (by TO&E a T/Sgt[3]), a platoon guide (Staff Sergeant) who was vital for parades and drill and served as a sort of assistant platoon sergeant, and maybe a runner for those unhappy moments when radios and field phones failed, which pretty much means "half the time." There were three rifle squads, each with a Staff Sergeant squad leader and a Sergeant assistant squad leader. The squad was built around the BAR team (a gunner and an assistant gunner); the rest of the soldiers were riflemen. One was designated grenadier, and had a grenade launcher mount for his M1. Prewar, two riflemen were designated scouts; this lapsed because scouts were at such risk that it was more equitable, death-wise, to have every rifleman trained as a scout and to rotate the job. In those days there was no weapons squad (as now).

This organization seems light compared to the machinegun-rich German platoon and company. But we should remember that Germany and the United States drew very different lessons from the First World War. Defense was paramount from 1914-1917, and the Germans took that fact to heart. The US entered the war as a combat force fairly late in 1917, and soon after the allies went on the offensive; the Yanks did not have the lessons of four years of static trench warfare. In any case, the preferred US strategy has always been offensive – in essence, spin up industry and stamp out a tank every ten seconds until the earth's crust groans. When confronted with a problem, we simply overwhelm it, leaving a large smoking hole. That's the plan, anyway. How it actually went down we'll see later.

In effect, the rifle units were light and mobile, but had huge resources to deal with the firepower-heavy German enemy. When confronted with a hedgerow bristling with MG-42's, the infantry would simply call in artillery from everywhere – very efficient artillery with sound radio communications that made the Germans' lives a hell on earth, and if anybody was still squeezing a trigger, call in the tanks. It was still tough, and the Germans were by and large trained and determined to fight outgunned and outnumbered (particularly those pulled in from the Eastern Front, compared to which the Norman bocage was R&R).

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[2] First and second lieutenants did/do not really have separate duties; you just got promoted to first if you lived long enough (a problem in WW2, when records – or so S. L. A. Marshall and HumRRO tell us – indicate the life of a platoon leader in combat was about fifteen minutes). The senior lieutenant in the company was executive officer. It is said that "rank among lieutenants is like virtue among whores."

[3] The Technical Sergeant is an odd title for a vital NCO grade. Prewar, the T/Sgt was a sort of utility senior NCO; with the overall bump in pay grades for each slot at the beginning of the war, platoon sergeants were raised from staff sergeant grade to T/Sgt. After the war, the rank was retitled "Sergeant First Class" (SFC); if the NCO in question was a platoon sergeant in a combat unit, the title was "platoon sergeant" (PSG).

## *Order of Battle*

A rifle company in the 29th is part of a chain that stretches back through various layers of command to the War Department and thence to the White House.

The 29th Division was assigned to V Corps. In the US Army, a Corps designation is always rendered as a Roman numeral. At Normandy, the spearhead of the V Corps (elements of 1st and 29th Infantry Divisions) landed at Omaha Beach, while the VII Corps appeared at Utah in the form of the 4th Infantry Division. As other divisions landed they were assigned to V and VII Corps respectively.

V Corps – commanded by Major General Leonard T. Gerow (formerly of the 29th) was part of the First US Army, nominally commanded by Lieutenant General Courtney Hodges. An army comprises two or more corps. Ultimately all US ground forces coming through Normandy would be part of 12th Army Group, while troops coming from the south of France would comprise 6th Army Group, while the British/Canadian formations would form 21st Army Group.

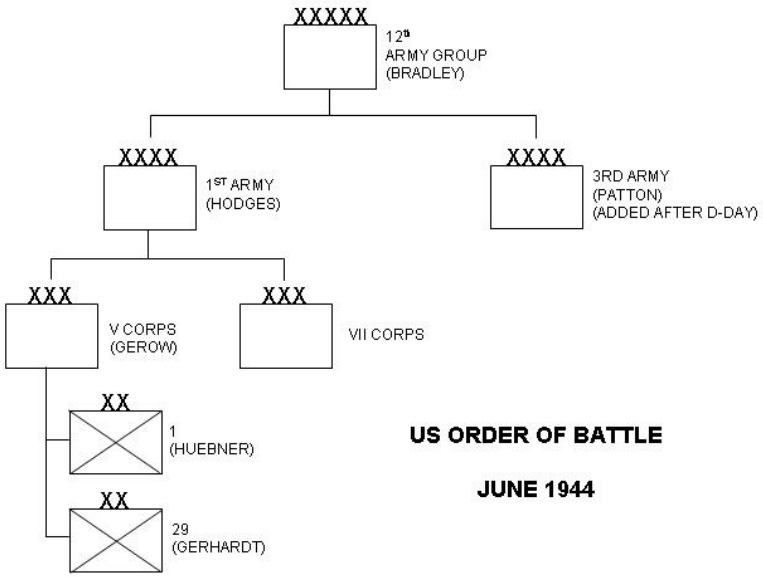
There was a quirk at the time of the landings. For tactical simplicity, 12th Army Group had a staff, but had not yet been designated because only a few divisions from First Army would be involved. For this reason, Bradley was acting Commanding General of First Army, and would move up to Army Group only when Third Army formed some weeks after D-Day; at that point, Hodges assumed command of First Army and Bradley went home to 12th Army Group.

All Army Groups (Bradley's 12th, Montgomery's 21st, and Devers's 6th) answered directly to the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (Eisenhower). Technically, the command ran from Eisenhower to the principal chiefs of government (Roosevelt, through Chief of Staff Marshal and Churchill, through his Chief of Staff Alan Brooke); in fact there was quite a lot of backchannel chatter that drove Eisenhower nuts.

The organizational diagram is very simplified and reflects how things were allocated at the time of the landings; 2nd and 90th Infantry Divisions landed soon after the first objectives were secured, for example, and joined their corps as soon as possible. Headquarters Third US Army was activated and soon its corps began to marshal and move into action in the breakout and exploitation.

Each corps had assigned, in addition to its divisions, huge corps assets of GS artillery, AAA, transportation, and other assets; in addition a corps was authorized a cavalry group as its reconnaissance element. Corps would generally parcel out the maneuver units (tank, TD, AAA, etc.) to its divisions, which would further divide them among the regiments as we have seen, creating strong RCT's. Of course, division could redistribute these assets to fit the tactical situation (why leave a tank battalion with an RCT in reserve?), as could corps; but it was general practice to leave the RCT's configured long term. This was a help because the regimental commander got to know and trust the attached[4] units.

[4] Units fit within their higher organizations in three ways. "Organic" units are there by virtue of formal TO&E. "Attached" units are added on, and in the process get their supplies through the higher unit to which they are attached. Units under "operational control" (these days called "OPCON") are temporarily attached, but for convenience continue to receive administrative and logistical support from their own




NOTE: The 29th eventually joined Ninth Army.

We should keep some little-understood things in mind:

1. While there is a prescribed TO&E strength, units always run short. On D-Day everybody was full strength or over strength; very soon rifle platoons were operating with staff sergeants as platoon leaders and five-man squads. That's how war is. In the infantry, rank means a short life; in the armor, casualties tended to come in groups of four or five.

2. Both sides tended to stress training that qualified each soldier to do the next higher job if – or, more accurately, when – that position opened up. US personnel policies centered on the individual replacement system[5] made this difficult.

3. Lieutenants were expendable. They usually didn't last long (even in Viet Nam the first platoon of my tank company turned over PL five times). They were usually OCS graduates, and the replacements arriving after D-Day were inexperienced. Being a platoon leader requires a lot of leading from the front and exposure to fire.

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higher headquarters.

[5] In which soldiers arriving in theater are shuffled into replacement depots like cattle preparing for slaughter, then shuffled off to needy units with inadequate training. We still do this because it suits the witless weenies of personnel and makes their job a little easier, despite decades of evidence that it is a bad idea.

The main reason it didn't work in WW2 was that – believe it or not – we fought the war on the cheap. The peacetime plan for mobilization and beating all the evil nations, called Victory Plan, envisioned an armor-heavy ground force of 230 divisions. Early on, this was scrapped. We invaded Europe with what planners figured was the "right size" force, the minimum necessary to do the job. This required most divisions to remain on the he line throughout the campaign, months on end, with a stream of individual replacements arriving with plenty of vitamins but little experience and no time to train properly at unit level. This lengthened the war and produced higher casualties than necessary.

Without belaboring more recent events, it is fair to say we never discard an idea once it is proven to be stupid and counterproductive.

4. Survival in the infantry (in particular) depends on training, experience, and physical fitness. Soldiers are overtrained – an expression that means they are trained to the point they do not have to think about routine actions under fire. The first time a small unit comes under fire, the tendency is to go to ground and freeze. This is a deadly sin. The airborne and first-wave infantry and supporters were overtrained, and it was this and not the detailed, ingenious, and in the event useless plans that yielded victory.

5. Unit cohesiveness saves lives and contributes generously to victory. This was the point of Band of Brothers. It worked in the 29th, too, until casualties were too high and the individual replacement system filled the squads with scared strangers regarded by veterans as fresh meat. Soldiers will ignore strangers, but will not let comrades down.

**More about the Infantry:** The infantry has been around ever since the first hairy Australopithecine celebrated upright posture by clobbering another guy with a rock. The Infantry has a stubborn pride that is part of being a member of the combat arm that always gets the shaft and does the heavy lifting.

The downscale élite of infantry is the regular heavy infantry soldier, called in those days a dog soldier or dogface. This term is of some antiquity and somehow vaguely related to the Dog Soldiers of the Northern Cheyenne (who were the tribal police, not elite scalp hunters), but it caught on. The official 3rd Infantry Division march celebrates the nickname:

*I'm just a dogface soldier*
*With a rifle on my shoulder*
*And I eat raw meat for breakfast ever day.*
*So feed me ammunition,*
*Keep me in an infantry division,*
*And your dogface soldier boy will be okay!*

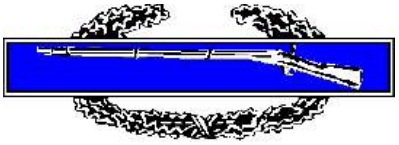
## *Branch Colors, Insignia & Awards*

The **branch color** is "robin's egg blue." Innumerable large boulders were placed over the years before orderly rooms and painted light blue, decorated with the regimental crest.

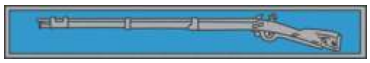
Infantry is called "Queen of Battle." The **branch insignia** is crossed Kentucky rifles:

Other branches consider the Infantry lowest of the low; the Infantry refuses to consider any but the armor and the artillery soldiers at all.

An infantryman under hostile fire for thirty days receives the coveted **Combat Infantryman Badge** – the sacred CIB.



CIB



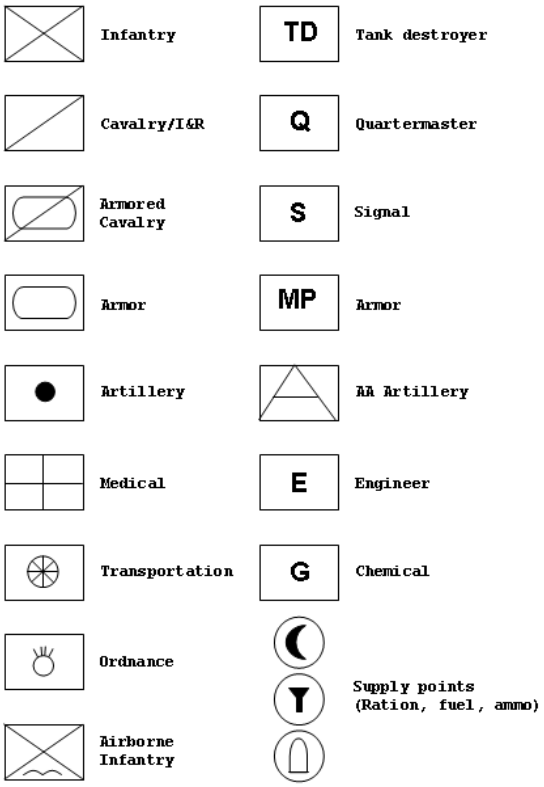
EIB

The **Expert Infantryman Badge**, authorized in October 1943, is won by a rigorous qualification program, generally established at regimental level based on War Department and Infantry School criteria and standards. Technically the EIB is harder to earn than the CIB; however, it is not generally awarded posthumously.

On the whole, however, the most common and most respected Infantry insignia is shown below:

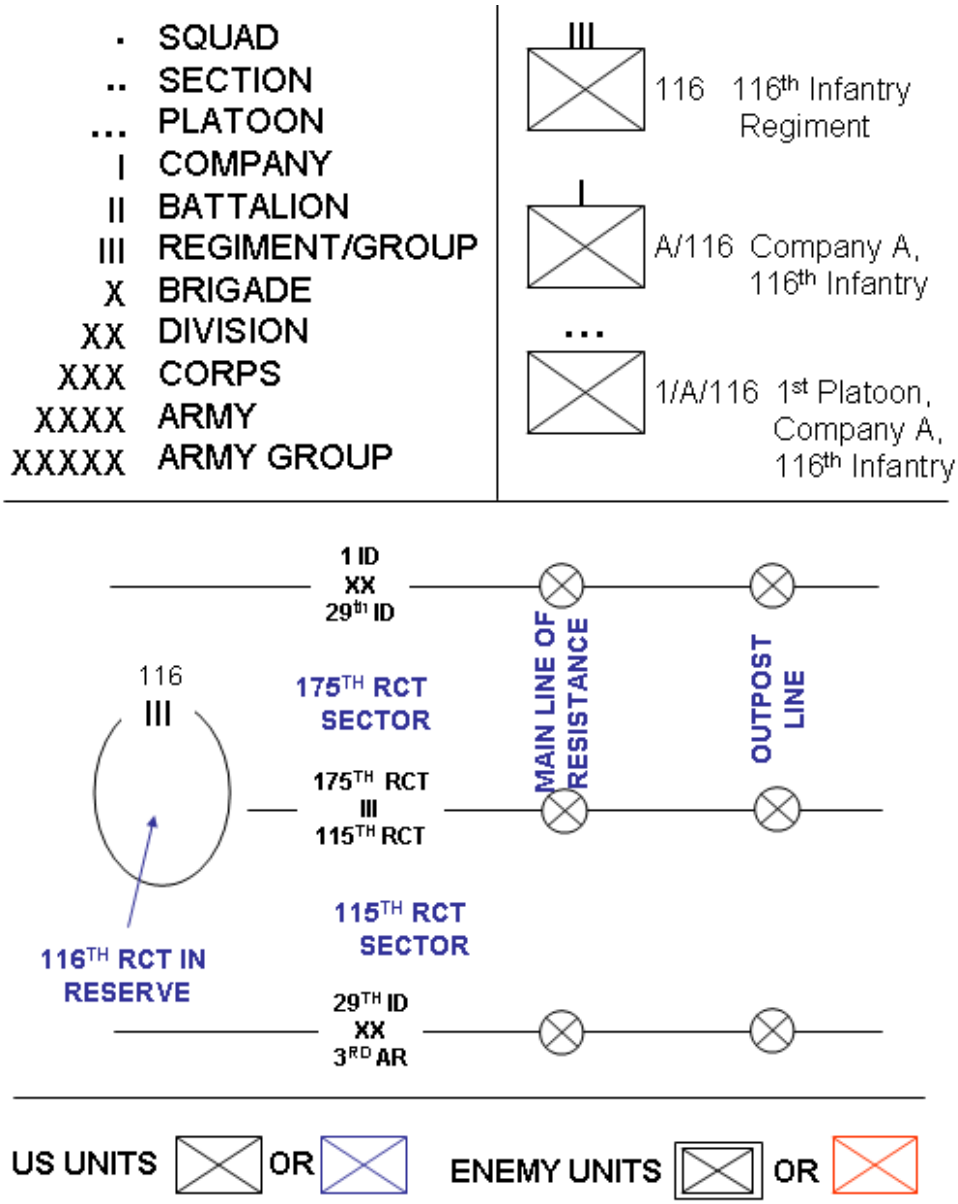
## Military Symbols

### MILITARY MAP SYMBOLS




NOTE: The level of "Brigade" is confusing. Through WWI, a brigade was a grouping of regiments (two brigades of two regiments each in the pre-1941 "square" division. With the reorganization under triangular structure, the brigade headquarters disappeared.

A modern brigade combat team (BCT) is closer in size and mission to the old RCT. The only regiments as such remaining are the Armored Cavalry Regiments, the Ranger Regiment (75th Infantry Regiment (RGR)) and the 160th Special Operations Air Regiment.




NOTE: In the late 50's, the terms "Main Line of Resistance" (MLR) and "Outpost Line" (OPL) were changed for no cogent reason to "Forward Edge of the Battle Area" (FEBA) and "Combat Outpost Line" (COPL).

## Rank and Command

The following authorized ranks are prescribed for each level of command. Leaders in these positions might not hold the maximum authorized grade at a given moment, but the represents the intended distribution.

| | |
|---|---|
| Rifle squad: | Staff Sergeant |
| Platoon guide: | Staff Sergeant |
| Platoon sergeant: | Technical Sergeant |
| Platoon leader: | Lieutenant |
| Company commander: | Captain |
| Battalion Commander: | Lieutenant Colonel |
| Regimental commander: | Colonel |
| Division: | Major General |
| Corps: | Lieutenant General |
| Army: | General |
| Army Group: | General[6] |

[6] The rank of General of the Army was authorized by Congress in war time only, and very few – generally theater commanders and the special case of the Army Air Force – are ever named. This rank corresponds to the European title of Field Marshal. The United States has no differentiation between Army and Army Group commanders (both are generals); the German Army had a rank called Colonel General (*Generaloberst*) between general and field marshal.

Eisenhower held the position of Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force, commanding forces of various nationalities plus selected air and naval organizations. MacArthur in the Southern Pacific (as well as Nimitz as CINCPAC) held five star rank and commanded allied and air/land/naval forces in theater – what we would now call a Joint or Unified Command.

# Section I

# Organization of the Infantry (Platoon)


# ORGANIZATION OF THE INFANTRY -- THE PLATOON

Since few living history units have the numbers to form regularly as more than a squad, it's hard to master the school of the platoon. For details, serious readers should consult FM 22-5 Infantry Drill Regulations (now Drill and Ceremonies), edition of 1941 and changes 1-3. For the moment, here is a quick introduction.

**What is a platoon?**

The platoon is a unit of small size, between a company and a squad or section, and in the combat arms is the smallest unit commanded *by an officer*. *In a rifle company, there are three platoons, each led by a lieutenant. During WWII, a rifle platoon comprised the following:*

A command section, including the platoon leader (LT), a platoon sergeant (T/Sgt – now a SFC or PSG, grade E-7), and a platoon guide (S/Sgt).

Three rifle squads, nominally of 12 men, including:
A squad leader (as of 1942 a S/SgT), an assistant squad leader (Sgt), AR gunner, AR assistant gunner, and eight riflemen (one of whom was equipped with a rifle grenade launcher and designated grenadier).

Aside from a bump in NCO grade in the table of organization and equipment, the changes that occurred in 1941 included the disappearance of the automatic rifle squad (a fourth squad); the AR teams were simply attached to the three rifle squads. In addition, the designated scouts disappeared; from 1942 on, every rifleman was expected to perform as a scout when necessary. Reason: Scouts tend to be more exposed to enemy observation and fire, and get used up. The change spread the fun a bit.

Why three rifle squads? A look at the organization of combat units shows that it is common to have three maneuver units (in a company, three rifle platoons; in a battalion, three rifle companies, etc.) This supported the shift from trench warfare doctrine that emerged in WWI as armies started looking at a more mobile, flexible doctrine. The change reflects the basic principle of "two up, one back" (that is, two combat elements forward with a reserve right behind to exploit success or as a hedge against the unexpected).

A platoon is a tactical unit only – that is, administration, supply, and other overhead functions are carried by the company.

# DUTIES

## The platoon leader

The military historian S. L. A. Marshall informs us (based on a monumental and depressing study by the Human Resources Research Office (HumRRO)) that the life expectancy of a platoon leader under fire in WWII was about fifteen minutes. A platoon leader leads from the front, and the enemy can usually spot a leader by his actions and finds it hard to resist the temptation to pop him before he does much damage.

The natural result of this gloomy situation was that there was a high turnover in junior officers in the infantry. (This was less so in the tank branch, since a tank is a tank and casualties tend to come in groups of 4-5)). The Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, Pearl of the Chattahoochie, was doing a land office business turning out infantry second lieutenants. (I was a Tac Officer at the Armor and Ordnance OCS brigades during Viet Nam – at the speed candidates go by, you had a hard time remembering names and faces).

Therefore, the dogfaces in the platoon usually didn't bother to inquire much about their lieutenant until he had been around for long enough to demonstrate high skill and good luck. But the sad fact is, most PL's didn't have enough luck to find time to develop skills. They arrived green as grass and were too often just as green when they were carried off to the field hospital or feet first to graves registration.

## The platoon sergeant

The fallback was the platoon sergeant, a nominally senior NCO. In movies, he is often a grizzled, experienced, salt-of-the-earth character formed in the Regular Army. In practice, PSG's tended to be young in WWII because the competent pre-war regulars and experienced National Guard NCOs tended to be promoted quickly during mobilization to cadre forming divisions – unless they were over a minimum age as of Pearl Harbor and got discharged.

The platoon sergeants that fielded to ETO and the Pacific tended to be younger than tradition has it, and less experienced than war movies suggest. What they were was good. A PSG was generally promoted to that position because he performed well. Because of somewhat longer experience, he was usually a few steps ahead of the PL, and he knew the men in the platoon a lot better because he had been with them, often from training.

My first platoon sergeant was Joe Gustin, who had been a private at the very end of WWII; by 1967 he was on the edge of retirement. He knew what he was doing; it took me a long time to get up to speed as a lieutenant. This is how the system is supposed to work. But by the later Sixties, old NCOs were getting out because of age or frustration; platoon sergeants by 1970 (my last combat tour in Viet Nam), PSG's tended to be younger S/Sgt's, often "shake and bake" NCO's who were promoted out of

training for being smart and steady. The result was that the PL had more work to do, and required a steeper learning curve. It showed. In eight months in 1970 I lost four platoon leaders – two to wounds, one I relieved for an ethical lapse (lied about the position of his patrol) and one because he was simply too scared to function under fire.

**The platoon guide**

Most reenactors have never heard of the platoon guide, but they were critical players in the rifle platoon. They are descended from the general guides of rifle battalions in the Civil War, when their job was to be the point of reference for direction of march. By WWII the guide still performed that function in close order drill (more about that later), but he also functioned as an assistant platoon sergeant (he was a S/Sgt), and he had specific tasks in combat (for example, when the platoon occupies a hasty defensive position the guide places the squads in their correct sectors while the PSG places the automatic weapons and generally kicks ass and the PL coordinates with the company).

Note that parades and formations as described in FM 22-5 require guides. (See Chapter 4, Section II; Chapter 8, Section II)

**The squad leader**

Squad leaders are nominally S/Sgts. They are responsible for the proficiency and performance of the soldiers in their squads, and they are expected to maneuver their squads independently in battle drill. A squad leader is expected to know the condition of every man – blisters, pay status, marksmanship proficiency, how long since the last letter from his worthless girl friend. He also knows where every man in his squad is – present, AWOL, on detail, on sick call – at all times. At every platoon or company formation he formally reports the status of his squad.

**The assistant squad leader**

It's easy to say "the assistant squad leader assists the squad leader." However, it's more complicated than that.

First, standard battle drill for the squad calls for using two teams in the attack – a base of fire (with the BAR) and a maneuver team. One is led by the SL, the other by the ASL. So two good NCO's are needed.

The other reason for the second Sgt in the rifle squad is that a squad without a qualified, trusted NCO in charge is basically a school of stunned mullets. The ASL is a squad leader in the making, and he should be able to take the squad leader's job when necessary (which, combat being what it is, comes sooner and oftener than we would prefer).

**Other platoon points**

There is a thing called a section which is between squad and platoon. This doesn't figure in the rifle platoon, but it does figure in the weapons platoon that supports the rifle platoons by fire. The weapons platoon has a machine gun section (of two squads, each with one MG) and a mortar section of three mortar squads (one 60mm tube each).

# SCHOOL OF THE PLATOON (CLOSE ORDER DRILL)

There are standard procedures we always use to form and march the platoon. Usually the platoon forms as part of its company (this will be covered in another info paper), but a platoon can do things on its own. Doing it right matters.

## Forming the platoon

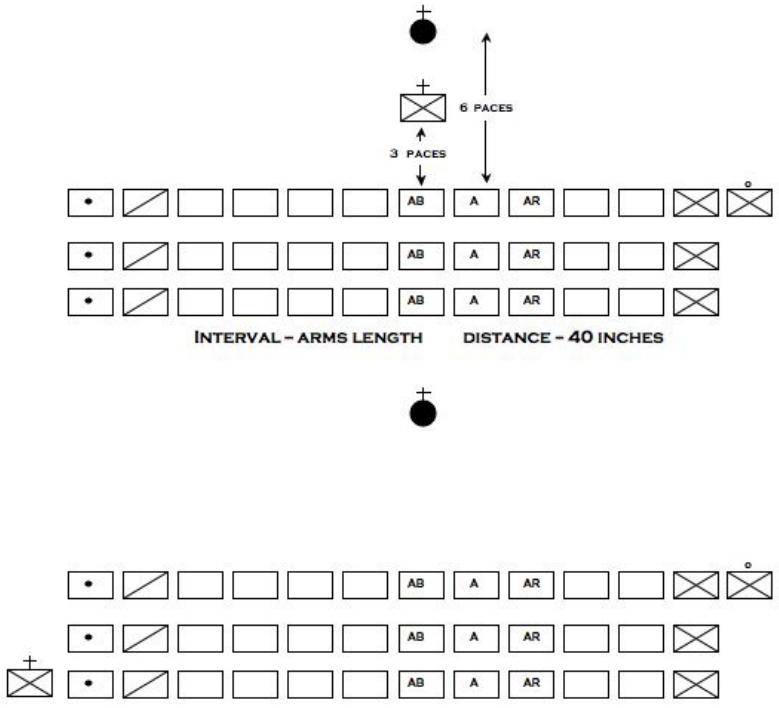
[See FM 22-5, C3, para. 134] Remember: the platoon leader is the owner, the platoon sergeant is the foreman (actually runs the platoon). Never micromanage your platoon sergeant. He will not be impressed, and some will simply let you screw up on your own and pick up the pieces later (though not in combat) as an object lesson.

So the PSG forms the platoon as a time and place designated by the PL (the platoon is generally formed and dismissed by the PSG [FM 22-5 Para 134c]. He does this by saying "__ platoon, FALL IN!" A blast of the M1A1E2 whistle, brass, Thunderer, may be used for emphasis. The platoon guide positions himself first, and everybody else forms on him. The three squad leaders take their positions, and the squad members fall on them, quickly checking dress and cover.

The PSG then commands "dress right, DRESS"; the soldiers shift as needed to align properly, followed by "ready, FRONT."

The PSG then takes reports: Orders "re-PORTS"; each squad leader in turn states the personnel status of his squad ("Private Slipschitz on detail"; Private Schmuckatello absent"; "all present"; NOTE: "All present and accounted for is not correct – if a soldier is present, he is by definition accounted for).

If the platoon is under arms (that is, carrying their weapons), the PSG then gives "inspection, ARMS" and listens for the distinct clink of a round ejected from the rifle of an unlucky soldier. (Those carrying other weapons – carbine, BAR, pistol) execute inspection arms as prescribed elsewhere.) The PSG then brings the platoon to "order arms" and faces abut. The PL steps in front of him, returns his salute, and proceeds (he may order "post", in which case the PSG takes his position at the left end of the rear file) or whatever else the PL may decide. The platoon is now formed.

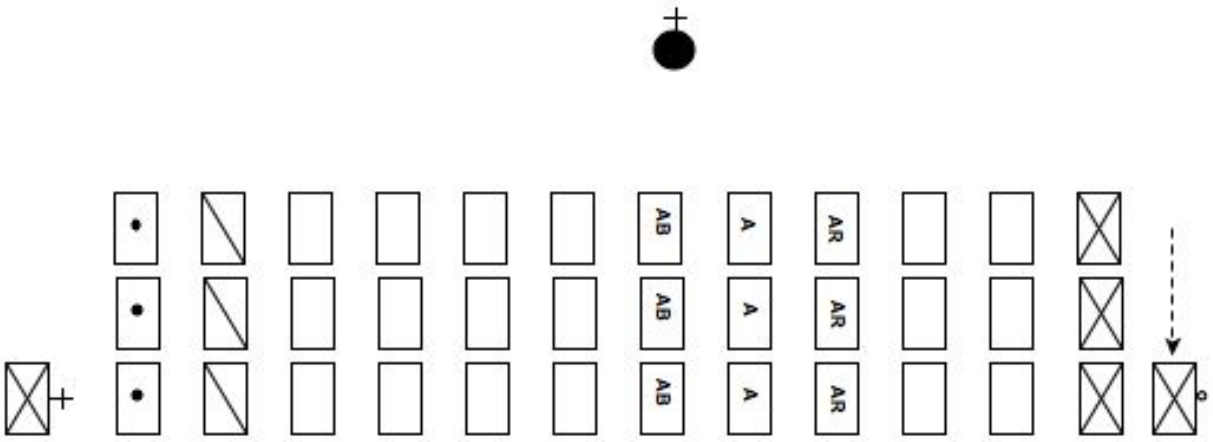



(Right above, top) Platoon sergeant has formed the platoon, turns it over to the PL. (Below) PSG in his post, far left rear.

**Marching the platoon**

To march the platoon as a separate element, we generally first change the face to march to the right (right because the platoon falls in from right to left, and a left face to march would put the guide and squad leaders at the rear of the formation).

The PL commands “right, FACE”; at this command, all members of the platoon face to the right except the guide, who faces about, steps to the front of the rightmost squad, then faces left. (The guide unless otherwise instructed is on the right, which explains this dance.) The PL faces left, facing in the same direction as the platoon.




(Above) The platoon faces right to march in column.

NOTE: There is no such command as “counter march” for close order drill in FM 22-5 (it is sometimes used to change direction in a band). To change direction front to rear while keeping the guide in front, use successive commands of “column left” or ”column right, MARCH.” The command “right (or left) turn, MARCH” is used only in company mass formation (see FM 22-5, para. 155).

NOTE: The platoon may fall in at regular interval (“FALL IN”) or close interval (“at close interval, FALL IN”). Close interval is used when space is limited. A problem with falling in at close interval is that when you face right or left, cover is reduced (ranks are compressed front to rear), which makes it difficult to march.

# Section J

# Organization of the Infantry (Company)


# ORGANIZATION OF THE INFANTRY (COMPANY)

Living history units seldom muster anything like company strength on their own, but must occasionally organize as companies at an event (like Conneaut). This presents a problem. We only do well the things we practice, and practice time at an event is usually brief.

It does matter how we perform in front of the public, however, so there has to be some convenient way to shorten the learning curve when we are together in numbers. It may be comfortable to stay in our little squads or demi-platoons when we form up at Conneaut or the Gap, little clusters of eight to ten reenactors and a guidon that usually stands in front of 150 or so – but it's wrong. If it's wrong to wear sneakers instead of service shoes or jump boots, it's just as wrong to fail at organizing correctly. Authenticity is more than clothes and gear.

So here is a quick rundown on the company that will allow us to have at least a head start – if we read it. I focus here on the rifle company, Army straightleg infantry, because that matches what most living history units represent. You should glance at the essay on the platoon (filed with this paper) as a head start.

**What is a company?**

A company is the smallest administrative unit in the Army. Anyone assigned to troops is in a company of some kind. The Chief of Staff of the Army is officially in Headquarters and Headquarters Company, United States Army at Fort Myer, Virgnia. Every name has to be carried on somebody's morning report, including those in transit or in the stockade. Anyone who isn't is unaccounted for, and this would blow the Army's anal-retentive mind.

It's also the largest unit in which the commander is expected to know every soldier by name. It is an extended family. More than at any other level, the commander is directly responsible for the performance, morale, and welfare of his troops. The size of the company is based on that requirement – how many varied people can one human being control at any time? Two millennia or more ago, the company was called an ordinis and was commanded by a Centurion. The size and general composition and place in the army has remained unchanged because it is based on unchanging human capabilities and limits.

The company is the soul of the Army.

(NOTE: In the cavalry, a company is called a "troop"; in the artillery, a "battery." Trivia: Cannon Company in a rifle regiment (See FM 7-5) is an infantry unit manning 105mm howitzers. The personnel are trained by the artillery, but they remain infantry, so they are a company.)

A rifle company (1940's) is composed of a headquarters section, three rifle platoons, and a weapons platoon. [See FM 7-10.]

The headquarters section contains those men and resources necessary for tactical command and administrative structure.

**Command group**: This consists of the company commander (Capt.), Executive Officer (second in command – Lt.), First Sergeant, Communication Sergeant, bugler, orderly and some messengers.

**Administration group**: Supply sergeant and armorer-artificer; mess sergeant, cooks, and cooks' helpers; company clerk.

**Rifle platoons**: Like the platoon, the company has three maneuver units, its platoons. The platoon structure and mission are described in the companion posting.

**Weapons platoon**: The heavy weapons of the company are concentrated in the weapons platoon, which consists of the following:

> **Command group**: A platoon leader (Lt.), platoon sergeant (T/Sgt.), transport corporal (who is in charge of loading and positioning of equipment and ammunition transported by the weapons carriers); and several privates or Pfc.'s assigned as messengers or drivers.
>
> **Light machine-gun section**: A section leader (S/Sgt.) and two squad leaders, each serving a light machine-gun, plus privates and Pfc.'s as crewmen and some messengers.
>
> **Mortar section**: A section leader (S/Sgt.), three mortar squad leaders (Sgt.) plus crews, and messengers.

## Duties

The **company commander** has absolute responsibility for his company. In war time, turnover for fools, martinets, and cowards is high (Herb Sobel was representative of a class, not *sui generis*). He has to know tactics, ordnance, administration, and training, and he has to lead by example – in the Army as well as in the hobby, the commander's most powerful weapon is force of personal example. It's hard to gain the respect and loyalty of the troops, easy to lose it.

The **executive officer** obviously assists the Old Man, but his area of responsibility is focused on making the company run – handling administration, supply, and maintenance – so the Old Man can focus on the combat mission. A good XO is always sleep-deprived.

The **first Sergeant** runs the company administration and keeps the NCO's sharp. His finger is always on the pulse of the company, and his advice to the CO is priceless unless he is a schmuck, which is unusual. Soldiers should always have an eye out for the Top. Who should not let any lapse pass without correction.

(NOTE: The CO is responsible for everything that happens in his company, but a good First Sergeant will cover the Old Man's rear by flawless administration and by shaping up weak NCOs.)

The job of the **company clerk** is to be abused and hammered, day in and day out, by the first sergeant. Sounds like a Jimmy Buffet song, but it's true.

**IMPORTANT RULES:** We talk loosely about responsibility and authority. Responsibility means you have to get it done; authority means you are provided the chops to do it.

**Rule One:** There is no responsibility without authority. If you do not have the authority to make things happen, you cannot expected to produce.

**Rule Two:** Authority can be delegated; responsibility cannot. You can give a platoon leader direct charge of an independent mission, but as CO it's your ass if he fails.

## Forming the company

If nothing else, any serious living history officer should know how to form the company correctly. It may seem gratuitous, but it's extremely important. The Army runs from formation to formation, and there is a standard way to do it. I taught our company on the right of the line last August how to make it happen, and everybody got comfortable with two run-throughs. Never forget: every action has a specific purpose.

A time for formation has been scheduled and posted on the bulletin board. Squad leaders are responsible for assuring that all their soldiers know the time and are available and in the right uniform, with the right equipment.

At formation time (or by the last note of "first call," which is the familiar tune still used at race tracks to call horses and jockeys to the starting gate), the **First Sergeant** walks out to the company street (the paved road – called the "hardball" – in front of the barracks) and takes his position where the center of the company will be, SIX paces in front of the position where the front rank will stand. He blows his whistle and commands:

"Company, FALL IN!" (If bugle calls are being used, he does this after the last note of "assembly"; the company has been forming on its own as described below.)

Platoon guides have moved to the points on which the platoons will dress and squad leaders quickly take their positions at the head of their squads, aligned on the guides.

[We are not used to having platoon guides, but they are a necessary part of drill. The guide is an NCO, a sort of assistant platoon sergeant (though in a pinch the platoon sergeant can act as guide). He

marks the base position on which the platoon will form; the guide of the first platoon is the base point on which the entire company will form, and is actually the company guide. If you come to us from the Civil War hobby, he is the "right general guide". He has very specific functions in dismounted drill, including making sure everybody is marching in a straight line, a skill that has to be learned.]

The platoon sergeants take their positions three paces in front of the centers of their platoons, facing the squad leaders.

As the squad members arrive (pouring out of the barracks), they fall in to the left of their squad leaders; squad leaders note their arrival by name and file. All soldiers fall in at order arms (if under arms) except those carrying the carbine, BAR, etc.; these fall in at sling arms.

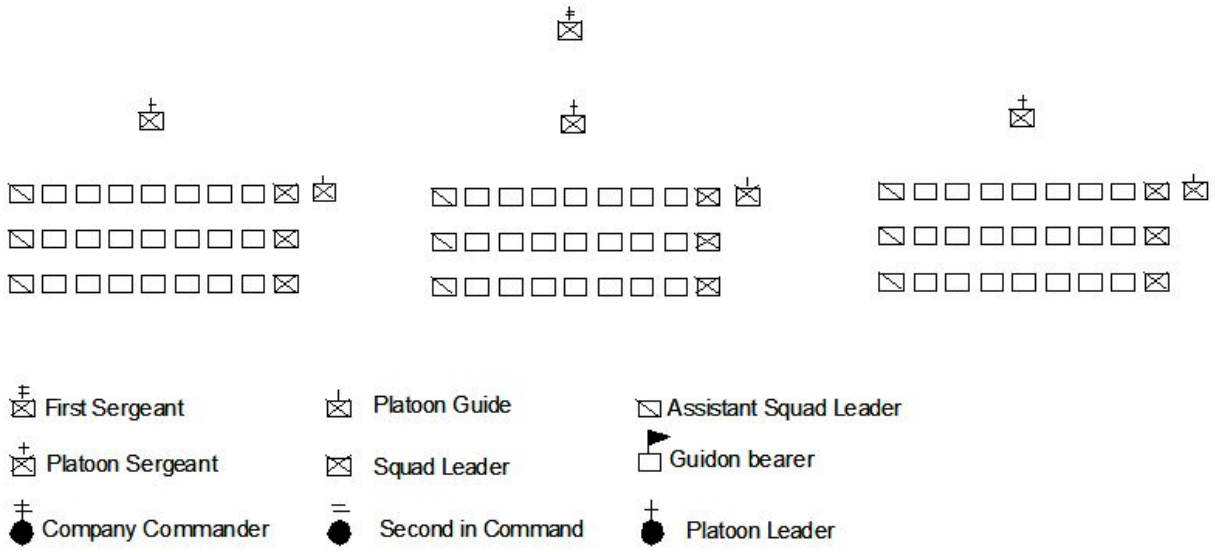



*Figure 1: NCOs and other EM fall in for head count.*

When the platoons have fallen in (they are not yet "formed"), the **platoon sergeant** commands:

"Platoon, Atten-SHUN!!" All members snap to attention. Then:

"Dress Right – DRESS!" All members raise their left arms parallel to the ground, palm down and fingers extended, and turn their heads to the right to check their alignment, EXCEPT for the leftmost member, who only looks to the right, and the Squad Leader, who raises his left arm, but looks straight ahead; the Squad Leader either pushes the man to his left farther down the line, and others move accordingly, or that man moves right to meet the Squad Leader's fingertips, and again, others move accordingly. When aligned, this position is held until the Platoon Sergeant commands:

"Ready – FRONT!" All members drop their left arms and look straight ahead. The Platoon Sergeant will say, if necessary, "Cover Down", meaning that members in the second and third ranks will "cover" on the positions of the first rank to obtain strict platoon alignment. Finally the Platoon Sergeant looks at the first squad leader and says: "REPORT."

The first squad leader salutes (yes, an NCO is saluting an NCO) and renders his report; for example: “Private Slipschitz absent.” NCOs, though they render and return the salute, do not use “sir” – this is reserved for formally addressing those “other people” who are not yet part of the formation. Then the second squad leader salutes and reports: “Private Ryan on detail.” Then the third squad leader salutes and reports: “All present.” The platoon sergeant returns each salute.

[On saluting: If the company is formed without arms (that is, no weapons), the hand salute is rendered when taking reports. If the company is under arms as for drill, the salute is given from “order arms” (see FM 22-5). If the company is falling in wearing combat gear and preparing to move to the field, soldiers fall in at “sling arms” and salutes are rendered as in FM 22-5: left hand crosses the chest and secures the sling, right hand executes the hand salute.]

When the last squad leader has reported, and if the company is under arms, the platoon sergeant orders: “Inspection – ARMS!” All soldiers then execute inspection arms as appropriate for the weapons they carry. Presuming no loose rounds or clips are ejected, the platoon sergeant then orders: “Port ARMS! Order – ARMS!” (M1 rifle carriers go to the order; others back to sling arms. NOTE: The command “lock pieces” was discarded by 1943 and replaced with “port arms” or “order arms”)

The platoon sergeant then faces about, which signals the first sergeant that the platoon is formed.

When platoons have formed, the first sergeant commands: “REPORT!” Each platoon sergeant reports in turn with a salute: “One man absent!”, etc.

The first sergeant then command “POSTS!” At this point, the platoon sergeants move at quick time and by the shortest route to their positions in the formation (to the left of the rear squads). Platoon leaders move to their positions, six paces front ad center of their platoons.

The first sergeant faces about, signaling the company is formed. At this point (or at his convenience) the company commander takes his position facing the first sergeant, who salutes and says: “Sir, one man absent.” At this time the company Guidon bearer takes his position to the left rear of the commander.

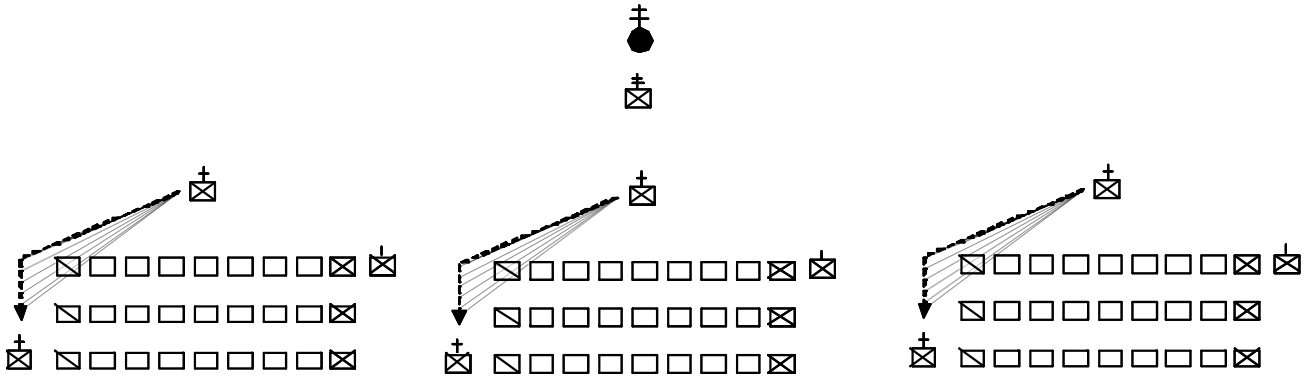


*Figure 2: Company assembled and reports taken, first sergeant sends platoon sergeants to their posts.*

The company commander returns the salute. The first sergeant faces about and moves smartly and by the shortest route to his position to the rear of the last file of the center platoon.

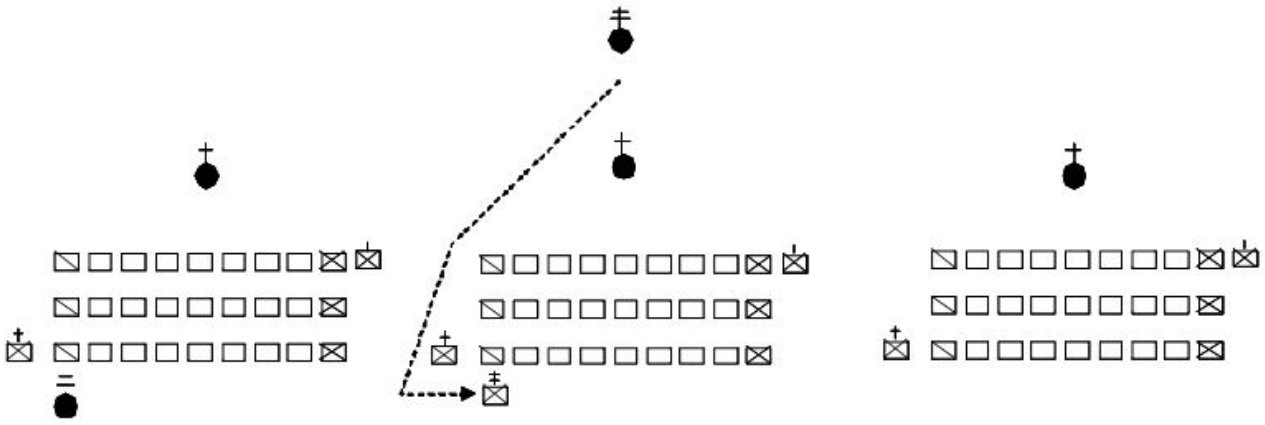


*Figure 3: First sergeant, platoon leaders, and Guidon bearer take their posts. The company is formed and turned over to the commander.*

NOTE: A rifle company would normally form as four platoons: 1st through 3rd rifle platoons, right to left, and the weapons platoon on the left. If it was a full inspection, the company's jeep and trailer would be parked centered on the rear of the weapons platoon. Supernumerary men (clerk, messengers, etc.) form at the ends of platoons as "file closers".

[NOTE: Military units form from right to left, for reasons that go back to the Roman legion and before. Because soldiers carried the shield on the left the right side was exposed, and so formations tended to drift nervously to the right in advancing on the enemy. For this reason the steadiest veteran cohort was given the right flank position in the line of battle. The motto of the U. S. 1st Infantry: "To the right of the line".]

**"Moving out"**

If the company is going somewhere in formation, the simple (and correct) way to move out is as follows:

Company commander orders "Right – FACE!"

The entire company simply executes right face **EXCEPT**:

-- **the platoon guides**, who face about and step to a position in front of the last (now right) rank of the platoon, then face left. They are now in a position to "guide right." The first man in the last file of each platoon (in a rifle platoon, this is the squad leader of the third squad) follows the guide.

[NOTE: FM 22-5 does not provide details about the guide's various dances; this information is hidden elsewhere, since it is not necessary for every soldier to know it.]

-- **the platoon leaders** move from their positions in front of the platoons to the head of the left file (the position formerly occupied by the guides).

-- **The Guidon bearer and company commander** move to the front of the column, Guidon bearer to the left rear of the company commander.

-- The **first sergeant and bugler** position themselves behind the commander and Guidon.

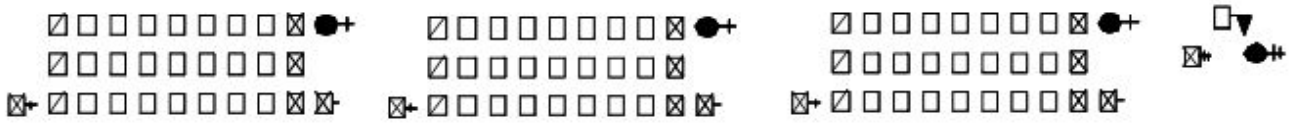


*Figure 4: Company prepared to march in column.*

**A perspective**

Close order drill changed dramatically in the latter part of the 19th century, but some things stayed the same. The main reason for the changes was technological: the infantry long arm evolved quickly after the late 1850's from a slow-fire muzzle-loading contraption that could put out 3 rounds per minute to rapid-firing repeaters. This caused a seismic shift from close-order linear combat common in the Civil War to extended-order combat, since a dispersed line of less vulnerable soldiers could now put out a good sustained rate of fire. Basically, all infantry became skirmishers.

But the basics of close order remained for administrative activities, training, and ceremony – and are still around today.

This doesn't mean there hasn't been evolution. Until the days after WWI, infantry had a marching style of some complexity called, informally, "squad drill". It got this name because squads moved simultaneously as units and as part of the whole. Oddly, this style persisted at West Point until the 1960's as a matter of tradition ("unhampered by progress"); it ended when President Kennedy insisted that all three service academies have the same size and West Point was obliged to more than double to 4400. Unfortunately, a brigade of 4400 using squad drill simply could not fit on the Plain, where parades are held; reluctantly the United States Military Academy started teaching cadets to use the drill manual they would use as officers. Old grads huffed that the "Corps has gone to hell", but they are always doing that.

Since the 1941 drill regulations, there have been only a few changes. At "dress right" all ranks started putting up their arms. "Lock pieces" simply became "port arms" or "order arms". But the basic dance, the Kabuki theater, has stayed the same, because it looks so damn good.

"Fall in!"

# Section K

# Individual Combat Techniques


# INDIVIDUAL COMBAT TECHNIQUES

## *Tactical Movement*

We use tactical movement techniques when we are moving through areas that might be observed by the enemy. The principles are fairly simple, but require considerable attention and discipline; carelessness costs lives and compromises combat operations.

At this point we have to understand two related activities: scouting and patrolling. Many of the same techniques are used, but bear in mind that scouts most often act in pairs and generally remain close to the main body to provide local reconnaissance and security. A patrol might be of squad or platoon size, and may range much farther than the scouts. However, the principles of scouting are the same as those used by individual members of a patrol. This includes methods of tactical movement, so we will begin there.

**Principles of tactical movement (from FM 21-75, para. 8, p.10):**

a. The scout moves from one covered and concealed position to another. There is no point in stopping where you can be seen. Much of the scout's attention is taken up with planning movements to begin and end under cover.

b. When halted, the scout is generally in the prone position. To observe, he lifts his head slowly from the ground, avoiding sudden or abrupt movements. The eye is not sensitive to very slow movements (which is why a cat of other predator will creep up slowly on prey), and such adjustments are hard to spot even in the center of vision. This is particularly true when the background is in motion (for example, the wind blowing leaves or grass).

c. From his position, he selects the next covered and concealed position he will occupy. This is a critical task, since there are some common mistakes that can be disastrous. Do not pick an obvious place, since an enemy observer will expect you to run for that spot. In addition, inspect the next position carefully to look for any sign that it is occupied already by the enemy (this can be embarrassing).

d. In moving from position to position, he must keep his exposure to a minimum. This means springing up rapidly and running with body bent low, then down again. In your mind, think: "I'm up, I'm seen, I'm down" in that period of time. Imagine how you will look to an alert enemy, and don't give him enough time to get off an aimed shot.

**Aids to movement (from FM 21-75, para. 9, pp. 10-18):**

a. "A scout should carry only necessities." As a scout, your movement is very strenuous and will consume more energy than for the troops behind you; all that running from covered and

concealed position to covered and concealed position is fatiguing. For that reason, scouts usually travel as light as possible (weapon, ammo, and canteen is best). You may wish to have your heavier gear carried by others in the squad or thrown in a vehicle to be collected later. If you are making a short mini-patrol, you might dump packs with the squad (though if the squad has to move you may lose your gear).

b. Take advantage of anything that may distract the enemy. This might be firing from another location, an aircraft passing overhead, or anything that will distract an enemy's attention for a brief time. Move then, as it may reduce the enemy's ability to bring fire on you during your run.

c. During periods of fog or haze, movement low to the ground may be easier. Such periods are helpful, but usually occur in early morning or evening.

d. When moving in tall grass or brush, take advantage of the wind. When the wind blows, the vegetation will move, and may mask your movements from observation.

e. Avoid making tracks where possible, especially in the snow. In snow, walk along tree lines where possible to hide your trail.

f. Never come back the way you left. Like many of these tips, this was mentioned in the Standing orders of Rogers Rangers during the French and Indian War of the 1700's. Despite their age, they are just as true today as they were nearly 200 years ago. If you move, you will leave a trail and you may have been observed; this will give an alert enemy the idea of ambushing you on the way back. Don't give him the chance. However, make sure the OP's on your own lines know where you will be coming in.

g. Select the right place to cross a road. The enemy loves to look down a road and shoot at soldiers crossing it. Choose a place with poor observation (a bend, a place in shadow). If all else fails and you must cross in plain view, don't give the enemy more than one chance at your team – cross together in a line.

h. If you must cross a plowed field, cross along the furrows, not across them. Movement across furrows causes a bobbing motion that attracts the eye.

**Rushing from the prone position:**

Your start position for a rush will be in the prone. In this position the body is flat, with the left cheek on the ground, legs spread, and heels touching the ground. Hold your rifle with the right hand at the balance, muzzle front and operating handle up.

Rising and rushing from the prone is something requiring practice – just looking at the pictures will not do the job. The idea is to limit exposure as much as possible, so agility and strength are necessary, along with lots of practice. Remember the mental exercise: "I'm UP . . . I'm SEEN . . . I'm DOWN." The whole rush should not be longer than it takes to say that in a conversational tone.

① *The soldier starts the rush from the prone position.*

② *He slowly raises his head to select a new position.*

③ *He slowly lowers his head, draws arms inward, and cocks the right leg forward, preparing to rush.*

④ *With one movement, he raises his body by straightening his arms.*

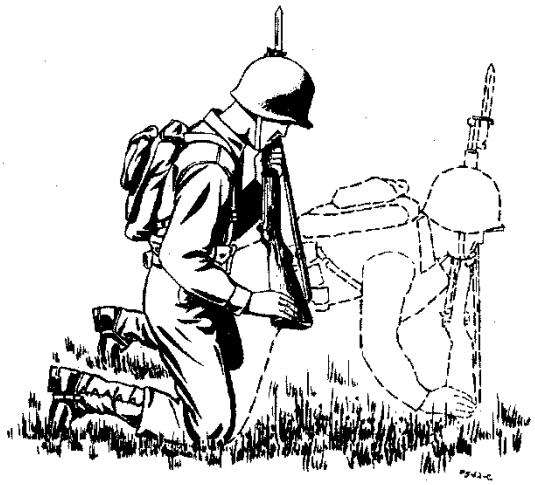
⑤ *He springs to his feet, stepping off with his left foot.*

⑥ *He runs forward in a straight line, crouched low, to the new position.*

At the end of your run, you should go quickly into the prone. This is a trick. You drop to your knees (free advice: go to the sporting goods store and buy some light athletic knee pads or you will end up with sore and creaky knees like the Professor), at the same time sliding the right hand down to grasp the heel of the butt of the rifle and using it to break your fall, then take up a firing position in the prone.

Another basic practice is to roll as soon as you hit to the right or left. We picked this up in the Pacific theater and then taught everybody to do it. The reason is that the enemy is likely to see your rush whether he has time to get off an aimed shot or not. He knows where you dropped, and may put a bullet in the last place he saw you. Don't give him a break.

① *The soldier plants both feet in place.*



② *He drops to his knees, and at the same time slides his hand to the heel of his rifle.*

③ *He falls forward, breaking the fall with the butt of his rifle.*

④ *He then rolls into the firing position, or lies as flat as possible on the ground. If he thinks he has been observed, and concealment exists, he moves a short distance toward a flank, moving in the most practicable manner.*

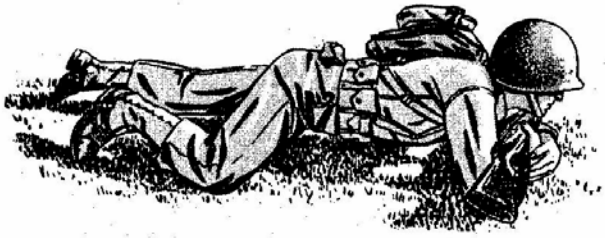
*Figure 6. Dropping to prone position.*

**Creeping and crawling:**

Sometimes the rush is too exposed, or you have some compelling tactical reason to avoid exposure during movement (like grazing fire from an enemy machine gun). In such a case you may creep or crawl. [NOTE: For soldiers who served later, this is equivalent to what we now call the high crawl and the low crawl.]

The easier mode is ***creeping***; it is also more exposed, and in particular may result in the kind of wound that draws wise-ass comments from our buddies and makes sitting difficult in later years! Use this one only if you have sufficient cover – a ditch or wall, for example – you protect you.

① *The body is kept free of the ground, and the weight of the body rests on the forearms and lower legs. The rifle is cradled in the arms, so that the muzzle is kept out of the dirt. Knees must be kept well behind the buttocks.*



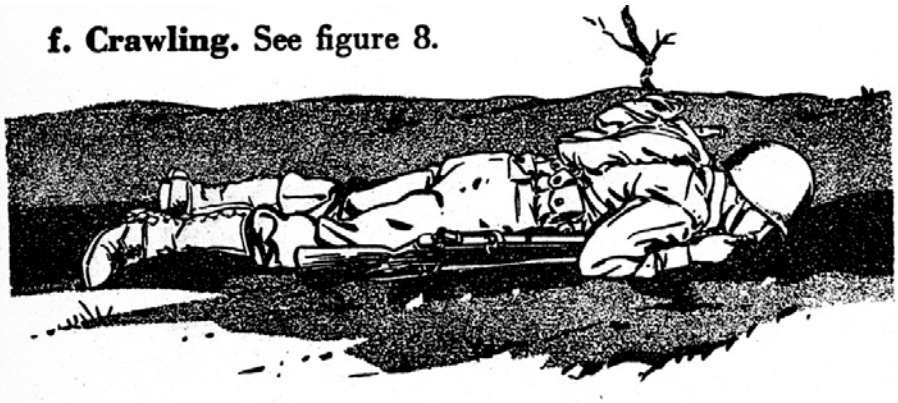
② *The soldier moves forward by alternately advancing the elbows and knees. The left elbow is advanced at the same time as the right knee.*

③ *In creeping, the soldier presents a higher silhouette than in crawling, but movement is faster.*

*Figure 7. Creeping.*

***Crawling*** is much more fatiguing; it wears you out very fast, but being tired and sore is better than being shot, or so I've heard. When you crawl, everything is touching the ground; you are trying to stay in what we used to call "dandelion defilade". (It was once an event in the Army Physical Fitness Test.)

**f. Crawling.** See figure 8.



① *The body is as flat as possible against the ground. The cheek is flat against the ground. The rifle is carried at the balance, or dragged along on the toe of the butt with the thumb or forefinger over the muzzle. Care must be taken to keep the rifle muzzle out of the dirt.*

② *To move forward, the soldier pushes his arms forward and cocks one leg forward.*

③ *He pulls himself forward with his arms and pushes with the forward leg.*

**Selecting a route:**

Plan the method of movement based on inspection of the ground or by a map recon (the latter more likely for a patrol than for a short scouting foray). Your movement should take advantage of terrain and vegetation – use high and low places in the ground to screen you from the enemy. Pick landmarks to aid in your navigation. Pick a distant but visible point to guide on so you can avoid drifting off course without frequent reference to a compass.

During daylight or bright moonlight, move along or through trees and brush; at night (without moonlight) move straight across open areas and let the darkness screen your movements.

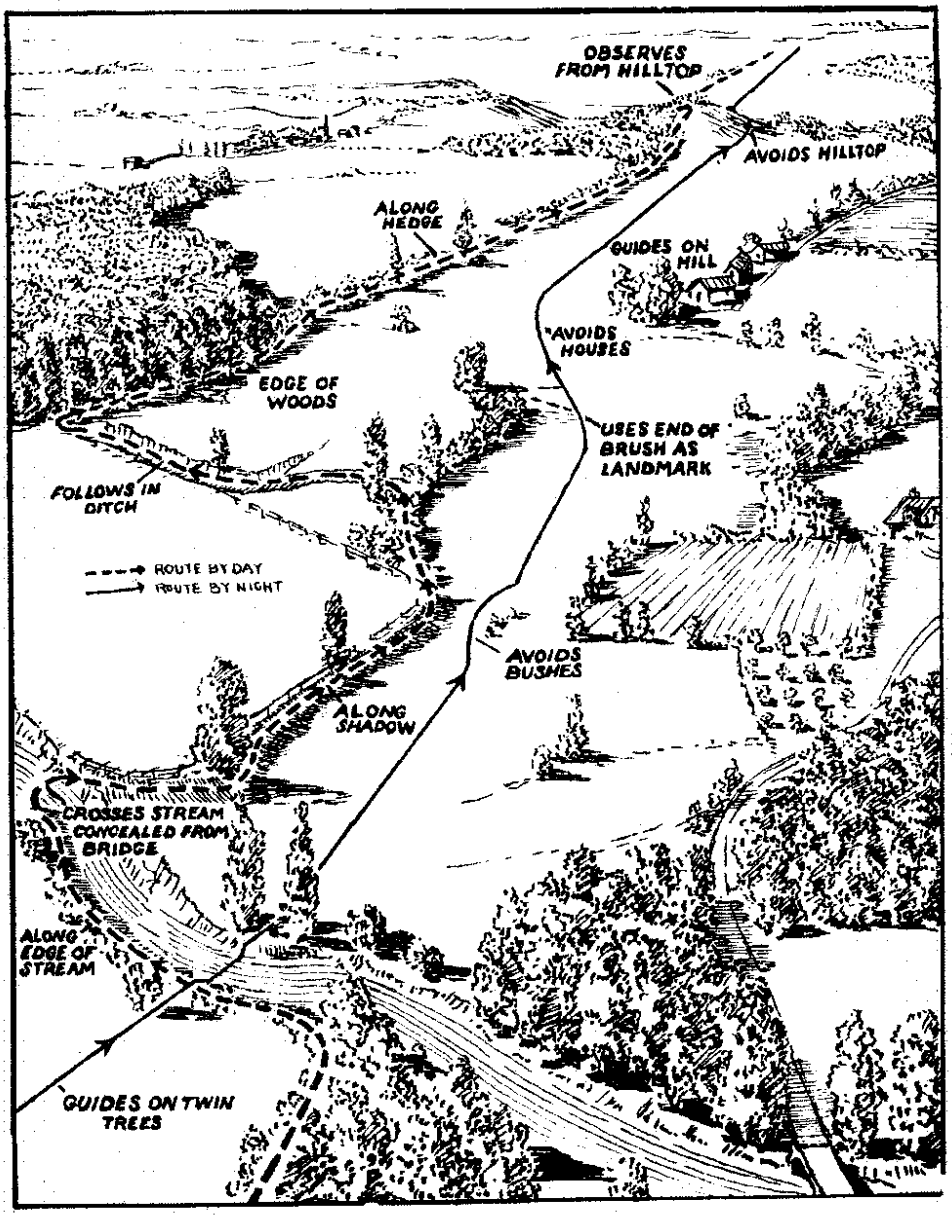



*Figure 12. Day and night routes.*

## *Cover & Concealment*

**Importance of cover and concealment:** Most reenactors do not begin to appreciate the value of cover and concealment – if nobody is actually shooting at you, it is easy to be careless! Even in harmless combat demonstrations and tacticals, however, it is useful to behave as if bullets are flying. The demonstration is more realistic, and in a tactical the enemy will appreciate your effort – there will be fewer cries of "I got you!"

**Lesson objective:** We will begin learning how to use cover and concealment. I say "begin" because a class or two is not nearly as effective as actually doing it in realistic conditions.

**Reference:** Most information in this lesson is drawn from FM 21-75, Infantry Scouting, Patrolling, and Sniping (6 February 1944). This manual reflects changes made to prewar practice and enshrined in the manuals through 1942, when lessons learned in Africa, Sicily, and New Guinea started getting attention at the Infantry School at Fort Benning.

**Use of cover:**

1. We use cover very poorly – a natural problem, since most of us have not been under fire and understand little about the penetrating power of small arms fire and shrapnel. The natural reenactor move is to hide behind a skinny tree, one too small to provide cover or concealment.

2. Nothing stops bullets like dirt – lots and lots of dirt. In some ways, soil is a better protection than rock, because ricochets are less likely. As an infantryman, you should develop a close and personal relationship with dirt. Always be observing the ground around you, figuring out where you can jump to put a lot of it between you and the enemy. This means being aware of even slight variations in the terrain – depressions, ditches, walls, small rises and dips. It's a hard state of mind to acquire and maintain, but infantrymen who manage it are the ones who survive to re-write the manuals.

3. You should move carefully, never straying far from cover. If you are a leader and choose the direction of movement for a squad or platoon, keep this in mind – don't move the unit in such a way as to risk the embarrassment of being under fire and without cover.

**Principles of concealment:**

1. Remain motionless while observing. The human visual system is very sensitive to relative motion against a background, particularly in the periphery ("corner of the eye"). If you have to move, move very slowly and use cover or you will be detected.

2. Use all available concealment. Here is a tip: Think of the ground where you will hide as positive, negative, and neutral spaces.

   A **Positive** space is a clump of bushes or some other place that looks like a place where soldiers will hide. This is the first place the enemy will look (and maybe shoot just to be safe). Avoid:

   **Negative** space is an open area where it would be difficult or impossible to hide (flat area with short grass, for example). You will be seen there; stay away.

   **Neutral** spaces are areas that provide cover but are not obvious. This is where you should seek concealment to observe. [These are post-WW2 terms, but the ideas are explicit in the manual.]

3. Observe from the prone position. This is obvious; in the prone position you are presenting as little as possible for the enemy to observe. A hint: Find a place with cover and concealment and approach from a covered and/or concealed position and slowly go into the prone. If no such path is available, crawl slowly from the last covered position to your observation point.

4. Expose nothing that glistens. This might be something as easily overlooked as the worn rim of your helmet or your canteen as you take a drink, your spectacles or the lenses of your binoculars. Be careful.

5. Blend with the background. Use camouflage, choose your position carefully.

6. Don't expose outlines. You can be seen from a long distance if you are exposed against the skyline, for example.

7. Look and fire around the right side of an object. This reduces your exposure.

8. Never look or fire over the top of your cover unless the outline is broken. Your head is easily seen if it is exposed over regular cover.

9. Use extra care when you are tired. Fatigue makes us careless.

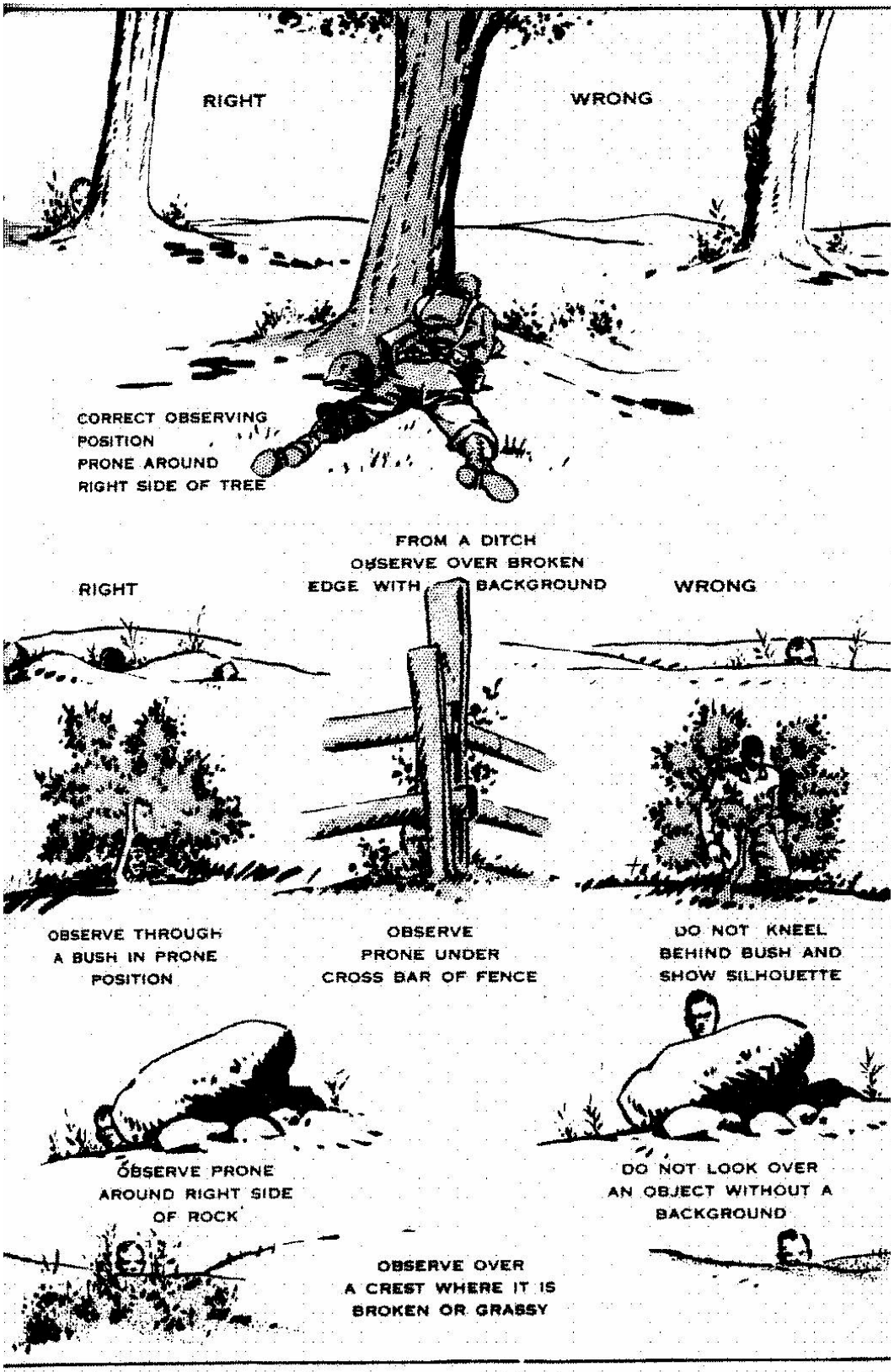



*Figure 1. Correct and incorrect methods of observing.*

## *Individual Camouflage Techniques*

**Theory of camouflage:**

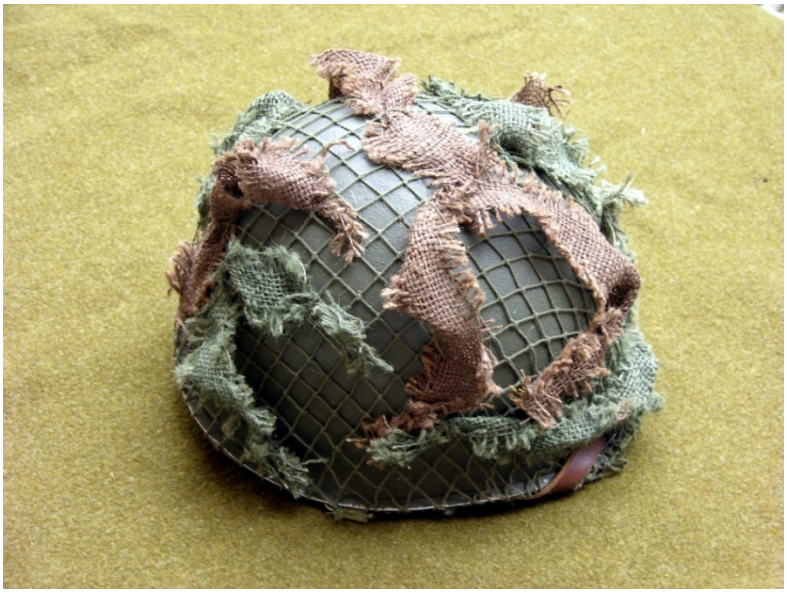
1. In applying individual camouflage, we must hide form (outline), texture, color, and shine. These elements create what is called a signature – distinctive elements that can be seen by the enemy.

2. You should learn the basic techniques, then practice them. The central element of camouflage is discipline – know what to do and do it promptly and correctly.

**Applying individual camouflage:**

1. Start with the helmet. The distinctive shape, smooth color, and shine of the helmet are distinctive signatures, particularly after the rough-sprayed texture begins to wear off.

2. Natural garnish is okay, but remember that it will wither and die very quickly and become a signature all its own. Burlap scrim attached through the net is probably better. If you don't have a net, get one. As a temporary fix, a wire can be drawn around the base of the helmet to hold garnish.

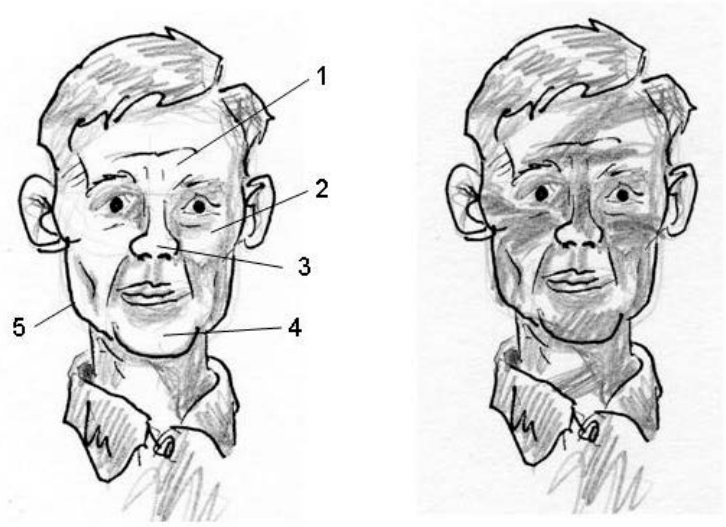


If you use scrim, be sure to prepare it correctly. Pull away the outer strands on the long sides of the strips leaving a "feathered" edge. Dampen the strips and crumple them in the hand to remove the flat, even texture. Interlace the strips in the helmet net in an irregular pattern (do not create "zebra stripes"). When you do this with a large camouflage net, you will follow a pattern called a "Greek key."

If you use leaves instead of or along with scrim, remember that the underside of a leaf is almost always a much lighter shade than the upper side. Make sure the leaves are positioned with the dark part on top.

The edge of the helmet rim is a critical problem. After extensive use, the paint along the edged tends to chip away, revealing a flat, bright strip of bare metal. This should be repainted or covered with natural materials or scrim, as the shine will be a dead giveaway.

3. Camouflage the face and hands. This is best done with wood ash or burnt cork. The camouflage face paints available now from the PX or from specialty mail order sales are very effective, but were not available in that form in the 1940's. The first camouflage sticks were issued in some quantity in 1945, but do not appear to have been used very much. They have a crayon-like, crumbly consistency and were hard to use (mosquito repellent softens the wax and makes it a little easier to apply.). Do not use dirt (whatever the FM says) because it is – dirty. The result is a risk of skin infections and other morale-busters. Shoe polish is all right, if you have a lot of time to clean it off!




   At night (as for a patrol), uniform application of blackening over all exposed skin is the best approach. During the day, however, this will just create a dark image of the face. It is better to apply the darkening to areas of the face that are normally bright and free of shadow. The result is to break up the characteristic shadow patterns of the face by darkening the bright areas and leaving the shadowy areas light.

4. Uniform and equipment. The manual (TM 5-267) suggests applying dabs of paint or dye to the uniform. This does not appear to have been practiced widely in the ETO, but did occur in the Pacific (illustrations show HBT uniforms and tropical backgrounds); due to the close and personal nature of that theater, it is likely that soldiers were motivated to take the time. In Europe, paratroopers were known to pattern their jump smocks and trousers with improvised dyes (yesterday's cooked-down coffee, for example); however, this does not seem to have carried over to other units.

   Application of face camouflage. Areas to hide are (1) brow ridge (higher forehead is hidden by headgear); (2) upper cheeks; (3) ridge of nose; (4) chin; (5) jaw line. Figure at right shows camouflage applied.

   Do not forget the hands and the back of the neck!

   Use of natural garnish or scrim on the pack and other equipment was done, however, particularly for scouting and patrolling. Unfortunately, these are activities not likely to be covered by photographers! All we have to go on is the Army doctrine that emerged from WW2.

Here is the correct practice: scrim and/or leaves and natural garnish would be applied to the pack and equipment on the soldier's back. Soldiers hide in the prone position, and this is the part that would be exposed.

Weapons: The M1 is camouflaged by use of bands of contrasting tape or by the simple expedient of wrapping in burlap from handy sandbags. The latter is more effective because it is easier to change when worn out, and because tape tends to have a shine. Do not place camouflage near the working parts of any weapon, or in such a position that it might catch fire.

5. Remember: Where and how you choose a position to hide is just as important as individual camouflage. This is a subject for another class.

# Section L

# Combat Formations for Squad and Platoon


# COMBAT FORMATIONS FOR SQUAD AND PLATOON

**Importance of combat formations:**

1. Security
2. Command control
3. Maneuver/flexibility

We have to learn how to use combat formations – where each member of the squad goes, where each element of the platoon is placed in each situation.

**Theory and application of combat formations:**

1. A "tactical formation" is adopted when a unit is likely to be under observation or fire from an enemy (as opposed to an "administrative formation" on the drill field or in rear areas -- see ### below). No matter what tactical unit is deployed information, the general rules are the same:

    a. Soldiers are dispersed far enough apart to avoid multiple casualties with one burst or exploding round. The usual distance is 5-10 paces.

    b. The formation is organized into task groups and sub units for tactical flexibility and to bring fire rapidly.

    c. A command group is placed far enough forward to be aware of the emerging tactical situation, but not so far forward that it can be wiped out with the first exchange of fire.

    d. The formation maintains all around security -- front, rear, and both flanks.

    e. The elements are so arranged that upon contact with the enemy only part of the force is engaged, allowing for maneuver and tactical flexibility.

2. We will generally operate at squad or platoon level, so the examples shown here are generally for those small unit levels. Topics in this section cover (1) formations for tactical movement and (2) formations and maneuvers in the attack.

3. We use standard combat formations to assure that every element of the unit is properly placed for response, movement, scouting, or other missions.

4. The leader of the element – squad, platoon, or company – needs to know where his men and his maneuver and support elements are at all times.

5. A unit is always deployed for security – scouts ahead, flank and rear security, outposts and sentinels when at rest.

6. Elements and leaders are deployed for redundancy – we don't want all critical assets killed by the first burst.

7. We differentiate between "administrative" and "tactical" movement. When moving "administratively" on foot (route march) we generally march on the sides of the road with a 10-15 meter interval, at sling arms. "Tactical" means we may be under enemy observation; at this point we shift to combat formation and go to port arms.

**Why combat formations changed after 1941:**

FM 21-100 and the New Infantry Drill Regulations reflect the formations and practices developed in the period between the world wars. By 1943, these practices had changed, and continued to be modified throughout the war. The reasons:

1. Small unit leaders originally led from all the way in front. In North Africa and Sicily, casualties among squad and platoon leaders were devastating. This resulted in a "scouts out" policy that lowered the risk of unit leadership being wiped out with the first burst of enemy fire.
2. TO&E changed; in particular, BAR's were blended with the squads very early in the war.

3. Command control improved with issue of reliable FM radios down to platoon level, reducing somewhat (but not eliminating) the reliance on messengers.

**Squad formations:**

A rifle squad consists of a squad leader (SL), and assistant squad leader (ASL), a BAR team of two men, and seven riflemen. In action, the squad will typically operate as two teams (base of fire and maneuver), one led by the SL and one by the ASL.

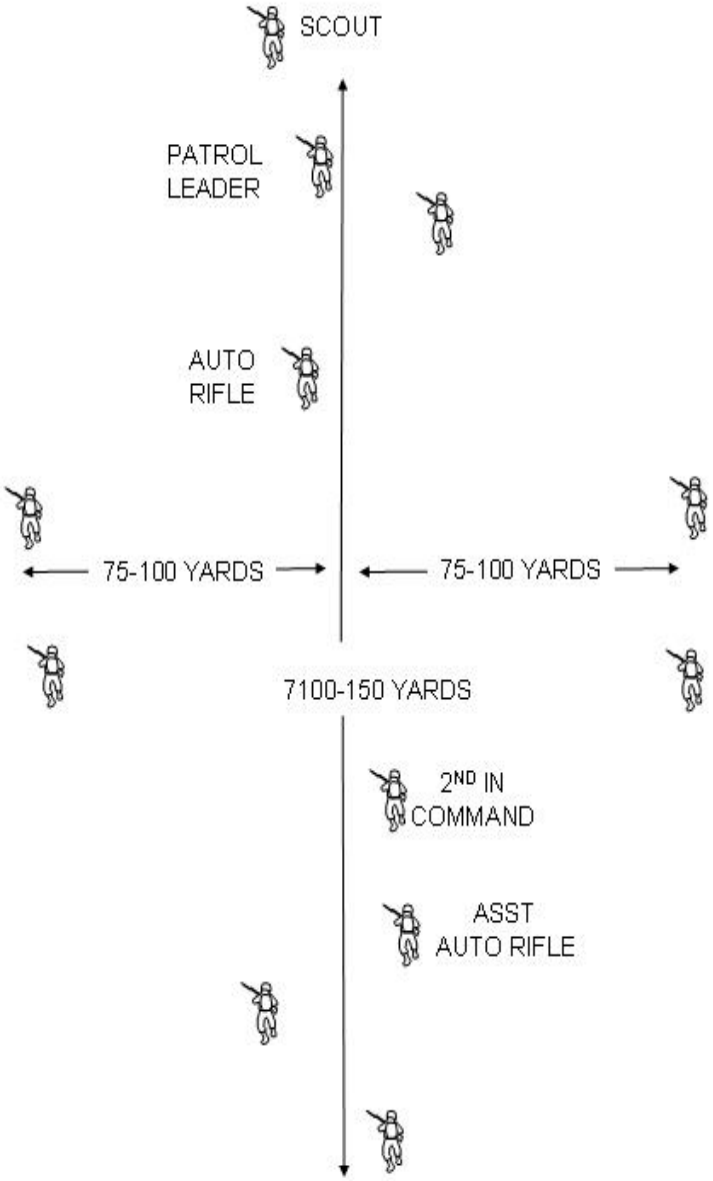
In this example below, a scout (designated rifleman) acts as an advanced guard ("point man"). He is followed by the SL and another rifleman, with the AR gunner close behind. Note that the assistant AR gunner and the ASL and to the rear, since each is trained to take over in case the principal is put out of action. The SL is leading from the front, where he can most accurately assess the situation:

1. The scouts (2) serve initially as an advanced guard or point element that prevents the squad from blundering nearsighted into a killing zone. The scouts precede the main body during movement.

2. The leader group is split, with the squad leader behind the scouts and the assistant squad leader near the rear. This is to allow the squad leader to assess the situation from the front and decide on an action (for example, “envelop left”) and allow the ASL to assemble the maneuver team. It also gives a backup to reduce the likelihood of losing the 1 and 2 leaders at one time.

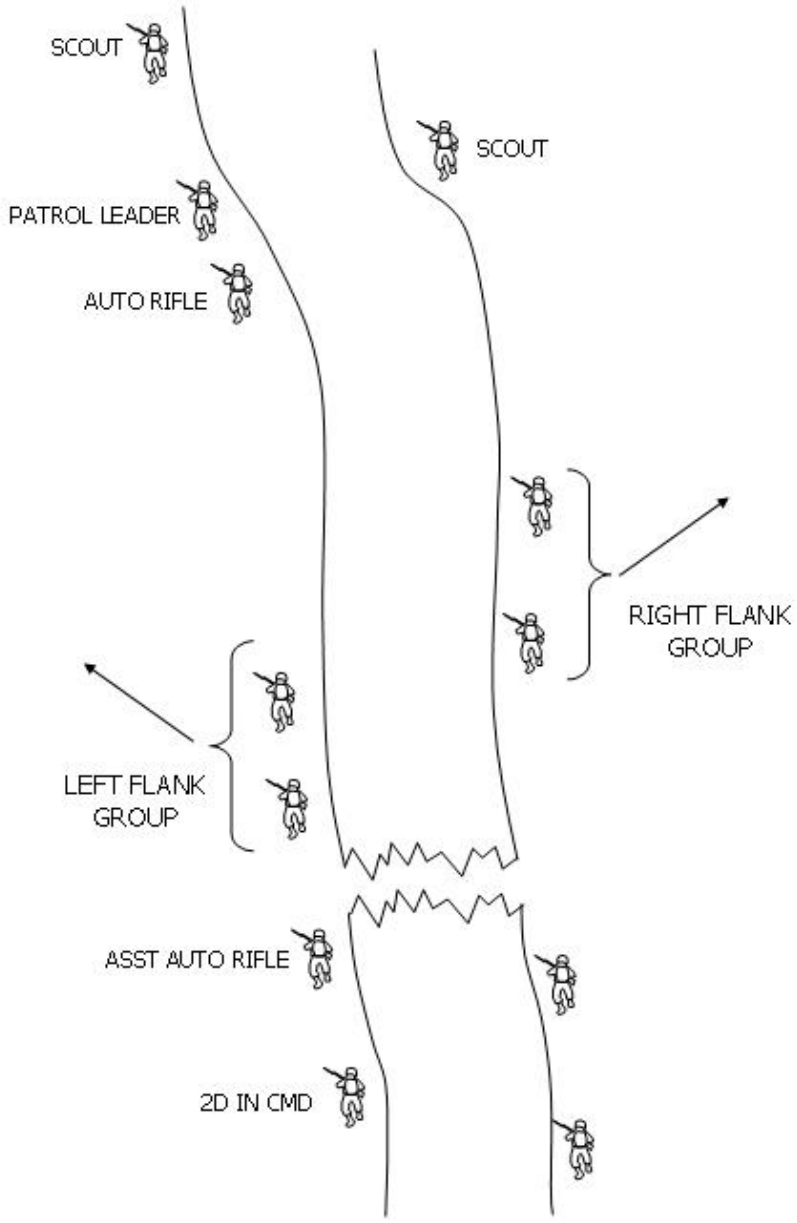
3. Occasionally we will split the AR team as well, with the BAR man forward and his assistant to the rear, again to make sure we don’t lose the only capable BAR man in the first burst.

4. Moving by itself (as on a daylight patrol), the squad might be deployed like this:




Note the separation of the SL and ASL and of the auto rifleman and assistant, as well as the deployment of flank guards. If adjacent units are protecting the flanks, the flank guards are drawn in from their positions.

Here the squad is moving along a road or wide trail. Note that the general deployment is the same as for movement across country, but more road bound. Terrain permitting, flankers may be deployed farther out.

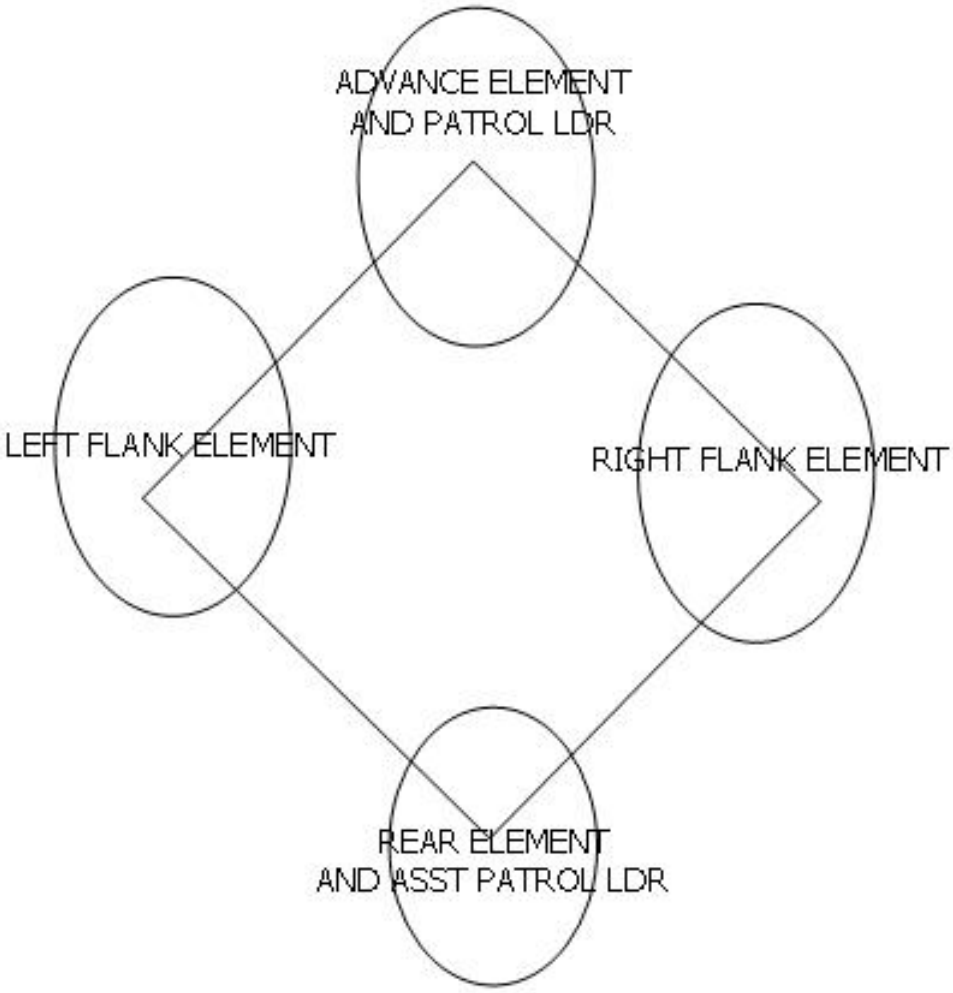



If the squad is part of a larger force (platoon or company, for example) that has provided flank elements, the “left and right flank groups” would generally not be deployed.

**Platoon formation:**

The platoon generally has three maneuver elements and a command group. In combat, the platoon may be reinforced, particularly with additional fire support (for example, one of the mortar squads or a light machine gun may be attached for additional firepower if the mission calls for it).

The common formation for a platoon while moving alone (e.g., a platoon-size daylight patrol) is the diamond formation:

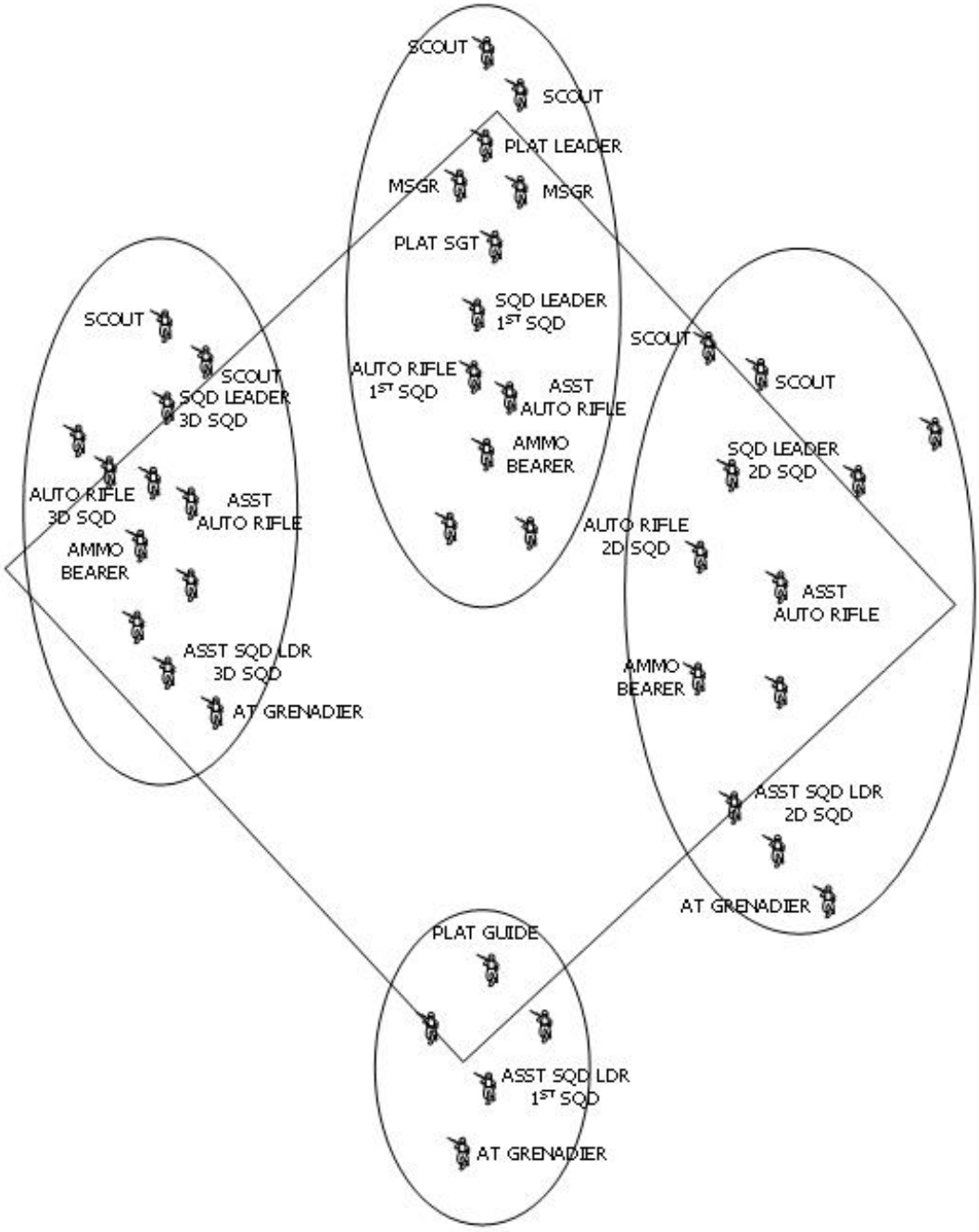



In this case, one squad plus the command team is split along the center axis, with an advance element (scouts, PL, PSG, AR, messengers) and a rear element (platoon guide, AAR, etc.). The other two squads deployed left and right on the flanks.

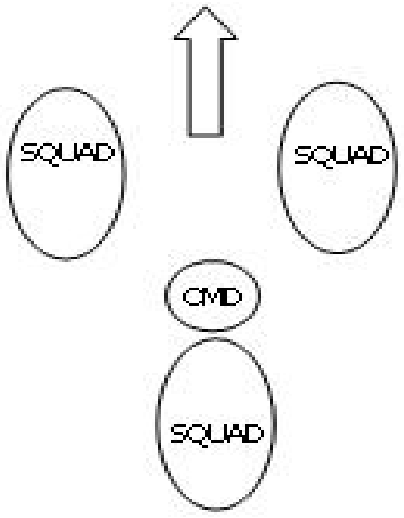
This formation provides all-around security. There is no direction from which the enemy can direct fire on only one squad (that is, you can't easily be "enfiladed"), along with leader redundancy

(when – not if – your fourth platoon leader this month gets killed, the PSG and guide are still there to take over).

Here is an example of how this formation might look on the ground:



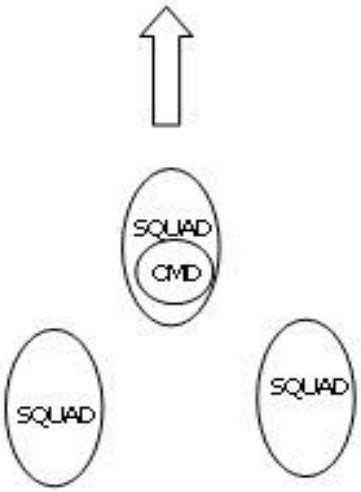
Note that interval between men is about 10-15 yards minimum (so one grenade or 60mm burst won't wipe out 3-4 people), and distance between squads is determined by the terrain.



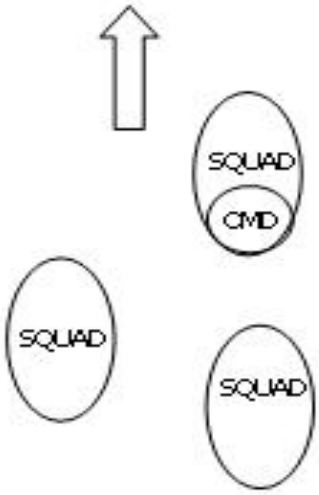

"VEE"

Other options for the platoon include the "vee" (two squads up, one back, generally used when the enemy's position and strength are known and you want maximum firepower forward):

The "wedge" (one squad up, two back, when you don't know where the enemy is and want maximum flexibility and low risk of having most of your platoon pinned down):




"WEDGE"




"ECHELON"

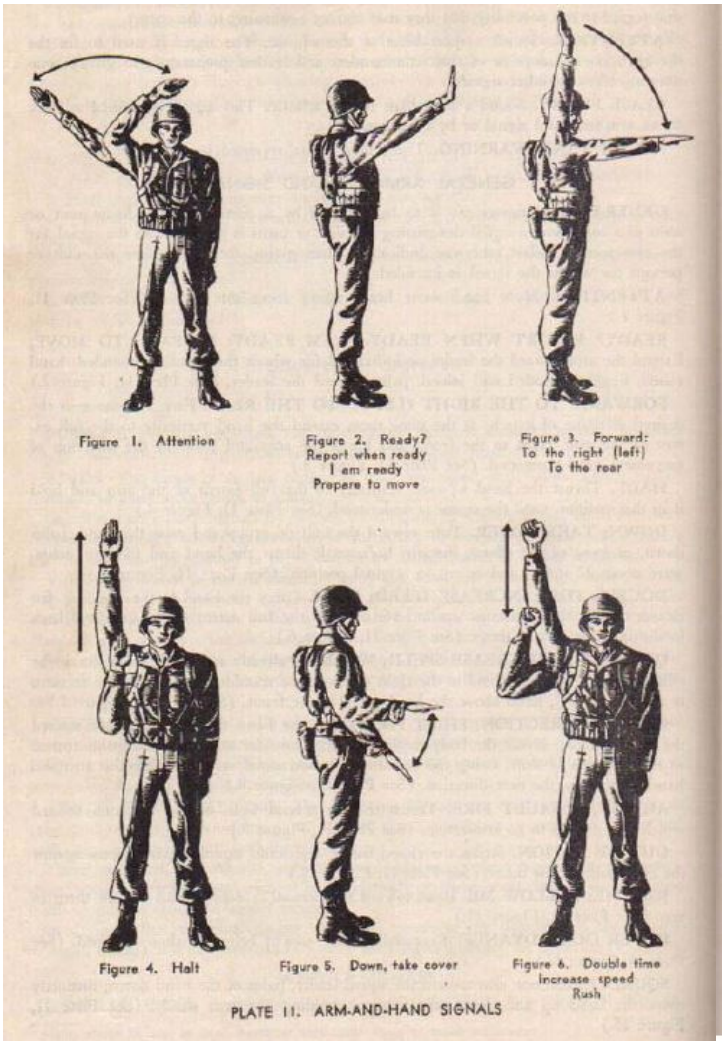
And "echelon" (right or left) when you believe the enemy threat is greater to one side or the other, since this "refusal of the flank" places maximum firepower to the left front or right front.

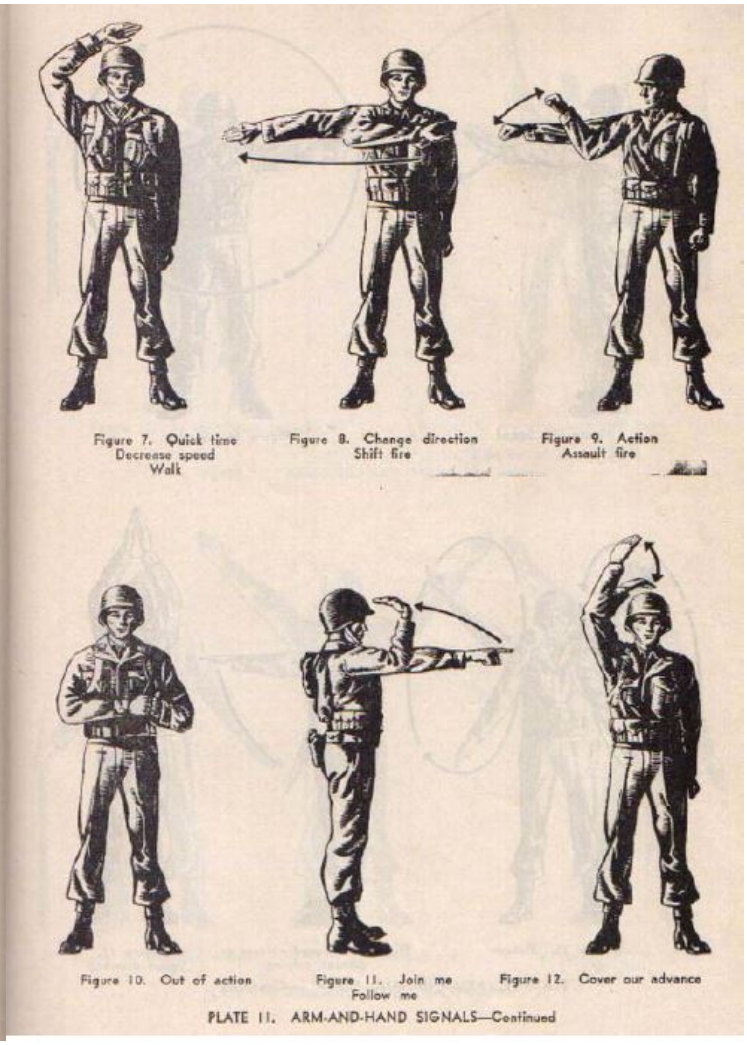
The wedge is only one typical formation. When the enemy's position is known and you want maximum firepower forward with a smaller reserve, the "VEE" formation is useful. This is the typical "two up and one back" scheme that combines mass and firepower with tactical flexibility.

The ECHELON (right or left) is employed when there is an enemy threat present or potential from one side or the other. The echelon keeps force forward while maintaining a bias to one side so that maximum firepower can be placed on an enemy if he is encountered on the flank.

## *Common Hand Signals*

While somewhat useless once the action has started, hand signals are still worth knowing and using when voice commands are not feasible. They convey orders, direction and intent. Unless the signal is preparatory, execution of the movement indicated commences as soon as the signal is completed and understood.



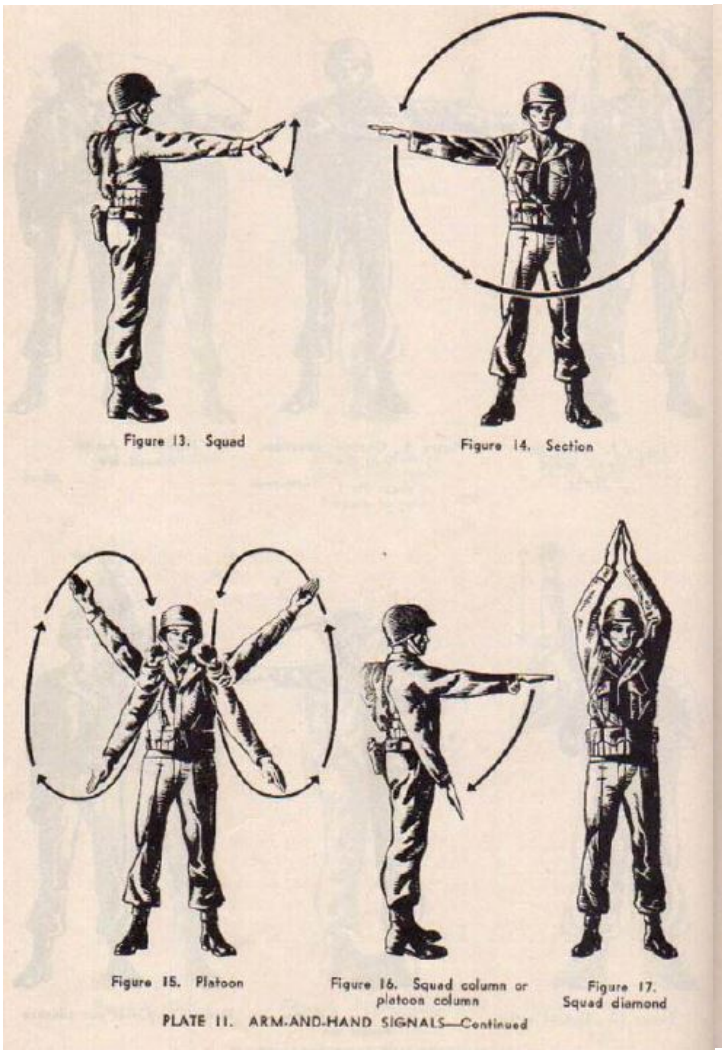


Figure 13. Squad

Figure 14. Section

Figure 15. Platoon

Figure 16. Squad column or platoon column

Figure 17. Squad diamond

PLATE 11. ARM-AND-HAND SIGNALS—Continued

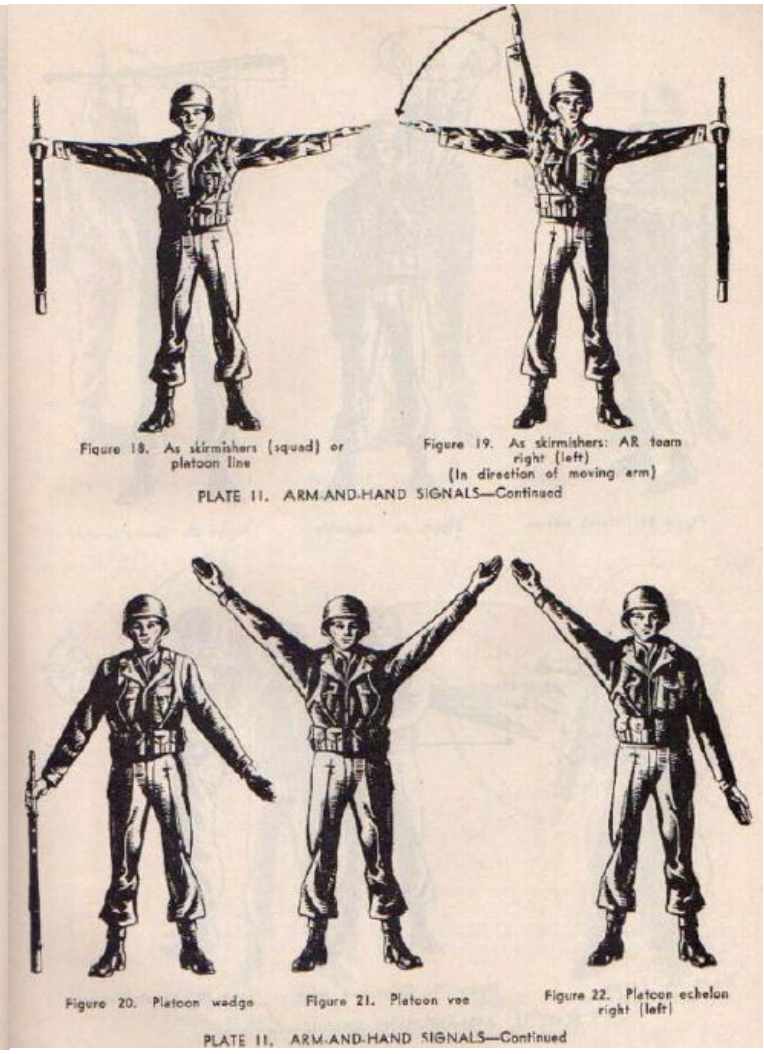


Figure 18. As skirmishers (squad) or platoon line

Figure 19. As skirmishers: AR team right (left) (In direction of moving arm)

PLATE 11. ARM-AND-HAND SIGNALS—Continued

Figure 20. Platoon wedge

Figure 21. Platoon vee

Figure 22. Platoon echelon right (left)

PLATE 11. ARM-AND-HAND SIGNALS—Continued

# Section M

## The Squad in the Attack


# THE SQUAD IN THE ATTACK

This is a very simple primer in the technique of assaulting by squad. There is one basic battle drill, proven over many years and still used in Iraq and Afghanistan. It was used in *Saving Private Ryan* in the assault on the German radar installation (listen carefully to CPT Miler's battle order) and it was used in our St. Lô tactical. It is so basic and so effective that a trained squad can launch it with nothing more than a common hand signal by the squad leader.

**What is a squad?**

The rifle squad is the smallest tactical unit generally capable of independent combat action. It is a purely tactical, not an administrative, unit, and it exists solely to close with and destroy the enemy by fire and maneuver. Despite its small size, the rifle squad employs a very basic tactic in the offensive similar to that of all smaller units engaged in direct combat: it attacks using a more or less stationary base of fire (BOF) to keep the enemy suppressed and a maneuver force that assaults the enemy under the covering fore of the BOF.

A squad is most emphatically not an administrative convenience. It does not appear on the DA Form 1 (morning report). It is a tactical unit, and it exists to close with and destroy the enemy with force and violence.

It is not just a bunch of guys bossed around by a sergeant. A squad has designated specialists grouped into teams that perform designated missions. A soldier is assigned a place in the squad, and with that place comes a skill and a mission that must be mastered. While squad members are necessarily interchangeable to some extent, some are best left in the same job.

By 1944 – the period we model – the paper strength of a squad was 12 men. It was composed of the following:

Squad leader (staff sergeant)
Assistant squad leader (sergeant)
Auto rifleman (BAR)
Assistant auto rifle
Riflemen (8 – one grenadier)

But this bare list tells us very little about the squad – particularly, what these seemingly faceless riflemen do and how the squad is organized for combat.

Think of the squad instead as four tactical elements: (1) command group, (2) scout team, (3) fire support team, and (4) maneuver team:

1. Command group (SL, rifleman as runner)
2. Scout team (2 riflemen)
3. AR team (BAR man and assistant)
4. Maneuver team (ASL plus remaining riflemen, which may include the two scouts)

The command group is the squad leader and the assistant squad leader. Though they are called, collectively, a "group", they are not together – in movement they are separate (the SL towards the front and the ASL towards the rear) so both NCOs don't get starched in the first burst of enemy fire. In assault, one NCO is with the fire support team and the other runs the maneuver team.

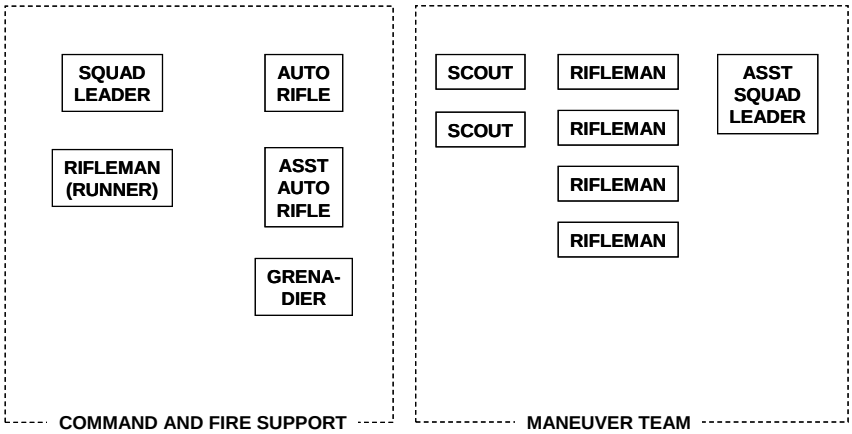
Two of the riflemen are, by TO&E (that is, "on paper") scouts. Early in the war scouts were trained separately; by 1944, all infantry soldiers were trained in scouting (check out FM 21-75 for details), and the scouts were simply riflemen chosen to be screwed blue on a given day. The scouts function as a separate element only during tactical movement, when they screen ahead of the movement and spoil the enemy's playful little surprises; in the assault, they shoot and scoot like everybody else.

The fire support is provided principally by the BAR team. Again, in movement the team is split; because both gunner and assistant gunner know how to use the BAR effectively, if one is still alive and has the weapon the bullets keep squirting out.

By 1944, one rifleman was also designated the thankless task of antitank grenadier. He had an add-on sight and grenade launcher for the M1 and could fire not only HE grenades, but also small bazooka-like shaped charge rounds that might stop a light vehicle or make a barely audible noise inside a Tiger. *Avoid this duty*; it attracts attention.

A squad will be intensively trained in a tactical SOP that covers the usual tactical situations. It's like a football team's playbook, except that there are fewer plays and yardage is often measured in blood. The SOPs come from combat experience, and are often more current than the field manual, reflecting local conditions and enemy strengths and weaknesses. One plan does not fit all conditions; as our brothers in the Marine Corps put it, "semper gumby" ("always flexible"). Back at the Infantry Center ("Benning School for Boys") hard-working purple-hearters who have cheated death one time too many and get rewarded by a recovery tour in Georgia crank out new doctrine and publish lessons learned and changes to the manuals as new information and proven ideas came back from North Africa, Italy, the Pacific, and those scenic hedgerows.

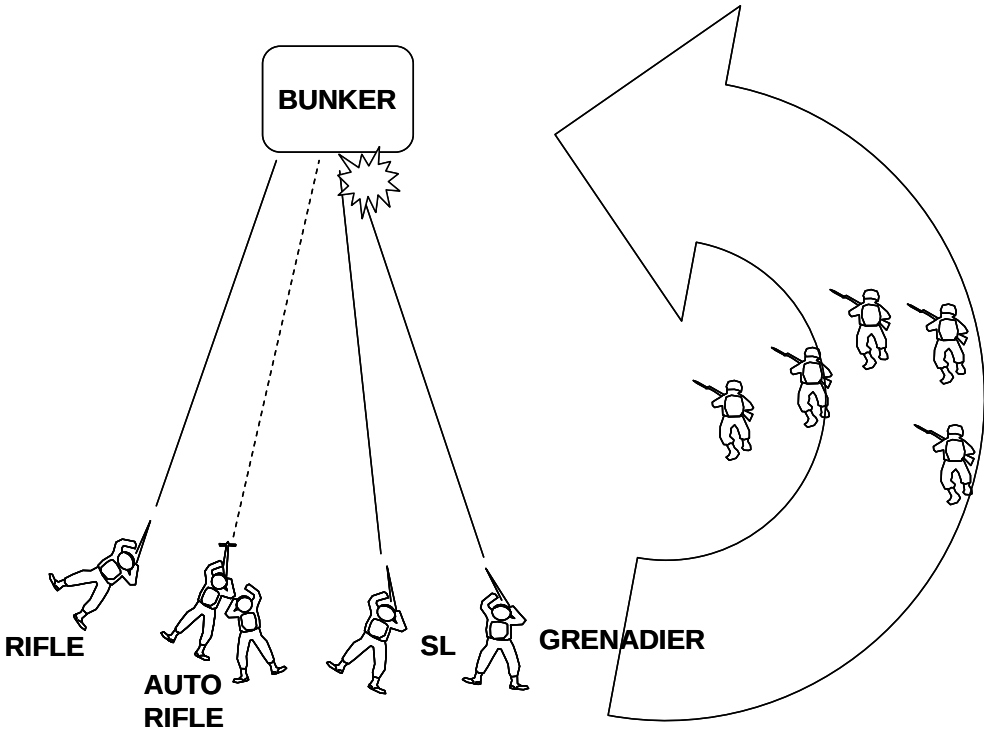
In ETO by the time of the Normandy invasion, this appears to have been the usual approach:



Here is an example of a full squad as a task-organized assault team. The squad leader makes the plan (usually something like “flank right” or “flank left” from the SOP like a QB calling a familiar play, in this case, a “right flank” maneuver. His team – command and fire support – provides a base of fire under which the mobile team can maneuver to flank the enemy position. The SL will generally keep a runner (a spare rifleman, if any rifle can be said to be “spare” in combat) to report his situation to the platoon leader, since squads did not have radios at that time. The BAR team will provide a continuous covering fire to encourage the enemy to keep their heads down, and the SL and runner pitch in as well. If the squad has a grenadier (again, a rifleman equipped to fire grenades, either HE or AT) he usually stays with the fire support team.

The assistant squad leader will usually lead the maneuver team, composed of the remaining riflemen, who will usually pack as many grenades as they can carry. Any rear-echelon insurance actuary will tell you that maneuver teams are subject to more hazard than the fire support teams. It’s not that simple, though. When the enemy calls in mortar and artillery fire, it’s generally the fire support team that will take it in the shorts.

Here’s an example of this “flank right” maneuver:




A trained squad can respond with no more than a hand signal from the SL, or in a dicey situation with a short order to the teams.

See how easy it is?

## Tips for squad attack

1. Practice this drill frequently. Actions should be automatic.
2. Don't bite off more than you can chew. The enemy force should be of a size and strength appropriate for a squad attack
3. Observe carefully; the enemy seldom puts an isolated post in a place unsupported by other positions. You may end up in a crossfire.
4. Make sure the maneuver team has people designated to search and clear the objective after it has been overrun. Search team should continue by searching the position for anything of intelligence value.
5. Segregate and secure prisoners.
6. Immediately after securing the objective, signal CLEAR; the BOF team will rejoin the maneuver team when the objective is cleared.
7. ALWAYS CONSOLIDATE on the objective; put out security. The enemy frequently counterattacks.
8. Report situation to platoon immediately. The commander may wish to exploit your success; he may need to coordinate for evacuation of casualties.
9. Check level of supply; make sure you have enough ammo and water to hold the objective.

## The down side

Well, if it is that easy why doesn't it always work?

*First*, the enemy knows what to expect. He is likely to be trained to do the same thing, and will expect you to do it. You will have to muster either surprise or a lot more force than the enemy. (The American way of war is to find the enemy and, no matter how small, just call in everything but the referee and the ring post water bucket on his head, leaving nothing but a smoking hole.)

*Second*, we are seldom confronted by an isolated strong point. Like us, the enemy is trained to set up interlocking fires in the defense, so that the maneuver team attacking position A finds itself raked by fire from position B as well. The squad leader has to scope out the situation with great care, identifying the whole threat before sending the maneuver team on a suicide mission. This is why we spend a lot of time in the selection and preparation of a defensive position – location, observation and fields of fire, cover and concealment, camouflage, attention to enemy avenues of approach – and so does the enemy.

If war were easy, we would call it "peace".

So, what do we do when the standard maneuver right/maneuver left will just cause white crosses to spring from the ground?

Use supporting fire. Mortar the crap out of them. An M49A1 costs a lot less than a rifleman, and takes a lot less time to build. Call in direct support artillery. Wave at a passing P-47.

Use smoke. The regimental 81mm platoon can do this (we simulate with 60mm) to mask the movement of the maneuver team.

Use distraction: keep the enemy amused with fire and a feint from one side to call attention away from the main attack.

Prayer is also helpful.

**On the cheap**

Our squads are usually 6-7 strong and don't usually have a BAR team. However, the numbers reflect combat reality – TO&E strength outfits get reduced fast when the metal starts flying around. Get used to it.

The Army recognized the effects of firepower imbalance and scattered a generous supply of submachineguns; it was common for a squad to have one, and if they didn't they were generally able to steal one or get a grease gun from an attached tank or TD unit in trade for some souvenirs. These things generally couldn't hit a bull in the ass at any range, but the generous supply of bullets flying usually dampens an enemy's enthusiasm for gazing around.

We need to match the mission to the available assets, mostly in terms of firepower. A five-man squad with no BAR does not attack an entrenched machinegun team (which usually, in the German case, includes a few riflemen whose job is to keep you off the MG team's back) and expect to enjoy elderly evenings at the VFW lodge back home.

But the principle is the same: base of fire covering maneuver. Let the spry young guys spring the trap while the older and firepower-heavy folks keep the objective amused. It isn't foolproof (what is?), but it's better than a frontal assault.

# Section N

## The Art of the Defense


# THE ART OF THE DEFENSE

According to U.S. common tactical doctrine, defense is only a means to an end, which is the continuation of offensive operations. Recall the lines from the movie *Patton – "I don't want to get any messages saying that "we are holding our position." We're not holding anything. Let the Hun do that. We are advancing constantly and we're not interested in holding onto anything except the enemy. We're going to hold onto him by the nose and we're going to kick him in the ass. We're going to kick the hell out of him all the time and we're going to go through him like crap through a goose!"*

Aggressiveness was – and still is – paramount in tactical doctrine. Nonetheless, a defensive position, or at least plans for one, is always necessary, since it is also always necessary that you hold the ground you have gained until you are able to conduct offensive operations once again. What follows are simple explanations and examples of how a basic defense is organized and conducted. This is the condensed "reenactor" defense, since we will rarely have the forces, fire support, construction materials and time available to conduct a more complex version.

## The Purpose of Defense

The sole purpose of a proper defense is to gain time for more favorable conditions. Typically, you economize forces on one position so to gather superior forces on another.

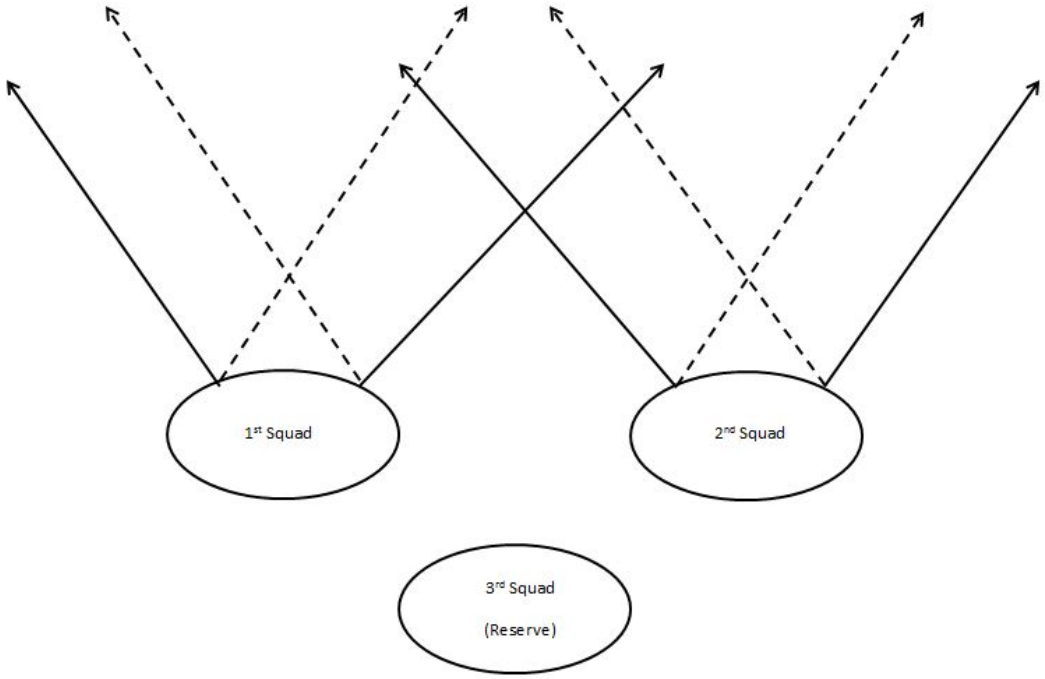
## The Basic Defense

The basic type of defense is called the "hasty defense." It is organized in a short period of time (even a perimeter defense is a type of hasty defense) and is assumed at any time from any type of combat. The ground must be evaluated quickly, and preparation is limited only by time and facilities.

Typically, the Platoon Leader and Platoon Sergeant will conduct the defense when more than a squad is involved. They make quick notes, make hasty map, plan and perform a recon to note limits of the area, identify adjacent units, note possible avenues of approach, obstacles, commanding hostile terrain features, and exposed areas. They note points for OP/LP, the covered routes to rear, and the tentative locations for squad and leader's CP.

Once such elements are established, the Platoon Leader and Platoon Sergeant contact adjacent units to arrange flanking fire. Only then will they determine final location for the defense position. They assign a fire plan by sector, apply overlapping fire, and have mortars and MGs (if available) cover any gaps.

Below is a simple diagram of a basic defense position, showing 1st and 2nd Squads on line, facing the MRL, and 3rd Squad in reserve. The solid and dashed lines indicate the overlapping fields of fire that are assigned within each squad:




Note that 3rd Squad doesn't have a field of fire. As reserve, it naturally does not, since it is meant to be a reactive force at the discretion of the Platoon Leader or Company Commander; and if it is directed to provide support fire for the two front Squads, it will do so only upon direction of the Platoon Leader or Company Commander.

## Actions of Squad Leader

Once assigned his area, each Squad Leader examines area to determine best features for defense. He notes locations of adjacent squads and decides where to place each squad member, and places the BAR as indicated by the Platoon Leader or Sergeant where it will best support the position while also issuing the Squad order for sector fire. The BAR is usually assigned an area of fire to cover gaps or specific terrain features, including the squad sector and the front of adjacent squads. The Squad members, or team of 2 Squad members, should be at least 5 yards from next individual or team in all directions. They take advantage of cover and concealment. The Squad leader then checks individual fields of fire for overlap and has the Squad clear fire sectors of obstacles.

The Squad Leader's main role is to supervise preparation of primary defense area. Then, in conference with the Platoon Leader and Platoon Sergeant, he selects and prepares a secondary "fall back" position should the initial position become compromised. In each case, he selects a position for the Squad CP for both himself and the Assistant Squad Leader.

## Action During Combat

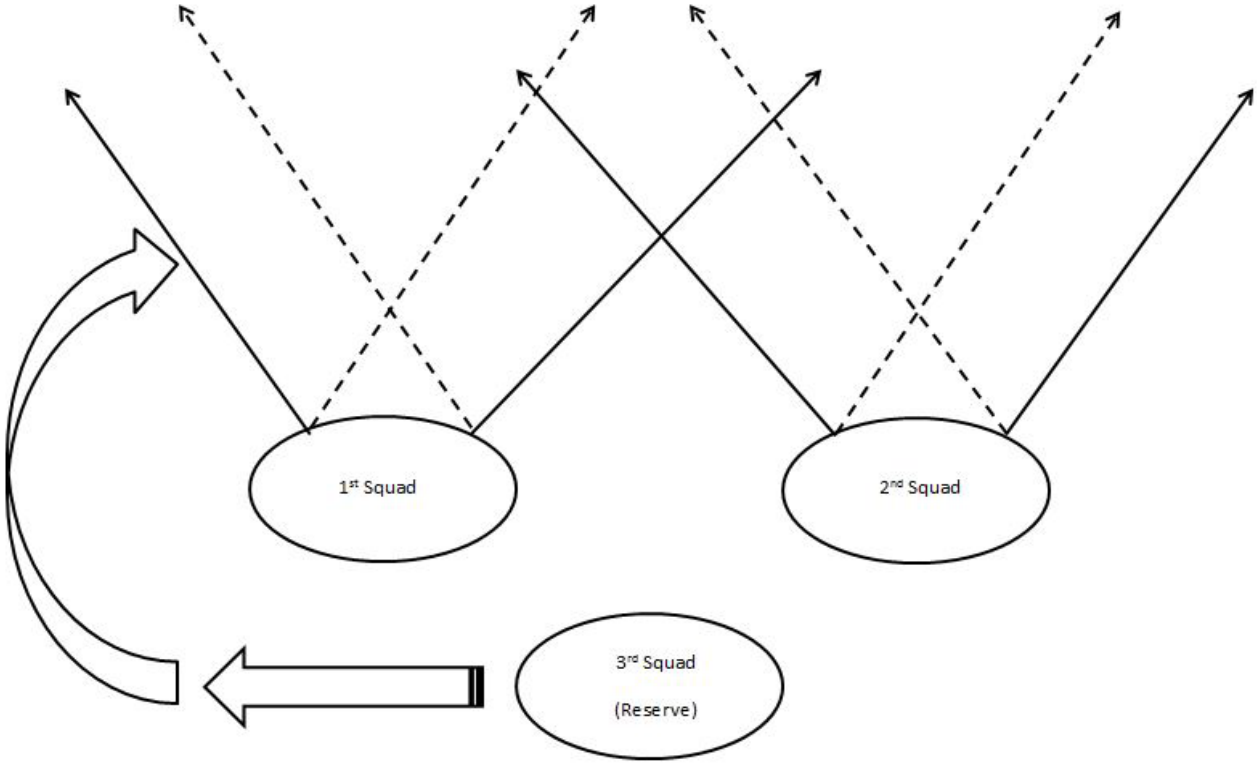
The Squad will open fire only on the command of the Platoon Leader or Sergeant. Withhold fire until enemy is within effective range and, if an adjacent area is penetrated, direct fire to prevent widening the break. Use the same action if adjacent squad area is overrun. If the platoon is threatened

with envelopment, the Platoon Leader will make changes in dispositions of personnel and weapons to ensure all-around defense.

## Actions of the Support/Reserve Squad

At all times, and upon the command of the Platoon Leader, the reserve Squad assists front line by fire, limits penetrations of platoon area, execute local counterattacks, and protect flanks and rear.

Frequently, the reserve Squad is used in the counterattack in a similar fashion to an assault in the Squad in the Attack – while the forward Squads provide the base of fire, the reserve Squad maneuvers to hit a flank as illustrated below:




Usually, such a move is decided by the Company Commander. It must be delivered quickly, and launched against flank of penetration, or against infiltrating elements

## Withdrawal

Withdrawal is ultimately undesirable and must be initiated only on orders of a higher authority – either the Platoon Leader, or Company Commander. Disengaging while under fire is extremely risky.

Ideally, the Platoon leader makes a recon, indicates time of withdrawal and assembly areas, and assigns covering force (usually 1 squad per platoon). During a daylight withdrawal, Squad leaders are told why, when, and where to assemble; the Squads thinned out as rapidly as possible while the remaining men cover withdrawal. The BAR is usually the last fire element to withdraw, then the Squad Leader, then the Platoon Leader. Support elements cover withdrawal of front line elements.

# Section O

# How to Travel Light in Combat



**The following article is included by gracious permission of the author, Mike Ellis, of the 90th Infantry Division Preservation Group.**

**This article gives examples and guidance of how WWII infantry lived and operated under battlefield conditions. Usually, most reenactors (new *and* experienced) have no idea what should or should not be carried. Mike Ellis did the research based on period photos and first-person, first-hand accounts of those soldiers who had experienced WWII.**

**Before adopting any of these recommendations or examples, check with your chain of command. There may be times when certain items are required for the event in question, or by the unit in general.**

# How to Travel Light

## ...or why are my HBTs so baggy??

Michael Ellis

90th Infantry Division Preservation Group

Winter 2014

# HOW TO TRAVEL LIGHT

## "What's 'dis all about?..."

*One of my favorite parts of reenacting is to watch the inexperienced take to the field. Usually, this involves a full 1928 pack, 1936 suspenders, 2-3 bandoleers of blanks, and K- or C-rations. Many never get far past this point, instead taking pride in the fact that they're "carrying just what the GI's did". Unfortunately, this is not quite the truth – most GI's took equal and opposite pride in carrying the bare minimum!*

Clearly walking along a road, not under fire.

The over-stocked reenactor.

# HOW TO TRAVEL LIGHT

*For starters, most reenactors carry some arrangement of the M1928 field pack, or the M1936 mussette bag and '36 suspenders. Both of these items were issued and carried in vast quantities. Get rid of them. (Ok, not completely. Keep it for displays, or the next time you feel like throwing out your back. Neither of these packs need be brought to tactical events!) "Why", you ask? Infantry regularly left behind heavy items such as the field pack prior to going on an attack. They also neglected to wear them when fighting from a fixed position. If you must bring it to a field event, do what the GI's did, and leave it under a tree somewhere before you try and take that village. Just remember; to the GI's, all equipment was expendable. Is yours?*

Got a headache? Tired? Irritable? Perhaps you're carrying too much.


SPECIAL INSET: Heavy or Bulky gear was often dropped in the rear before attacking.

# HOW TO TRAVEL LIGHT

*By doing this, we naturally arrive at the next step: deciding what you want, what you need, and what you can stuff down your field jacket. There is a reason that front line troops rarely kept bulky souvenirs. Go through your pack, and ditch the following rarely-found items:*

- *Shaving Brush*
- *Shaving Soap*
- *Shaving Mirror*
- *Towels*
- *Flashlight (including those 10 lb D cells stored within)*
- *Mess Tin*
- *G.I. Fork/Knife*
- *That large, bulky, useless, Red-Cross made sewing kit (find yourself a needle, wrap some thread around it, and you're good to go.)*
- *E-tool and Cover*

*"What specifically?"*

# HOW TO TRAVEL LIGHT

*They may not sound like much, but the weight and bulk of these items is what makes you dance like an elephant in the field. Now that you've gotten rid of them, you really can ditch that pack. Note how some of these Soldiers retain the pack, some have already dropped it.*

Full pack, rifle slung, standing around.

No pack, rifle out, eyes open.

No pack, rifle out, eyes open.

'Tactically' hugging a wall – possibly unexpected fire.

# HOW TO TRAVEL LIGHT

Excess gut? No. There are items stored in here.

Cutdown E-tool, to boot

*Additional views – note the slight bump in the front of the jacket. This is where you store your basic needs items such as food, maps, or binoculars. More on this later. Cigarettes were often kept in one of the compartments of the ten-pocket cartridge belt. Note the highly-attractive OD7 leggings.*

# HOW TO TRAVEL LIGHT

*What about shaving? Does this mean you'll start growing a beard? If you're like many GI's, this may actually be the case…on the other hand, many more realized that one can easily shave with a standard bar of soap and a razor. Fill your helmet shell with water, wet both the soap and your hands, and begin lathering.*

Shaving brush.

Wash basin.

Wash basin.

# HOW TO TRAVEL LIGHT

The ultimate GI shave – several days' stubble.

*Congratulations. You've just replaced the shaving soap, brush, and cup. As for the mirror, build up by practicing shaving in the shower, then gradually start shaving out doors. With a week's practice, you'll find that a GI steel mirror actually hinders your shave. Finish by wiping your face on your field jacket.*

# HOW TO TRAVEL LIGHT

*Flashlights are replaced by a small unscented candle, the kind found in hundreds of churches, cathedrals, and farmhouses across Europe. Zippo lighter fluid is found under the driver's seat of any Jeep, and matches are a perennial favorite found in field rations of all sorts. The GI sewing kit need be nothing more than a needle with some thread wrapped around it.*


# HOW TO TRAVEL LIGHT

*An Army runs on its' stomach, so why don't we move on to carrying the field ration? D-rations provide plenty of compact energy, but not the kind you'd want to eat. K-rations are small and light...but they're angular, bulky, and generally take up lots of space. The best thing to do is to open the box and carry only the inner contents. If you'd like, the waxed inner carton may also be torn into strips to be used as a fire starter. For C-rations, the meat and hash canned goods must be kept whole, but the B-unit may be opened and the heavy, bulky can discarded. You may also string the cans on wire to use as an early warning signal.*


Strip this down

Keep this whole

'Beer gut'


Start fires with this

These store better outside the box

# HOW TO TRAVEL LIGHT

More secret stash.

This replaces your mess kit.

As printed on the outside of the carton, save the bag as a waterproof holder for matches, ID booklets, playing cards, ect.

# HOW TO TRAVEL LIGHT

## "But what about?..."

*Now to the business end of things - nature's business. You may find yourself looking at that pitifully small K-ration toilet paper wondering if it really is a single serving. It's not. Which means you're going to be spending time hunting down for, shall we say, a better way. Soldier's readers were notorious for their alternate uses, and many GI's sadly recall the moment they had to make the choice between a favorite novel and pine cones. On top of this, they make for great bathroom reading...*

Which one would you trust more to protect your hand?

# HOW TO TRAVEL LIGHT


B*tch T*ts?? No…This guy is traveling light.

*When it comes to soldering, one of the more important aspects is keeping your weapon clean and functioning. One of the most commonly-neglected aspects of the average reenactor's impression is the rifle cleaning kit. To be properly outfitted, those carrying the M1 should have a nickel/long plastic oiler, pull through, oil, combo tool, and small cut-up pieces of off-white fabric cleaning patches. 4/5 of these items are kept inside of your rifle, the patches may be kept in a rubberized tool bag, or in a K-ration bag. Again, this goes in one of your pockets, or your gas mask bag. Larger cleaning kits involving wire brushes or sectional cleaning rods are not a required aspect of the impression. If, on the occasion you spend the evening at a tactical event, others may find it impressive that you can clean your weapon "the Army way" – out in the field, and without outside help.*

# HOW TO TRAVEL LIGHT

*Sans pack, you'll now keep most of your items down your field jacket or in your pockets. Many reenactors simply cannot comprehend how this is done, as things keep falling out. If this is the case, you are wearing your cartridge belt too loosely. The various models of suspender, both integral and separate, are not an absolute requirement and may be dumped at the side of the next French roadway. Your belt should be adjusted so that it will ride atop your hips and not slide down.*

Not too loose, not too tight – just right for foot patrols.

'Gunslinger' style. Sometimes seen even in vintage photos, but useless if you're dismounted.

# HOW TO TRAVEL LIGHT

*If done correctly, you'll actually be able to access the lower pockets on an M43 jacket. Imagine that…it's as if it were designed that way. With a belt worn like this, you may now comfortably store items such as socks, books, and rations down your jacket. When buttoned up, these will not fall out, nor will they interfere with your running abilities. Worn properly snug, this will also prevent most belt wandering, one of the main causes of discomfort while moving.*

This can still be done today.

Great example: tight belt, lots of stuff down the jacket.

# HOW TO TRAVEL LIGHT

## *"What does that leave me with?"*

*On to what you'll want to keep. The following list is a general guide, but goes a long way in keeping down the weight:*

- *1-2 Soldier's readers (for use as reading materials, toilet paper, and notepad)*
- *Razor, with spare blades*
- *Soap (for shaving and washing)*
- *Candle, Matches/Zippo (Kilroy's flashlight)*
- *A Pencil*
- *A spoon (GI, Kraut, or period civilian, your choice)*
- *A canteen cup (your new mess tin)*
- *A needle and thread ("sewing kit")*
- *K/C Ration Inners (keep the bag to store cigarettes, matches, cleaning patches, ect. in)*

# HOW TO TRAVEL LIGHT

*What about your raincoat? Your M41 jacket? Sometimes it pays to be able to keep an extra layer of clothing. But isn't this what the field pack is for?...yes and no. Look at original images - you'll notice that one of the best places to store extra clothing items is underneath the cartridge belt, to the rear.*



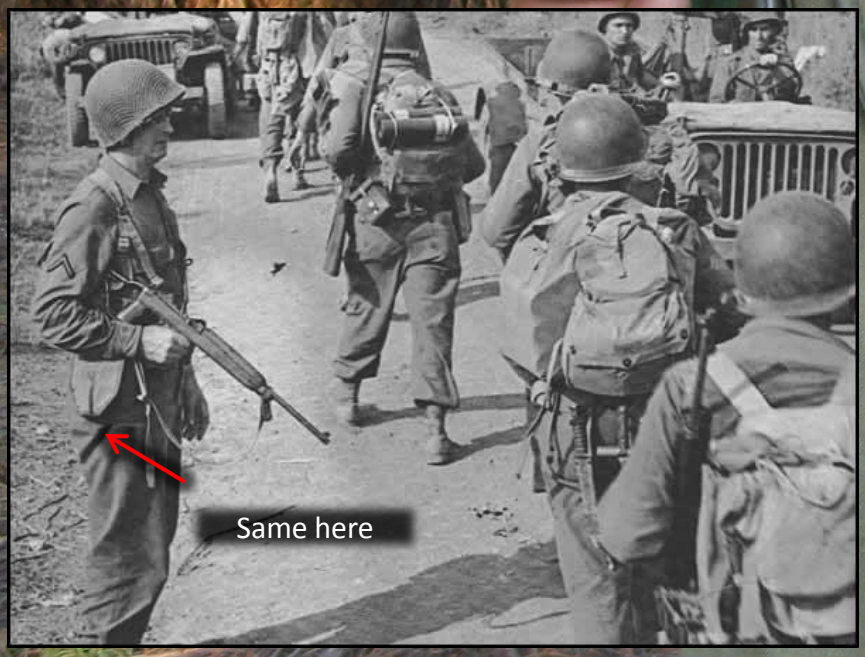

# HOW TO TRAVEL LIGHT

## A Word on the E-tool

*One final note on E-tools: you may need them, you may not. Entrenching tools were one of those items that were carried on condition, and that condition was the type of fighting encountered. For vehicle-bourne troops, or those fighting in an urban enviornment, they were left strapped to one's pack, or delivered by truck only when it was necessary to dig in. It was common was to simply tuck the m43 shovel, sans carrier, into one's belt.*

'Just' the E-tool, no cover

# HOW TO TRAVEL LIGHT


*Others kept only the carrier on their belt, as rotating troops were ordered to leave their E-tools for the incoming relief force to dig-in with.*

# HOW TO TRAVEL LIGHT

*Occasionally, men would resort to further shortening the already stop-gap instruments: this is well-known when it comes to paratroopers and the T-handle shovel, but it was also done by standard infantry to m43 shovels.*



# HOW TO TRAVEL LIGHT

*It was also possible to place the M43 into the carrier without fully securing it. This wasn't a common carry method, but did allow rapid access and replacement as might be needed when suddenly forced to move. Regardless of your choice when it comes to carrying and E-tool, just know that there is more than one option.*

# HOW TO TRAVEL LIGHT

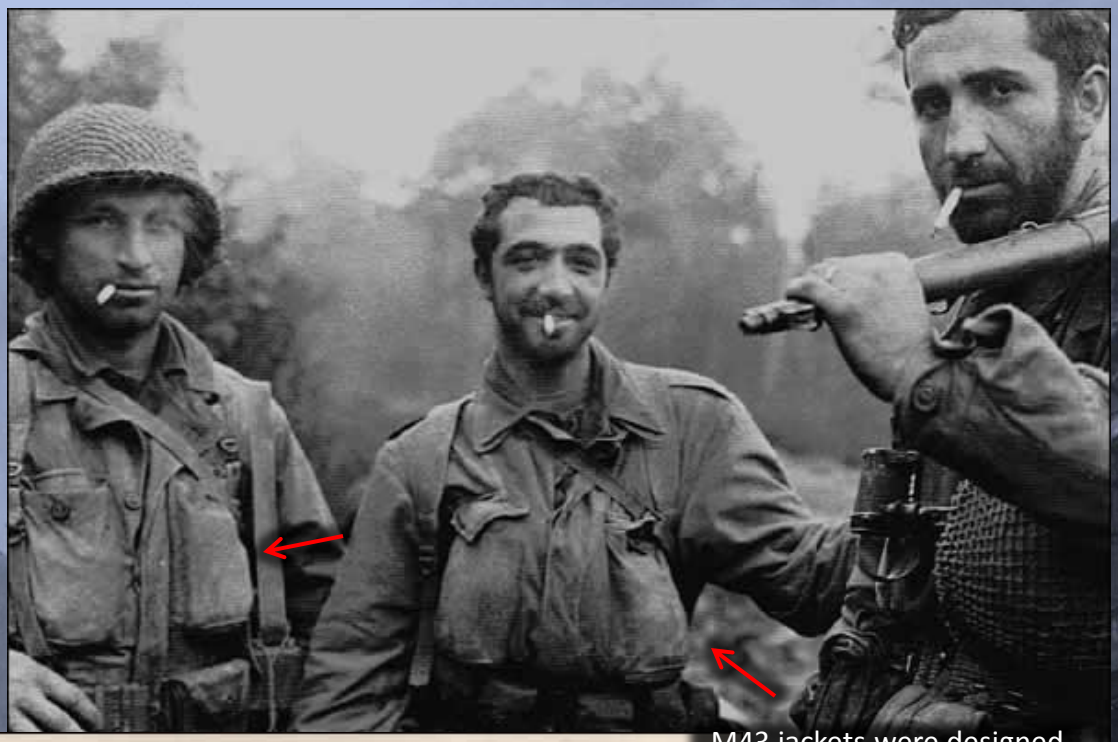
## The Big Picture

Man t*ts. Clearly these original uniforms stretch with use.

*Up to this point, you've probably noticed that the things you carry should be light weight, compact, or both. We're almost done, but let's go over just a few more things.*

Even more damming.

# HOW TO TRAVEL LIGHT



M43 jackets were designed to be used like this. Ike hated them.

*Take a look at a few more examples of GIs traveling 'light' – yes, you can wear a full field pack at the next event, but know that it's not the only way to be authentic.*

Generally pudgy appearance.

D-bar in pocket, along with other things.

# HOW TO TRAVEL LIGHT

*In other words, 'lose' the following…*

Load-bearing suspenders

Excess clothing (weather dependent)

1928 pack/1936 bag

Oversized eating accessories

Gas Mask

Flashlight

More excess clothing (weather dependent)

E-tool

Towel

Chem gear

Ludicrous Shaving Ensemble

Red-Cross made sewing kits

# How to Travel Light

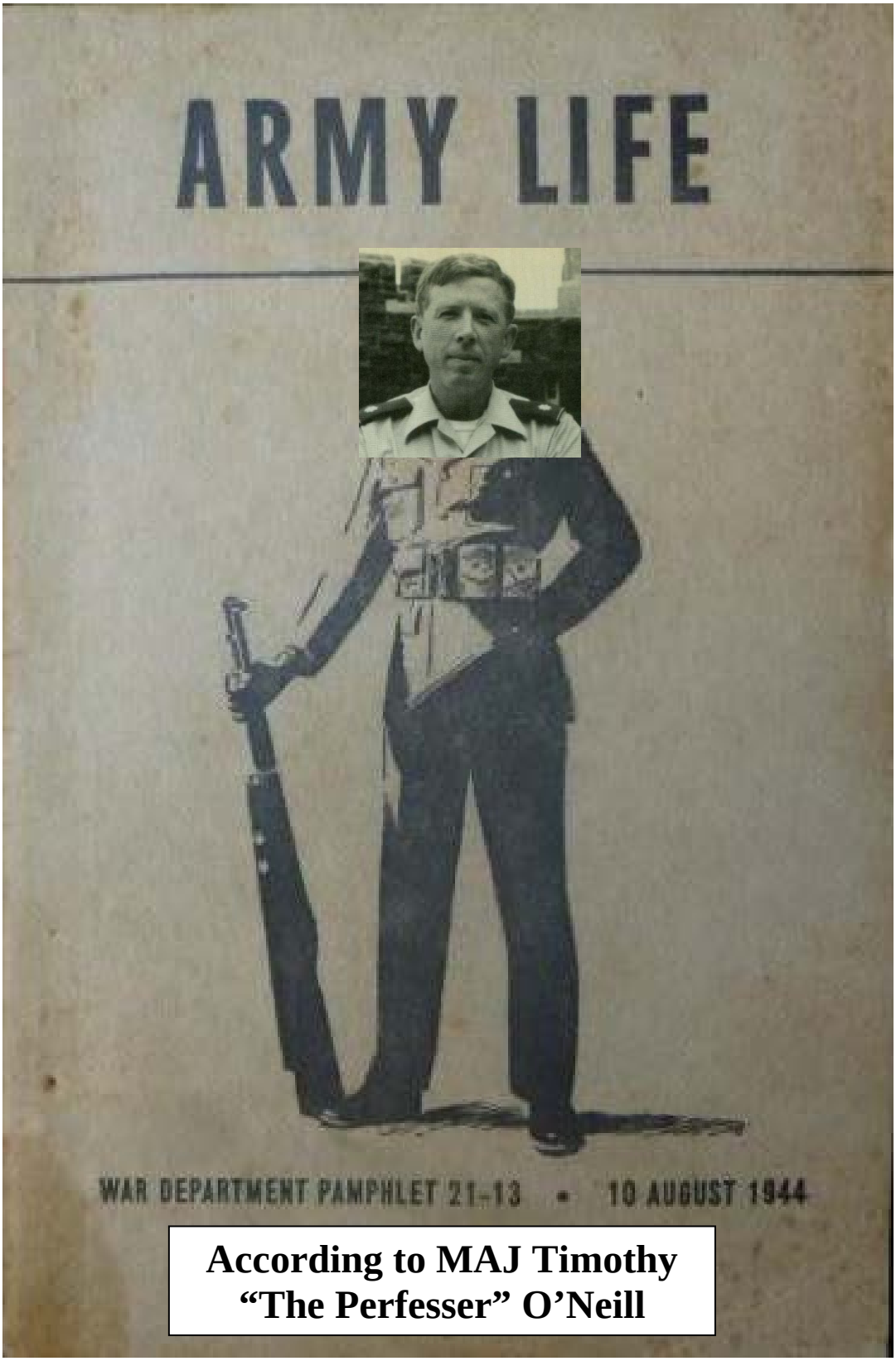
About the Author:

Michael Ellis has previously written such articles as "Four Eyes", "How to Travel Light: Packing Tips for the Seasoned Reenactor", and "The M-1938 Legging - An Introduction". He is a 9 year member of the 90th Infantry Division Preservation Group and returned from a deployment to southern Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in 2012.

*No profit of any kind was made or intended from this article.*

# Section P

## Army Life


**According to MAJ Timothy "The Perfesser" O'Neill**

# ARMY LIFE


As living historians, we make a diligent effort to master our subject. This leads us to a thousand fascinating details that enrich our understanding of World War II and enhance our ability to interpret that time for the public.

The problem with this way of understanding the past is that the details tend to distract us from the pulse and pattern of soldier life as excessive attention to trees distorts our perception of the forest. Sometimes we need to focus on bigger things; once we do that, puzzling elements of the details we have learned suddenly become easier to understand.

This time, we will focus on:

(1) The American soldier of the 1940's, and how he changed with the coming of conscription and war; and

(2) What Army life was like.

## *The GI*

*Our God and the soldier we alike adore.*

*Even at the brink of danger; not before;*

*After deliverance, both alike requited.*

*Our God's forgotten, and our soldiers slighted.*

— Francis Quarles, 1632

The Army between 1918 and 1941 was generally considered a fate worse than death, a place for losers. That the Army was manned at all was possible only because the Great Depression provided an endless supply of losers. The Old Army was led by a force comprised of discouraged[1] professional officers – predominantly West Pointers – noncoms who had entered the service after the Armistice, and a few thirty-year men who had seen the green fields of France, plus the mass of the enlisted who could find no other trade. Many younger soldiers enlisted because, however degrading peacetime service

[1] As was the case after WWII, the rapid promotions required by mobilization were reversed, and most officers reverted to their Regular Army (permanent) grades, often several steps below their wartime rank. There was also a massive reduction in force (RIF) and, during the Depression, a fifty percent pay cut. Soldiers (and most officers) lived in squalid conditions far from the amenities of civilization.

might be, it was at least better than soup kitchens, riding boxcars and dodging railroad bulls, or shoveling dirt in the CCC.

It was a professional Army, largely cut off from the country it served[2], worshipping its own secular saints, honoring its own traditions, and as contemptuous of civilians as the civilians were of the soldiers. The enlisted man's lot was a mix of harsh discipline, degrading fatigue duty, and dull rote training. Operational budgets were below subsistence level because of the Depression and years of isolationist politics. There was just enough ammunition to fire qualification in the spring and summer, not enough gasoline available to train with anything heavier than light vehicles (such tanks as there were sat in the motor pool), and no political will to change things until the late 1930's. Much of Army life was endless listless routine for low pay and little respect.

The peacetime draft instituted in 1940 started a change that would affect the Army for decades to come. From a ground strength of 620,774 at the end of 1940[3], the Army grew by the eve of Pearl Harbor to 1,460,998; by 1945 there were around eleven million under arms[4]. The influx of draftees strained the Army's capacity to house and train the mobilized numbers. Camps – predominantly pyramidal tents or shacks on wooden pallets, with mud streets, plank sidewalks, and desperate supply problems – sprang up across the nation. The Regular Army had to supply the cadres to train the new recruits, and that cadre was spread thin and inventing new methods every day. The need for experienced officers was so far beyond the Regulars and the output of ROTC and West Point that the Command and General Staff School was actually closed down for a time to release senior and middle-grade officers for active assignments, while the faculty turned to writing new field manuals by the dozens.


The new draftees were quite unlike the old hands who had been manning the Army. Strict medical standards screened out hundreds of thousands whose health had been stunted by poverty and poor nutrition in the 1930's[5], and their educational levels varied from the ridiculous to

[2] Just like today!
[3] Larger than today!
[4] If we had conscripted at a per capita rate equivalent to the other belligerent powers, the numbers would have been at least twice as high. But America was truly the arsenal of democracy, and had we shifted all available and physically qualified manpower to active service we would never have been able to perform such feats as launching a liberty ship or victory ship every 48 hours.
[5] One side effect of the Depression was to give new life to diseases conquered or banished so long ago they didn't even have Latin names.

the sublime – from college graduates to the barely literate. At the same time, the sudden arrival of war resulted in the relentless involuntary retirement of large numbers of overage but experienced noncoms – an error that would cost the Army dearly during the hectic expansion.

Attitudes were different among draftees. Although it is generally forgotten, the Depression had triggered a leftward turn in attitudes, and many new soldiers were wary of discipline and the traditional Army caste system (the Communist Party was active in America in the 1930's and 40's[6]), and brought into the mainstream of soldier values a much wider range of beliefs and tolerances. The post stockades did a land office business.

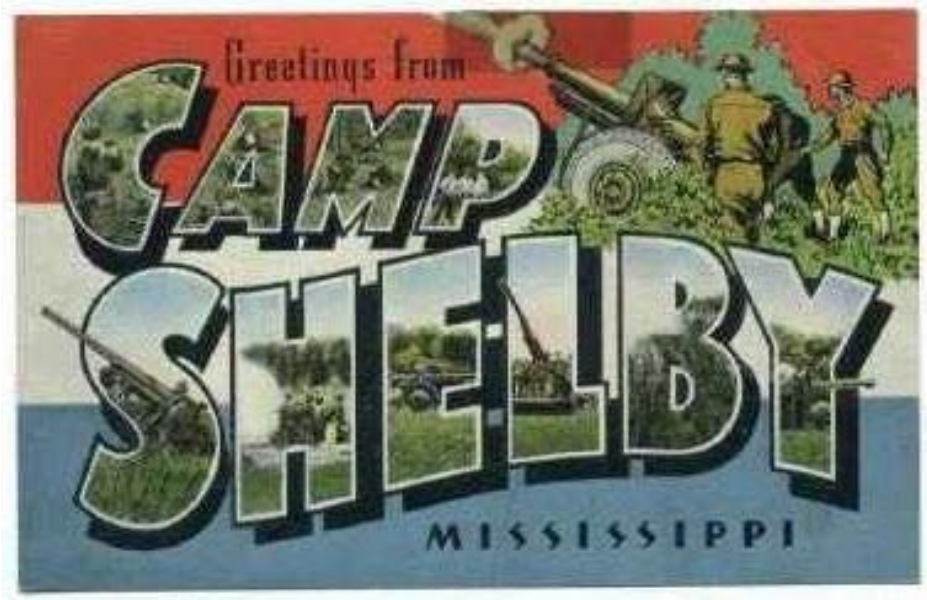
Until Pearl Harbor, public support for war was abysmally low, despite the obvious urgency of events in Europe. Renewal of the peacetime draft passed Congress by *one vote* in 1941, not long before the Japanese attack. Interestingly, isolationist policy was a conservative position; the American Left was much more warlike, particularly as the threat to the Soviet Union increased.

As months passed, more qualified draftees began to move into NCO positions as the Army expanded beyond the available prewar leader pool; sheer Darwinian merit prevailed to fill leader positions. But despite the turnover, the general traditions of Army life survived. It is those that we must understand and honor if we are to interpret that critical time.

It is useful to understand how the expansion was done. Divisions were formed and trained together, then deployed together – a great tool for building cohesion and morale. However, just before deployment, each division was "taxed" large numbers of good officers and NCO's to form the leadership base ("cadre" used as a verb) of new divisions. Leadership was somewhat anemic because of this necessary practice. It's also important to understand that most of the earlier divisions trained together; only later did draftees and enlistees go into a general replacement pool to be centrally trained (Basic Individual rather than Basic Unit Training). The program was also speeded up to feed the mobilization, and there were never enough combat veterans available to staff the training divisions in the States. The result (of the "individual replacement system") was questionably trained replacements trying to fit in with veterans who had been together from the start (a problem dramatized in "Band of Brothers").

[6] When we read abut the Red Scare and the McCarthy abuses of the late 40's and early 50's, it is hard to understand why these attitudes were prevalent. Those alive and sentient at the time remember that the Depression and the war left us with a legacy of political leftism that had been driven underground. There were quite a few Reds around—though some threats were hallucinated or manufactured for political reasons, and the degree of actual threat exaggerated, there was a residue of radicalism.

## *Life in the Army*




These middle-of-nowhere camps – a "camp" being a temporary installation, the permanent ones designated "fort" – were often bleak places to live and learn. They were usually thrown together in record time. Barracks, if there were any, were cold or hot according to the season; food was basic, but generally plentiful (wartime enforces attention to priorities). Amusements for the limited free time were bare-bones – a drafty post theater, small post exchanges[7] where soldiers waited in long lines to buy a candy bar, maybe a pass into the nearest town – if one happened to be handy. (The expression "gonorrhea gulch" often described small communities overwhelmed by lonely and bored trainees.)

The Army in garrison is dull routine punctuated by frustration and despair, gallows humor, and glimmers of hope.

One thing we miss in reenacting – even at the Gap – is the Army day. There is a sameness to the daily activities, and it is a somewhat troubling reality that soldiers and others in such jobs tend to be comfortable with routine and annoyed when it is broken. This also happens in prison populations. A day ran something like this:

**0615: Reveille** ("Drop your cocks and grab your socks!"). Soldiers quickly dress and shave.

**0645: First call** (the tune they play as the horses walk to the starting gate at the Derby) alerts the troops that formation is nigh.

**0650: Assembly** (another bugle call. Some of these calls were so familiar the soldiers had words for them.) At the last note, every soldier not excused from formation had to be in place or risk company punishment.

**0715: Breakfast**. Rubbery eggs, greasy fried potatoes, limp toast; maybe SOS[8] (always popular) or some fried spam. A lot of grab-ass in line.

[7] A modern PX, by contrast, resembles a medium-size Wal-Mart where one finds anything a department store would carry.
[8] "Shit on a shingle" (officially, creamed chipped beef on toast.

**0800: Fatigue**. Soldiers policed the barracks area, cleaned the latrines, hauled trash, or prepared for inspection. A police inspection followed. Cleaning latrines was always popular. Most troublesome was the urinal: not the slick ceramic fixture in public facilities today, but a sheet metal trough that sloped slightly to let the piss drain away. Fatigue was despised by soldiers. It came as a result of the duty roster kept by the First Sergeant; assignments were supposed to be fair and evenly distributed, but the Top could use it to influence problem soldiers by assigning them to less desirable fatigue duties.

James Jones, in his novel *From Here to Eternity* (the greatest novel ever written about the Unites States Army), described fatigue in this way:


> There is, in the Army, a little known but very important activity appropriately called Fatigue. Fatigue, in the Army, is the very necessary cleaning and repairing of the aftermath of living. Any man who has ever owned a gun has known Fatigue, when, after fifteen minutes in the woods and perhaps three shots at an elusive squirrel, has gone home to spend three quarters of an hour cleaning up his piece so it will be ready the next time he goes into the woods. Any woman who has ever cooked a luscious meal and ladled it out in plates upon the table has known Fatigue, when after the glorious meal has been eaten, she repairs to the kitchen to wash the congealed gravy from the plates and the slick grease from the cooking pots so they will be ready to be used this evening, dirtied, and so washed again. It is the knowledge of the unendingness and of the repetitious uselessness, the do it up so it can be done again, that makes Fatigue.
>
> And any man who shoots his gun at squirrels and then gives it to his young son with orders to clean, any woman who cooks the succulent meal and gives the dishes to the non-cooking daughter to be washed – those grownups know the way an officer feels about Fatigue. The son and daughter can understand the way an enlisted man feels about Fatigue.

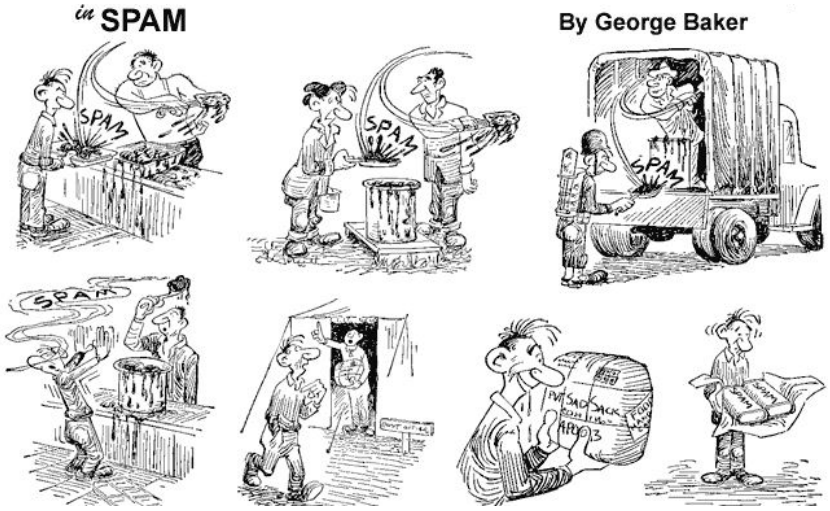
[NOTE: In the novel, drill was in the morning and fatigue in the afternoon. This was the result of weather cycles in the Hawaiian Islands where the novel was set. Drill was put aside in the rainy season – when rain was a daily annoyance – and intense in the dry season. It was the "Pineapple Army," and unique.]

A special kind of fatigue was "motor stables." This evolved from the horse cavalry and persisted after that branch shifted from oats to gasoline, though the bugle call remained the same *("Come to the stable as fast as you're able/ To curry your horses and give them some corn/ For if you don't do it the captain will know it/And then you will rue it as sure as you're boooorn!"*). At motor stables, vehicle crews maintain their equipment.

**0900: Drill**. This had its popular bugle call: *"Fall out for drill/Like hell I will/I ain't had no chow – fall out for drill/You bet I will/Comp'ny commander's here noooow."* Drill was of two types: close order and extended order. Close order was marching – drill and ceremonies. Extended order was tactics training. Drill could be switched to physical training – generally "setting up" exercises, vaguely related to modern stretching exercises, as a warm-up followed by a "daily dozen" that included by 1943 side straddle hop ("jumping jacks"), bend and reach, deep knee bends, four-count or eight-count pushups, situps, squat thrusts (then called "burpees"), and other favorites (see FM 21-20 and the entertaining War Department Pamphlet 21-9). This was often replaced by hikes. Running in formation, except in the parachute units, was not as common as it is today.[9] Aerobic fitness was reinforced by calisthenics and other activities. (Overweight draftees were comparatively rare. Being underweight was a more serious problem.) There was also training in unarmed combat (now called "hand to hand" or "combatives"). In those days it was based on popular principles of judo as taught in big-city dojos. Nowadays it combines classic principles with elements of Korean taekwondo.

In many cases, close-order drill was in the morning, extended order in the afternoon.

**1200: Midday meal**. This has "mess call" to entertain the troops, called "soupy" (from French bugle call, *Soupe*): *"Soupy, soupy, soupy/Without a single bean/Porky, porky, porky/Without a streak of lean/Coffee, coffee, coffee/Without any cream."* This was unchanged since the 1860's. There were favorite meals, such as beans and franks. According to James Jones, favorites lost popularity if served too often; beans and franks, sometimes called "stars and stripes" became "rat turds and dog turds" if overused. Salty-sweet Spam, pork




[9] In my day (1966-1992) the runs were the core activity, as the airborne culture had spread to the whole Army. These runs were typically 1-5 miles, depending on the unit's mission and the preferences of the commander; they usually took place before breakfast. Recently the Army revised its physical conditioning regime, mixing distance runs with sprints for more aerobic range, and mixing Crossfit exercises that stress both fast-twitch and slow-twitch neuromuscular pathways.

The version of FM 21-20 at the start of the war was antiquated. Almost immediately the Army recognized that getting soldiers into physical shape was essential and there wasn't a lot of time available to make it happen. The manual was revised with changes that became training bulletins explaining the new methods. These didn't result in a complete new FM 21-20 until 1946, though the methods were pretty much in place by the beginning of 1943.

The central feature of the WWII PT program was hikes, since most regiments were "leg" infantry and combat outcomes often depend on movement rates. Other exercises were added by 1944 for variety and to offer different conditioning paths – most notably grass drills, guerrilla exercises, and the ever-popular log drills.

shoulder and ham pulverized and crammed appetizingly into a large tin, was also popular unless overused (it is still the official state food of Hawaii!). There was great dissatisfaction among occupation forces in Europe after 1945 as commissaries tried to use up huge wartime surpluses of the stuff. After a few weeks of nothing but Spam, you're ready to scarf cat food (which spam closely resembles). SOS was a popular breakfast meal when I was young—we never got tired of it.

In garrison, meals were either A rations (fresh meat and vegetables) or B rations (canned meat, dried or canned veggies), but usually a mix. Powdered eggs were common because of storage problems; real eggs kept too long would, as Herman Wouk put it, "dissolve your fillings." Powdered eggs could be stored without refrigeration and resuscitated in boiling water, and efficient process that tasted, unfortunately, like shit.

To keep control of personnel, there was a formation and troops marched to the mess hall.

Generally there was a period of personal time after lunch. This was inserted in the schedule because of the mental and physiological decline in the early afternoon (called the "postprandial dip"—*prandium* is Latin for lunch). They would doze off or fumble anyway, so not much is lost with a short break.

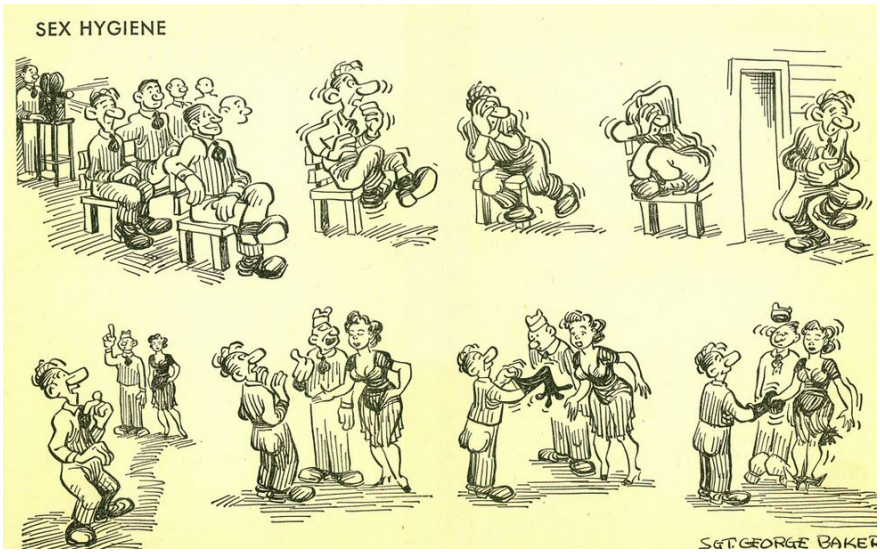
**1300: Drill** again.

**1600: Recall from drill**; personal maintenance time.

**1700: Retreat formation**. The entire regiment falls in to honor the flag as it is lowered.

**1730: Supper meal**

To break up this routine, there were troop information classes ("Why We Fight"; "VD Prevention"[10]), organized athletics, and other adventures in soldiering. Drill was frequently replaced by classroom or outdoor sit-around training (class call: *"It's CLASS—CALL. Oh, it's CLASS—CALL. I don't want to go to class, but I gotta go to class, I don't want to go to class, but I gotta goooo."*)




After supper, there might be free time, or extra training (see "crime and punishment", below), or extra duty – soldiers are paid for 24 hours a day, and quitting time is up to the commander's discretion!

[10] This film was so graphic it defies description. Venereal disease was endemic because of the large, horny transient military population with no source of release but assorted floozies (it was a great time to be an ugly girl). The film used the same approach as those grisly pictures of highway wrecks used to make high schoolers slow down a bit. It came close to stopping the baby boom.

Basic training was somewhat different from that at a settled camp with a veteran unit. For the peacetime Army, there was a mood of busywork and listlessness that often defied the motivating efforts of the leadership. In the training camps of Army Ground Forces, there was too much to do in too little time; the pace was naturally more intense.

## *Duty*

In addition to scheduled training, there would be a lot of extra duties available to build soldiers' character. Here we need to look briefly at the concepts of "straight duty" and "special duty."

Straight duty for a lower enlisted man was in a rifle squad or some other combat slot. With straight duty came drill, drill, and more drill, plus the joys of guard, KP, and other work assigned by roster. Special duty men performed work that made them exempt from drill and other infelicities of soldier life. Special duty included the clerks and jerks (company and supply), cooks, and, particularly in the prewar Army, the bugler. The SD men rode the gravy train, at least from the point of view of the dog soldiers[11] doing straight duty.

**KP** – kitchen police – requires a special note. This was a detail that most soldiers dreaded, even though it excused you from training. The mess hall was run by a mess sergeant – an important figure who generally was not pestered by the First Sergeant, who and answered to a regimental mess officer (usually a warrant officer). There were assigned cooks, most notably the first cook, who might be a T/5, and a staff of permanent cooks (who, as the observant James Jones put it, "got KP every day, but too dumb to know it"). Preparing, serving, and cleaning up after meals required more manpower, and this came from the duty roster.


If you had KP on a given day, you tried to show up early – jobs were usually handed out first come, first served. Most desirable was DRO, or "dining room orderly", who served the officers and senior NCOs (officers had a special section in the mess hall – and they paid for their meals in cash[12]). The DROs were waiters and general gophers; they didn't have the dirtier jobs.

[11] "Dog soldier", which morphed in the early 40's into "dogface" is of uncertain origin but some antiquity. It is said to derive from the late 19th Century, a reference to the Dog Soldiers of the Cheyenne Nation (who were the tribal police, not elite warriors), but this may be too much to hope for. The version "dogface" appeared in the 40's, and was immortalized in "Dogface Soldier," the official song of the 3rd Infantry Division. It means a line infantry soldier – doughfoot, grunt, cricket-cruncher, etc. Parachute infantry referred to straight heavy infantry as "straightlegs" or just "legs." Marines called them "doggies."

[12] Most are not aware of this, but officers are for historical reasons administered in a way distinct from enlisted men. An officer pays for any meal received in the mess hall or the field (we had to pay cash for C rations in Ranger School!). Officers are issued field gear (TA-50/501) and turn it in when they transfer; but they buy their own uniforms (and receive a small "uniform allowance" that does not cover much of the cost).

Worst of the jobs was pots and pans ("pearl diving") – the P&P soldier scrubbed large cooking equipment in deep sinks until spotless. This was hard on the skin, and left the KP greasy and worn out with fingers and palms that would soon start to peel. You could also end up with joyful jobs like peeling spuds (no cook would deign to peel anything) and scrubbing garbage cans. When you finished KP, you knew you had done a day's work. In a company, you generally didn't pull it more than once a month – and that was enough. It was also a good reason to buck for rank, since only privates and pfc's drew KP.

**Guard**: This was another unpopular duty, as it was for 24 hours and – in WWII – without "compensatory time" to catch up on sleep. Sergeants and below drew this, with duties appropriate to rank (though the guard detail also needed a sergeant of the guard and a couple of corporals of the guard). It was an important job, and all soldiers memorized the eleven general guard orders in Basic Training. At guard mount there was an inspection (you had to be clean and polished), and the Officer of the Guard[13] might well require you to sound off with, say, the fifth guard order ("I will quit my post only when properly relieved"). You generally walked a two-hour post, with some time set aside for sleep.

**CQ**: Junior NCO's often pulled a duty called CQ, or "Charge of Quarters." This was the poor soul who sat in the Orderly Room after duty hours and answered the telephone; there was a runner on standby.

**Fire guard**: Every barracks had a fire guard awake at all times.

**ED**: The most desirable category was ED, or "excused duty." This didn't happen very often, and usually resulted from an injury that was not serious enough for hospitalization but too serious for normal duty and training. ED's were commonly called the "sick lame and lazy squad", or, in the Civil War, the "puny squad."[14]

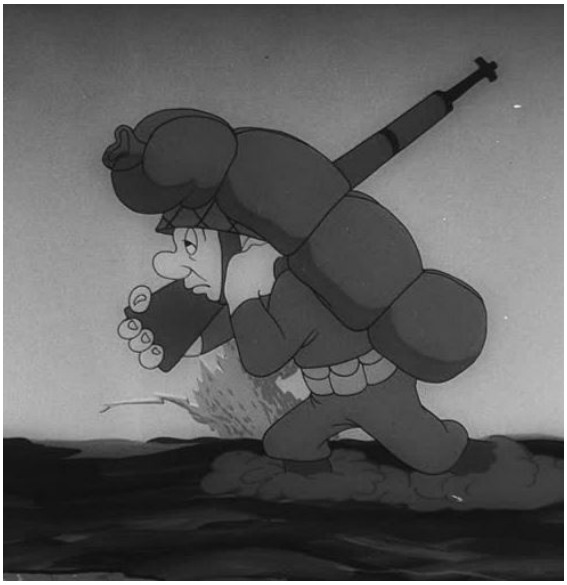
[13] Officer guard duties were specialized. The Officer of the Guard (OG) ran the guard details for a specified organization; there was also an Officer of the Day (OD) for the whole installation. Finally there was the Staff Duty Officer (SDO), who stayed up all night to answer important calls, check safes, etc.

[14] Around this time the Medical Corps came up with what is called the "profile." Six medical categories were established (P=physical capacity (stamina); U=upper extremities; L=lower extremities; H=hearing and ears; E=eyes; S=psychiatric). Together these spelled "PULHES." If you were squared away in all areas, each had a value of "1", for a physical profile of 111111, or "picket fence". If you were slightly nearsighted, you might have a profile of 111121. If you were a nut case you might be 111115 (this was determined by psychiatric exam, something like "Do you hate your mother? Do you hate your father? Do you jerk off? Are you queer? Next man . . ."). If you broke an arm, you might have a temporary profile (131111, for example) and be exempt from certain activities.

## *Crime and Punishment*

In WWII, soldiers were subject to the Articles of War; this draconian document was replaced after the war by the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), which is still the standard. The Articles of War were a bit looser on what is now called "nonjudicial punishment" under Article 15 of the UCMJ. This was minor correction applied without the formality of a court martial, and was then called "company punishment."

Company punishment had one overwhelming advantage – it was not part of the soldier's official record. It was, in fact, "nonjudicial." It also entirely under the authority and discretion of the company commander, which could sometimes lead to abuse. Company punishment generally consisted of "extra training", which could mean denial of pass privilege, unscheduled hikes in full field pack, special work details, or such generally frowned-upon activities as digging a large hole and filling it in. It was particularly effective (and hated) because it was conducted during the soldier's free time. There was little free time under good circumstances, and using it up with unpleasant activities was infuriating.



There were two important limitations to company punishment. First, it was not assigned in the form of extra helpings of regular duty, such as interior guard. These were "duties" that a soldier performed because he was a soldier, and were not to be confused with punishment. The duty roster was in the hands of the First Sergeant, and most played it straight – messing with the duty roster to punish soldiers was considered classic "chicken shit" (see below). Second, a soldier was not required to accept company punishment; if he felt he was being unfairly treated, he had the right to demand a court-martial to sort the matter out, which is what happened in the famous latrine inspection flap between Dick Winters and Captain Sobel. Of course, the soldier took a big chance doing this, since the officers empanelled to hear his case might disagree as to the injustice and hand down a verdict significantly in excess of the company punishment.

[After the war (and with the introduction of the UCMJ (Uniform Code of Military Justice, which replaced the Articles of War), a soldier charged with a court-martial offense could demand to have an enlisted member on the board. This seldom happens; the enlisted member assigned is usually a senior NCO who is likely to be far less sympathetic to a miscreant enlisted man than any officer who might sit

in his place. The UCMJ also replaced "company punishment" with nonjudicial punishment under Article 15. This last was meant to curb abuses, but it also insured that any infraction cited against a soldier went on his permanent record.]

Most courts martial did not deal with major crimes. The common charges were absent without leave or pass, drunk on duty, insubordination, and other peccadilloes pretty much reflecting violations of Army discipline rather than things a civilian would recognize as big, fat, hairy deals. Sentences, depending on the seriousness of the offense, could range from an official reprimand to reduction in grade to stockade time. I suspect something equivalent to the manpower of a corps was in the stockade at any given time during the peak of the war.


Repetitive minor insubordination was, in those days, often handled by "NCO justice," in which the squad leader would simply take the ne'er-do-well to a secluded spot behind the barracks and beat the crap out of him. This generally worked well, for two reasons: there was no spot on the soldier's record (and his behavior was generally corrected by NCO justice) and there was a sort of personal touch involved instead of the arid, authoritarian formal company punishment because no officer got involved. (Mort Walker, creator of "Beetle Bailey," clearly recalls NCO justice from his Army days; his comic strip is frozen in the early 1950's, when the practice was still common.[15])

Particularly in theater, there was also an option called "disciplinary company." This was a last alternative to a bad conduct discharge (BCD), which was undesirable because lack of an honorable discharge could complicate finding employment in the postwar years, as many "tough guys" learned. Hard cases went to disciplinary company, usually at Division. The experience was to be avoided – the training provided the Dirty Dozen of movie fame was mild compared to life in the hell of disciplinary company.

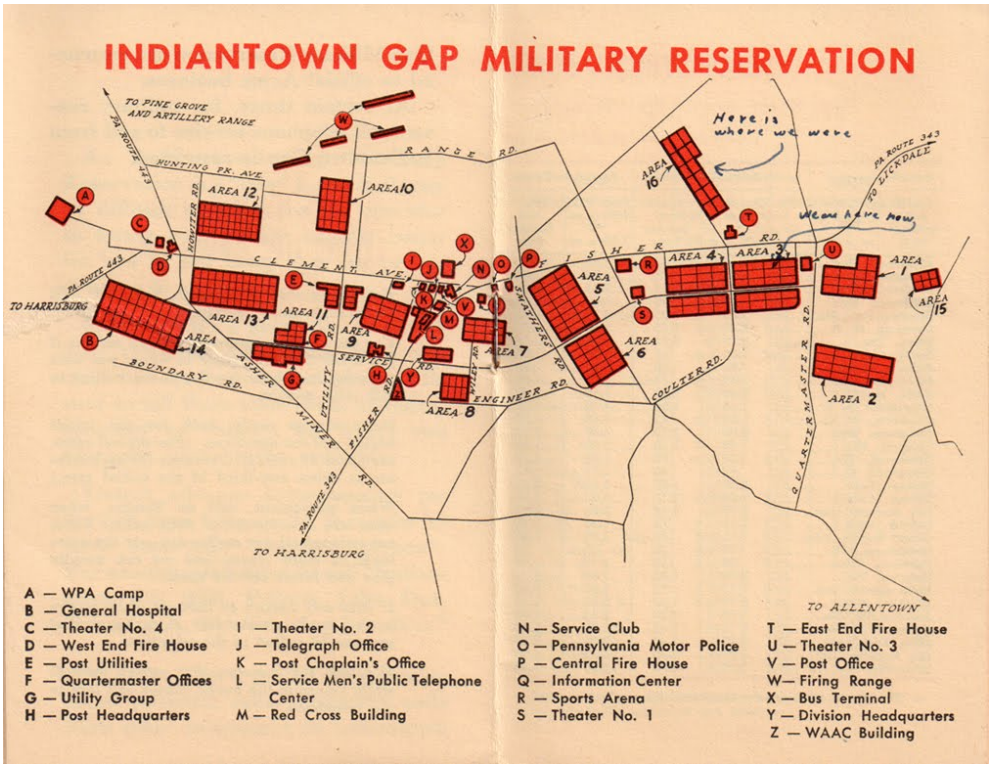
A hard case could also be transferred to another company for one last chance before imposition of a BCD, on the quaint notion that new leadership might straighten out the soldier before it was too late. This happened in my company in 1970 in Viet Nam, resulting in a rather long episode involving a First Sergeant who threw people though doors without opening them first and a monkey named Maurice who drank Budweiser from a can and suffered from intense body odor – a story like that of the Giant Rat of Sumatra for which "the world is not yet ready."

[15] I've read Beetle Bailey for something like fifty years, and it has changed. There was a time when it reflected the American man's recollections of the Army, and included quite a few "in-jokes" understood best by soldiers and vets. When the draft ended in the 70's, a new comic strip was born; the artist had to go "generic" as his former audience dried up. (However, Beetle first appeared in the Missouri State student paper, before he (and Mort Walker, who matriculated at Mizzou) faced the draft.) He still appeared in *Army Times* – maybe he still does. During the cynical Army years of Viet Nam, there was a privately circulated cartoon strip (not by Walker) in which Beetle finally took off that fatigue cap. Tattooed on his forehead was the sentiment "fuck the Army."

## *Life in garrison: The company area*

Home living was of three kinds: bivouac, in which soldiers encamped in the field under two-man tents; cantonment, which was for a longer period and generally mean under squad (pyramidal) tents with hot meals, latrines, maybe a theater under the big top. Garrison was a settled post, camp, or station, with wooden barracks or even fancier permanent structures. A "fort" was a permanent Army facility; a "camp" was a mustering point used in mobilization training. A "station" was a temporary sluice gate for soldiers in transit. Forts are forever; camps are supposed to vanish when the war is over – and many were built in a temporary fashion with standard wooden barracks that could be put up in a short time; since they were supposed to be temporary, they were not supposed to be durable. As we know, a few installations are still using them. Major forts generally have buildings of brick or concrete; old camps (now all designated forts, like Fort Indiantown Gap) might have temp buildings still going after 60 years.

[As early as the mid 1950's, a peculiar hazard complicated the razing of these buildings. In the latrines, there were slots below the sink mirrors into which used razor blades were discarded. Since stainless steel razors had not been invented, a blade was good for one shave and one shave only, unless you were my old buddy "Nick" Von Schnepel who went cheap on blades and as a consequence regularly appeared at reveille formation with bloody bits of toilet paper stuck on his face. The result over the years was a huge buildup of used razor blades, out of sight and of mind until the buildings came down, when special handling was required to dispose of them. I believe most of them were collected and melted down and subsequently converted into my family's 1954 Studebaker, which would explain several intriguing mysteries.]




Let's look at a typical company area in garrison, using Indiantown Gap as an example.

The buildings were arranged in row, long way: Mess Hall, Orderly room, barracks (3-4), supply room.

The company headquarters was the Orderly Room, usually a separate building. The company officers had their offices there, as did the First Sergeant and the company clerk. This was an important place to Private Snuffy. For one thing, if he were called to the Orderly Room, it was usually bad news: "Yer mother died;"[16] or you were in some kind of trouble. You generally had to report to the Orderly Room to sign out before you went on pass, and usually be inspected, and to sign in again when you returned.

Usually sharing the same building as the orderly room was the Day Room. The day room was a place to relax during those rare moments when you had nothing else to do. There were some ragged old magazines and newspapers, maybe a pool table, some chairs and an ugly vinyl sofa. Real luxury. (This was supported by the "unit fund", which received contributions from the operations of the PX system; a unit fund council, chaired by the CO, found ways to spend it, which is where those ugly vinyl sofas came from. This was separate from the other fund – either unmentioned or called in hushed voices "the slush fund" – that let the First Sergeant help soldiers out of ready cash pay for haircuts, etc. It was not legal, but every company had one.)

Each platoon generally had a separate barracks, two floors each with two squads per floor. There were rooms set aside for platoon sergeants and above, plus showers and latrine and bunk space for supernumerary enlisted like the company clerk and supply sergeant. (Officers did not live in barracks.

[16] An old Army story. The grizzled top sergeant had no tact or empathy for soldiers' personal misfortunes. At formation one day he yelled out "Hey, Kabibble, yer mother died! Report to the CO!" The Captain was horrified and told him to handle bad news with more sensitivity. Later that month Private Slipschitz's father passed away suddenly. At formation: "All men with two living parents take one step forward. Where the %@$&# are you going, Slipschitz?"

They had their own housing – usually no fancier than the men's, but with more privacy – in a bachelor officer quarters, or BOQ. These quarters had less supervision, and sometimes combined the worst features of the *garçonniere* and the Bates Motel.)

The supply room held various classes of Quartermaster and Ordnance supply – clothing and equipment for issue; ammunition and weapons were stored in the arms room, usually attached and heavily locked for security. The supply sergeant and supply clerk ran this operation.

The mess hall was at the head of the company row (for reasons that go back to the pre-Civil War encampment regulations, which actually form the basis for the fixed camp of the 1940's). The Mess Sergeant ruled here, assisted by the First Cook and the permanent cook staff. A company in garrison for an extended period would probably spend money from the company fund to spruce up the mess hall a bit.

Also available – though you might have to slog through mud to get there – were a small Post Exchange (PX) and an EM Club where you could get a beer. (There was also an NCO Club and an Officers' Club.)

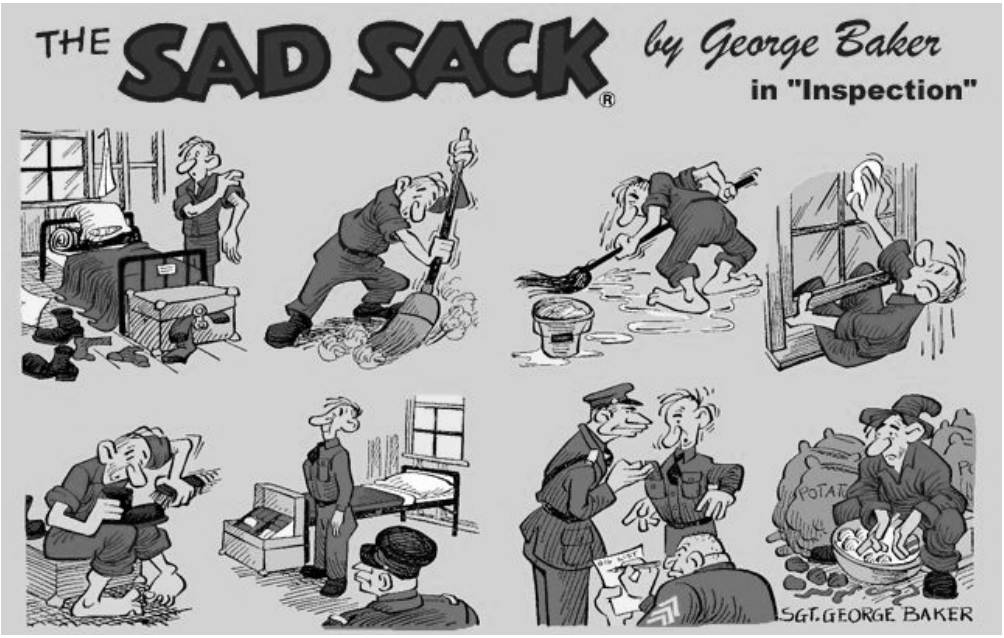
## *Going on pass*

If you were lucky, you might get a pass. A pass is formal permission to be absent from post for a short time – generally no more than 72 hours, usually shorter. For longer absences, a formal leave was necessary, and this was rare unless you were going from one post to another or had a special leave for emergency or travel. A whole regiment could be granted a furlough for a set period, usually a break before port call to head overseas, a few days to kiss your mother goodbye and get laid one last time. ("Hey, come on – a month from now I may be lying dead in a ditch . . .")

A pass, as the NCO's would tell you, is a privilege – not a right. You had to earn it by good behavior and satisfactory progress in training and proficiency – duty always came first. You could not go on any pass if you had a duty – guard, KP, etc. – to perform, and you had to report to the Orderly Room to sign out. The duty NCO or First Sergeant would usually inspect you; depending how chicken shit (see *infra*) he was, you might have to go back to the barracks to make corrections to your uniform.

But a pass made life worth while. Stories of life on an old-fashioned pass are rapidly fading. A good account is in Neil Simon's play "Biloxi Blues" and in the late Jean Shepherd's short story "Zinsmeister and the Treacherous Eighter from Decatur." (Jean Shepherd's tales were used to create such films as "A Christmas Story.") Another humorist and veteran, Art Buchwald, wrote a useful guide on how to get laid on pass, and I will say without further elaboration that Mel Brooks (a WWII sergeant) had an even better plan.

## *Grades of shit: bull, chicken, and nit*




A common, if rhetorical, question asked by soldiers is: "How do I get out of this chicken shit outfit?" The expression "chicken shit", which can be used in the sense of a noun or predicate nominative ("Sobel is chicken shit") or of an adjective ("that chicken shit bastard"), referred to a perceived overemphasis on details that would not matter in combat. Most identifiable splots of chicken shit had to do with the niceties of garrison life – mopped and buffed linoleum, shined service shoes, details of haircut and display, too-frequent inspections, and other things a Freudian military analyst would call "anal-retentive" as opposed to the other pole of soldier behavior – "phallic-aggressive"; I'm not making this up. Garrison soldiers and field soldiers even have their own subcategories of obscenity. (I wrote a paper on that topic when I was just out of grad school. It was rejected by the social psychology journal.)

Chicken shit, like most things pejorative, tends to be in the eye of the beholder, though I already wish I had not put it quite that way. One man's attention to detail is another man's petty harassment; what seems a natural article of discipline to a Regular NCO or a West Point or ROTC lieutenant can look like pointless busywork to a stressed private. Everyone understands and generally accepts a "nit shit" detail (which technically refers to the excreta of the nymph stage (nit) of the common body louse, *Pediculus vestimenti* – far smaller than the droppings of a chicken!) like close attention to grit or crud in the workings of the rifle – this is understandable attention to detail run a bit amok. Chicken shit begins where the combat edge of nit shit dulls.

"Bullshit," of course, refers to obvious larger-scale injustices – mass punishment, general cancellation of passes, drilling in the rain, bad food in the mess hall, frequent changes of schedule and other bugaboos of soldiering. Bullshit is expected and likened to the Homeric understanding of the workings of Fate – even the gods are subject to bullshit, and there is no point losing sleep about it. A soldier can use the term "bullshit" with a smile or a laugh – not so "chicken shit," which earns no better than a sneer.

A good example of bullshit is "hurry up and wait." If regiment says Able Company is to be on the range by 0830, battalion decides to get them there by 0800 to avoid any chance of being late; company anticipates battalion by specifying 0730. When the order came all the way from SHAEF to have the 29th ready to embark the landing force in June 1944, I am surprised the soldiers did not arrive at the docks by July 1937. This is bullshit at its most understandable: human frailty squared and cubed and painted OD.

It is also understood that bullshit is subject to the law of gravity: that is, it rolls downhill. It starts at the top – like SHAEF – and keeps sliding like a wet avalanche to lower levels. Guess who is at the bottom. It is bearable because everyone in the chain of command is wearing some of it before it lands on Private Snuffy.

**What ain't we got?** Wartime is a time of shortages, when the citizens do without this or that luxury so the soldiers lack nothing but the sporting probability of a long life.[17] But there are things that soldiers miss, and we need to remind ourselves of these empty places.

First, money is not generally in short supply; what is hard to find is something to spend it on (unless you were on leave or furlough). Life on an Army post was the ultimate expression of inflation – "too many dollars chasing too few goods." If there happened to be a town nearby, money evaporated quickly (minus the allotments you sent home and other deductions), but you were usually too busy to care. Money was like beer – it came in one end and it went out the other in the most natural way, only faster. Gambling was against regulations, which meant you didn't do it when anybody who cared was watching (why else did God make latrines?). Such wealth as there was tended to be redistributed with easy, almost Socialist fluidity. Nobody was going to get rich on Army pay, so why worry? Hedge fund managers lose sleep; privates don't even dream.

So where were the shortfalls?

**Free time**. Time for yourself is more valuable than your monthly pay. The Army does for free time what de Beers, Ltd. does for uncut diamonds: it raises value by austerely limiting supply. You dream of an hour without having to worry about details or police calls or the smell of Private Slipschitz in the next bunk or the way Pfc. Schmuckatello continuously picks his nose. You fantasize about lying on the sofa reading an Earl Stanley Gardner novel or *Life* magazine. You miss having a life distinct from that of the slob next to you. You're ready to strangle Hitler with your bare hands for the violence he has done to your personal life.

**Snacking**. You can't store food in the barracks, as it attracts vermin (nit shit) and doesn't look "military" (chicken shit). Nobody eats except at meal times on most days. Americans, even in the Great Depression, were great snackers – hey, would the Germans have invented Coca-Cola and the Milky Way? – and that's a yearning the Army does not satisfy.

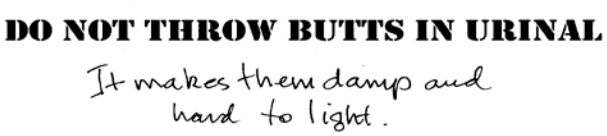
**Sitting down like decent men**. Some obvious things make life unpleasant, one example being the lack of a comfortable place to sit. If you sit on your bunk (usually not permitted during duty hours), you will have to make it again (don't even think about lying down). There are no chairs. In the field the ground is cold and generally wet, and if there are bleachers they are hard and cold and generally wet. The Army issues tons of foot powder, but – tragically – no Preparation H. (Aviators and tankers have it particularly hard – trust me.)

**Privacy**. One thing soldiers immediately miss is the luxury of taking a dump out of view of the passing crowd. (This skips the related problem of the inevitable draftee from Dogpatch who has never seen a toilet and kicks off his Army service by using the urinal for unintended purposes.) No matter how

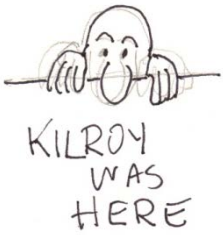
[17] Or so it was in olden days. We have been fighting two wars for more than a decade as I write this, and most Americans have not been obliged to make any particular sacrifice.

touchy a recruit may be on induction, he eventually ceases to care about this problem, anyway – or, like the legendary cattywhampus, gets "real mean."

The urinal in those days was a sheet metal trough with a common flush. Soldiers tended to flick their cigarette butts in the urinal, which would have to be cleaned by hand by the soldiers detailed on fatigue to clean the latrines. This unpleasantness produced an official sign with a frequent unofficial endorsement:




A frequent witness to this drollery was a mysterious character named Kilroy, who was everywhere:




**Sex**. An unavoidable side effect of the training camps and deployments was the unavailability of safe and sane sexual release. Deprivation when no sex is reasonably available seems worse than deprivation when there is still some hope, however faint; that is, even those who were not getting it back home miss it even more at Camp Runamuck, Alabama. Unlike famously civilized France, America has never countenanced the idea of the "field brothel" (or, in the Foreign Legion, the institution of the company camel – on the back of which, I hasten to explain, the men ride into town to seek release at a bordello). The United States Army is opposed to casual sex as an official policy, but generally accepts pinups and other institutions that make that policy more cruel and less practical than it need be (at the same time that it limits other forms of release: see "privacy", above). Sex, as Bill Mauldin's avatars put it, is a "revrint subject." The Army also makes condoms available and wishes it could find a way to make them mandatory without actually stapling them in place. As noted earlier, one who has seen the infamously graphic 1942 training film on venereal disease will ever see love in quite the same way again; no audiovisual device has ever done so much to suppress *eros* and encourage *agape*. Not that any soldier is known to have actually desisted for purely hygienic reasons. They just worried more during the intermissions (that is, "between intromissions").[18]

**Mind food**. Much of what soldiers do is so routine and so repetitive that any source of mental stimulation is a relief. If the *Stars and Stripes* was too tame or official-sounding, *Yank* was a little less "revrint" (it was the difference between Willie and Joe and the Sad Sack as models). A letter from home was golden – the troops would eat dirt and drink hydraulic fluid rather than miss mail call. The sorry

[18] In Viet Nam in 1970, the first sergeant of my company invented an ingenious way of easing venereal infelicities. Convenient outdoor urinals – "piss tubes" – were installed by inserting the sheet metal prop charge casings of 155mm rounds in the ground with some gravel to ease absorption. The Top added a sort of handle bar for any soldier recovering from gonorrhea to hold as he urinated – an exquisitely painful experience when you have the clap.

friends and family back on the home front should do time in Purgatory watching the faces of soldiers who didn't get mail when they needed it.

## *Time perspectives*

Why did men serve?

(1) Serving in the Army is like hitting yourself on the head with a hammer because it feels *so good* when you stop.

(2) They hunted you down and put you in jail if you didn't.

(3) It was arguably better than being identified as 4F during a war everybody knew had to be fought to the finish.

(4) Women wanted to help the war effort, too. There was an easy way to do this while having a good time and getting at least dinner and a drink or two, so there was some value in wearing the uniform for that reason alone.

(5) Great friends, travel opportunities, good food.

Most veterans have good and bad memories of the Army; they tend to tell us about the good times and keep the bad ones to themselves because (1) they'd just as soon not relive the bad times, and (2) they soon learn that non-veterans won't understand anyway.

It is this last thing that sets veterans apart – literally a sense of *apartness*, the sharing of experiences that others who have not been through it, even in peace time – will not understand. "We have shared," as Oliver Wendell Holmes put it long after his service in the 1860's, "the uncommunicable experience of war." There is an indescribable sense of the terrible, the inspiring, and the totally, bugfuckingly absurd about the Army and the practice of war, the inevitable and unavoidable imposition of order and logic on sheer madness that would amaze Sartre or render Homer mute as well as blind.

Maybe this is why the veterans just . . . smile and nod.