

Tactical Structure in World War II

France

Leland Ness

30 April 2023

Cavalry

The Mounted Cavalry Squadron	1
The Mounted Cavalry Regiment	3
The Type 1932 Cavalry Division	9
The Cavalry Light Division	12
The DLC Armored Car Regiment	12
The DLC Dragons Portés	19
The DLC Artillery	26
The DLC Division Base	28
The DLC in the Field	31
The Mechanized Light Division	32
The Cavalry Tank Regiment	34
The DLM Dragons Portés	36
DLM Armored Cars	39
DLM Division Base	40
Assessing the DLM	42
Corps Reconnaissance	43

Certainly one of the lessons of the First World War that had not been lost on the French Army was that the advent of the machine gun had stripped the heavy role from the mounted cavalry. No longer could the elan and shock value of the mounted charge hope to overcome the firepower of any but the most dispirited of infantry. The cavalry thus tended to concentrate on the lighter roles of scouting, screening, security, and the ambiguous concept of exploitation. Despite this, the French cavalry was no more lightly armed than its international contemporaries following the war, and indeed, the cavalry regiment had almost as much firepower as its infantry counterpart, the battalion. That the cavalry was still expected to fight was clear, with the 1931 cavalry manual devoting more space to considerations of cavalry in the attack than any other mission, but the attacks contemplated were now to be conducted dismounted, with the cavalry assuming more of the posture of mounted infantry.

The Mounted Cavalry Squadron

For the entire period between the wars, the cavalry line platoon consisted of two sections plus a rifle squad and a platoon headquarters. The platoon headquarters was made up of a lieutenant platoon leader, a private to care for the lieutenant's horse, a dispatch rider, and a corporal who supervised the care and treatment of the platoon's mounts. Each cavalry section (*groupe de combat*) was made up of a sergeant section leader, a scout squad, and a rifle squad. The scout squad consisted of a corporal and five privates, all armed with bolt-action carbines, one of which had a "VB" rifle grenade launcher attachment. The rifle squad was also made up of a corporal and five privates, all but two armed with carbines, these being issued pistols and forming the crew for an M24/29 light machine gun. As well as riding horses for each man a pack horse was provided to carry the machine gun and 1,740 of the squad's 2,290 rounds of LMG ammunition. During the advance to contact the scout squad would move ahead as a line of skirmishers, with the section leader following behind the rifle squad behind him. The frontage assigned to a section was not to exceed 100 meters. When the section reached a point 1,200 meters from where the enemy was, or at least where the section leader thought they might be, the section would dismount if they had not done so already and the rifle squad would pass through the scouts and take up the lead. This 1200-meter figure represented what the French considered the maximum useful range of the M24/29 and enabled the rifle squad to take the enemy under fire and provide a base of fire in concert with which the scout squad could maneuver to the flanks and close with the enemy. At 400 meters the scouts reached the effective range of their carbines and at 170 meters the range of the VB grenade launcher. The section would advance by

bounds until close enough for the assault. In the defense, employment was more flexible, with the section holding a frontage of up to 50 meters.

The cavalry rifle platoon was made up of two such sections plus an extra rifle squad, identical to the rifle squads in the sections. Although mounted combat was an accepted component of cavalry employment, once again considerably more attention was placed on dismounted combat in French tactical doctrine. The initial advance was, of course, made on horseback. Once near the enemy the platoon would dismount and advance in one of several formations. The widest frontage, about 150 meters, was achieved by advancing in two section columns abreast. The platoon could also advance in simple platoon column with the scout squads screening the flanks. Once contact had been made with the enemy the platoon would advance in bounds with each section alternately supporting the other. During this phase the platoon leader could opt to concentrate all the VB grenadiers into an improvised squad to concentrate their firepower.

The cavalry rifle squadron consisted of a headquarters platoon and four rifle platoons. The headquarters platoon was made up of a headquarters element and a trains element. The former included the squadron commander, a captain; two sergeants, one the platoon leader and the other the section leader; a signal team; an observer team; a motorcycle dispatch rider, and a medic. The signal team was made up of a corporal and five privates, with two personnel being trained as carrier pigeon handlers and the other four rated as buglers but with more important secondary duties as radio operators after 1935. The observer team was also a signal unit and consisted of a corporal and three privates trained in optical signaling. Through the 1920s the squadron medic rode his own horse, but in the early 1930s, he was given a sidecar motorcycle with a driver to facilitate evacuation of the wounded. It seems unlikely, however, that he could reach all of the wounded on a motorcycle and in March 1939 the motorcycle and driver were dropped again and the horse reinstated.

The employment of the cavalry squadron was similar to that of the platoon but on a larger scale. The squadron would advance towards the enemy mounted until contact seemed likely or, if scouting had proven inadequate, contact was made. In the event of a surprise meeting between a mounted squadron and the enemy, a mounted charge on the presumably surprised foe was part of the doctrine if undertaken immediately, before the enemy had time to recover his wits and set up a defense. In other cases, dismounted combat was preferred. The squadron would dismount, leaving its horses in one or more areas designated by the

squadron commander. For this purpose, each platoon had a corporal who could oversee the mounts and the efforts of the platoon personnel left behind to guard them while the bulk of the platoon went forward on foot. Additionally, the squadron commander would designate a sergeant from the HQ platoon to supervise the corporals and maintain liaison with the main body of the squadron so that the horses would be ready and available when again needed. In the attack, the squadron would usually have a frontage of 400-500 meters. This could be extended to 600-700 meters under the proper circumstances but, the manuals pointed out, only by increasing the intervals between the platoons rather than by increasing the platoon frontages. Once contact had been made the squadron generally advanced with three platoons up and one back, the reserve platoon generally staying 100-300 meters behind the advance. The squadron commander was responsible for coordination with artillery and other supporting units and the body of the squadron would advance by bounds. If the enemy was defeated and retreated a portion of the squadron would be detailed to pursue on foot, maintaining contact and preventing the enemy from setting up a systematic defense, while the remainder of the squadron remounted. The squadron could also attack "in depth" with a front of about 300 meters and a configuration of two platoons forward and two in reserve. The same was true of the squadron in defense, where it could adopt either a three-forward-one-back posture or a two-forward two-back. In either case, a squadron was usually assigned a defensive front of about 500-700 meters, although this could rise to 1,000 meters in the proper terrain.

The Mounted Cavalry Regiment

The squadron group (*groupe d'escadrons*) was a purely tactical formation consisting of two rifle squadrons and a very small headquarters. The headquarters consisted solely of the group commander, a sergeant to assist him, an optical signal/observer team of a corporal and two privates, two motorcycle dispatch riders, and a private to care for the commander's horse. On occasion this level of command was somewhat analogous to the US "task force" concept, as many regimental commanders preferred to deal directly with their rifle squadrons, thus leaving the group commanders to serve as commanders of any extemporized battle groups the regimental commander may detach for relatively isolated duties or subunits other than the neat two-squadron arrangement shown on organization charts.

In addition to the four rifle squadrons, the cavalry regiment also had a headquarters and platoon. The headquarters platoon was concentrated in the

signal section, which consisted of two sergeants, 5 corporals and 35 privates, all under the supervision of the regimental signal officer. The platoon provided two telephone centers, each of a corporal and five privates, a 13-man optical/carrier pigeon signal section, 4 motorcycle dispatch riders, and, under the 1936 TO&E, an 8-man radio team who manned a transceiver and a receiver to monitor nets above and below the regiment HQ. The platoon was also authorized six ER.40 backpack radios that they were to issue to the squadron or squadron group HQs for use by local personnel. These seven transceivers and one receiver were the total radio assets for the regiment, the squadrons having trained radio personnel but no equipment of their own.

	Officers	Sergeants	Corporals	Privates	Pistols	Carbines	Light MGs	Medium MGs	60mm Mortars	25mm AT Guns	Horses	Wagons	Motorcycles	Field Cars	Light Trucks	Trucks
Regiment Headquarters	7	5	6	45	11	52	0	0	0	0	28	0	4	4	3	0
Headquarters Squadron																
Squadron HQ & Trains	1	3	2	0	2	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	2
Pioneer Squad	0	1	2	15	1	17	0	0	0	0	15	0	0	0	1	1
Supply Platoon	1	3	2	23	2	26	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	7	6
Medical Platoon	2	2	0	18	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	0
Veterinary Section	1	2	2	13	3	15	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	1	1
Two Squadron Groups, each																
Group Headquarters	1	1	1	5	1	7	0	0	0	0	7	0	2	0	0	0
Two Rifle Squadrons, each																
Squadron HQ Platoon																
Squadron HQ	1	2	2	11	2	12	0	0	0	0	16	0	1	0	0	0
Trains Group	0	2	3	7	2	10	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	2
Four Rifle Platoons, each																
Platoon HQ	1	0	1	2	1	3	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0
Two Cavalry Sections, each	0	1	2	10	2	11	1	0	0	0	14	0	0	0	0	0
Rifle Squad	0	0	1	5	2	4	1	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	0
Heavy Weapons Squadron																
Squadron HQ Platoon																
Squadron HQ	1	2	0	8	2	8	0	0	0	0	9	0	1	1	0	0
Trains Group	0	3	3	14	3	17	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	3
Two Machine Gun Platoons																
Platoon HQ	1	0	1	3	2	3	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0
Two MG Sections, each	0	1	3	17	4	17	0	3	0	0	25	2	0	0	0	0
Two Anti-Tank Platoons, each																
Platoon HQ	1	1	0	3	1	3	0	0	0	0	5	0	1	0	0	0
Two Gun Squads, each	0	0	1	10	0	11	0	0	0	1	13	1	0	0	0	0
Mortar Platoon																
Platoon HQ	1	0	1	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0
Two Mortar Sections, each	0	1	2	12	5	10	0	0	2	0	15	4	0	0	0	0

Mounted Cavalry Regiment, from 11 March 1939

The regimental HQ squadron provided the service support for the regiment. A mounted pioneer squad assisted in the preparation and destruction of obstacles and had a light 1.2-ton truck with tools and equipment and a medium truck with "Veyry" bridging equipment. The Veyry bridge was rated at 2 tons capacity for a 9-meter span or could be built as a 21-meter long footbridge across which men could lead horses. The supply platoon provided seven light trucks and five (six after 1938) medium trucks. The light trucks were used for a wide variety of purposes, including carrying armorer's tools, water, fresh meat, etc., while the five-ton medium trucks were allocated one to fuel and four to rations. In July 1938 another medium truck, a 3-ton, was added to carry anti-tank mines in response to the growing armor threat. The veterinary section was somewhat misnamed, in that ten of its eighteen personnel were motor mechanics charged with maintaining the regiment's trucks and motorcycles, for which duty they had a motorcycle and a truck with a light crane. The remainder of the section included the regimental veterinarian and a sergeant and had a light truck for their equipment and personnel transport.

Through the 1920s and into the early 1930s the regimental heavy weapons squadron had consisted of two machine gun platoons and a heavy weapons platoon in addition to the squadron HQ platoon. A machine gun platoon consisted of two sections, each with two medium MGs for ground use and a third MG for anti-air duties. The heavy weapons platoon was made up of a mortar section with two 81mm Stokes mortars and a gun squad with a 37mm infantry gun. By the early 1930s, however, the introduction of two new weapons, the 60mm mle.35 mortar, and the 25mm mle.34 anti-tank gun, mandated a reorganization of the heavy weapons platoon to incorporate these weapons. The definitive TO&Es for the mounted cavalry in the French Army, published in December 1936, finalized these changes.

Under the 1936 TO&E, the heavy weapons squadron consisted of a headquarters platoon, two machine gun platoons, two anti-tank platoons (nominally sections, but commanded by officers), and a mortar platoon. The headquarters platoon included five dispatch riders (four on horseback and one on a motorcycle), a medic, and a section leader in the HQ group, while the trains element included the mess section and supply trucks. One light and one medium truck were given over to the carriage of ammunition, with the former carrying 20,160 rounds of machine gun ammunition and 180 rounds of 60mm ammunition, while the latter carried 37,440 rounds of MG ammunition and

another 180 rounds of 60mm. Another medium truck was used to carry rations and baggage while the third served as a mess truck.

The machine gun platoon consisted of a headquarters and two sections. The headquarters was made up of the lieutenant, a corporal in charge of ammunition resupply, and three privates, one to carry an optical range-finder, one a dispatch rider, and the third to care for and guard the platoon's horses while the unit was dismounted. The section was the smallest tactical machine gun unit according to French doctrine and the weapons were not to be employed singly. The section sergeant commanded two gun squads, each of which was made up of a corporal squad leader, a four-man gun crew, a machine gun repairman, two teamsters, and a guard for the horses. All but the teamsters were mounted on their own riding horses, while the teamsters rode a light 4-horse wagon. Normally the squad's machine gun was carried in the wagon, along with 4,032 rounds of ammunition, but if the situation required the draft horses could be disconnected from the wagon and used as pack animals to bring the machine gun and a portion of its ammunition forward. Since the MG was necessarily fired dismounted the machine gun section was tactically divided into "echelons". The combat force, consisting of the bulk of the sections, was deployed forward to man the machine guns. The animals and wagons, however, were kept behind the battle lines under the command of the transport corporal with the horse-guards, the teamsters, and the machine gun repairmen. In addition to the two general-purpose Hotchkisses held by the machine gun section a third MG was also provided, carried on one of the wagons, for anti-aircraft protection. This weapon did not have a specific dedicated crew but was instead manned by the transport echelon personnel. Thus, when tactically deployed the machine gun platoon would have four Hotchkiss 8mm machine guns forward with their crews, with the transport echelon behind them manning two more machine guns in the air defense role. Depending on the regiment's scheme of maneuver the machine gun platoons could be held together under the squadron commander for use as a regimental base of fire or a platoon or section could be detached to support a specific rifle squadron. During the advance, a section was usually so attached to the lead squadron.

The anti-tank platoon had a headquarters identical to that of the machine gun platoon except that the range-finder was replaced by a motorcycle dispatch rider and the NCO was a sergeant with somewhat broader duties than ammunition supply. The platoon leader commanded two gun squads, each consisting of a corporal, five gun crewmen, a dispatch rider, two teamsters, and two guards for the horses. The teamsters rode a 4-horse wagon with 192 rounds of ammunition

that served as a caisson for the 25mm AT gun. During the brief period between the introduction of the Model 1934 AT gun and the publication of the 1936 TO&Es the 25mm platoon had been a motorized unit using cross-country trucks, but drawbacks had apparently come to light and in 1936 the unit was made a horsed element.

Unlike the other elements of the heavy weapons squadron, the mortar platoon was on a purely pack basis. Each mortar squad was made up of a corporal, a four-man mortar crew, and two pack horse leaders. Each of the men in the squad had a riding horse and in addition, there were two pack horses to carry the 60mm mortar and 60 rounds of ammunition. Two such squads plus a sergeant made up the mortar section. The platoon HQ consisted of the platoon leader, a corporal in charge of ammunition resupply, a dispatch rider, and a guard for the horses. The 60mm mortar was a fairly modern piece and its range of 1,900 meters was the same as that of the earlier Stokes 81mm mortars previously used by the regiment. It was a popular and useful weapon, although too few in number and small in size to be effective at that level of command in heavy combat.

The cavalry regiment as thus configured usually attacked dismounted with both squadron groups on line, with each group having one squadron to the front and one in reserve. Each of the squadrons, in turn, would theoretically have two platoons forward and two in reserve, although a 3-forward 1-back arrangement was also used. The frontage on which a regiment could attack was usually defined as 30 meters for each automatic weapon in the front. The squadrons in the second echelon were usually deployed 200-to 500 meters behind the leading squadrons. Once the front squadrons had fixed the enemy the reserve squadrons could be thrown in at the critical juncture. In defense the regiment could be deployed in one of three configurations: with three squadrons forward and one in reserve, with one squadron group forward and one in reserve, or with each squadron group deploying one squadron forward and one in reserve. Generally, when the frontage involved was small the machine gun platoons remained under the control of the heavy weapons squadron commander, but when the regiment was more spread out they were decentralized to local control.

Each divisional cavalry brigade consisted of a small headquarters and two cavalry regiments. The brigade HQ consisted of four officers and 63 other ranks and had 20 horses and eight motor vehicles for transport. The major component of the brigade headquarters was the signal section, which included an optical signal squad, a dispatch rider squad, and a radio squad. The latter unit operated

two transceivers to maintain normal radio nets above and below the brigade HQ. To effect liaison with supporting units and use the logistics net the brigade relied on attachments from the divisional signal company.

The Type 1932 Cavalry Division

The five cavalry divisions maintained in the metropole by France during the 1920s each consisted of three mounted cavalry brigades and an artillery regiment. The possibilities raised by motorization, however, were recognized quite early and on 4 July 1930 the Defense Minister signed a new cavalry modernization program that envisioned transforming one of the cavalry divisions into a mechanized light division and the motorization of one of the three brigades in each of the remaining cavalry divisions. The 4th Cavalry Division was ordered reorganized as the 1st Mechanized Light Division in 1935 and the 5th Cavalry Division as the 2nd Mechanized Light Division in 1937.

For the remaining three cavalry divisions a new organization had resulted from the Mailly maneuvers of September 1932. This was known as the Type 1932 Cavalry Division and featured, as foreseen in the 1930 plan, a maneuver element of two horsed and one motorized cavalry brigades backed by an artillery regiment of two 75mm battalions and a 105mm battalion. The motorized cavalry brigade was to consist, on mobilization, of an armored car regiment and a motorized infantry (*Dragons Portés*) regiment. The armored car regiment was composed of two battalions (*groupes d'escadrons*), the first battalion consisting of an AMD squadron and two motorcycle rifle squadrons, and the second battalion of an AMR squadron, and two AMC squadrons.

The AMD squadron was equipped with modernized WW I Laffly 50 armored cars and consisted of 125 men divided into four platoons each of 3 armored cars, plus two more armored cars in squadron HQ. The squadron commander's vehicle and each platoon leader's vehicle was equipped with a radio. Each AMR squadron had 144 men divided into four platoons, each with five Renault Model 33 tankettes, with two more AMRs in squadron HQs. As was the case with the AMD squadron, the platoon also included two motorcycle dispatch riders. The AMC platoon had 137 men in four platoons each with three Model 1929 Schneider P-16 half-tracks, with another two half-tracks in squadron headquarters. As before, each platoon also had two motorcycle dispatch riders. As was the case with the AMD squadron, each squadron and platoon commander had a radio in his vehicle. The motorcycle squadron had 148 men tactically divided into four rifle platoons.

The *Dragons Portés* regiment of the 1932 cavalry division was to consist of three

	Officers	Enlisted	Horses	Wagons & Carts	Motorcycles	Road Trucks	Cross-Country Trucks	Heavy Weapons
Division Headquarters	63	260	30	3	0	50	0	
Two Cavalry Brigades, each								
Brigade Headquarters	4	65	20	0	0	8	0	
Two Cavalry Regiments, each								
Regiment Headquarters	7	56	28	0	4	3	0	
Service Squadron	5	99	17	0	5	23	0	
Two Squadron Groups, each								
Group HQ	1	7	7	0	1	0	0	
Two Squadrons, each	5	177	180	0	2	4	0	12 LMG, 1 60mm mort
Heavy Weapons Squadron	6	205	162	8	10	2	10	8 MG, 4 25mm AT
Armored Car Regiment								
Regiment Headquarters								
Scout Group								
Group HQ	2	10	0	0	5	2	0	
Two Motorcycle Squadrons, each	5	145	0	0	70	6	0	16 LMG, 1 60mm mort
Armored Car Squadron	5	120	0	0	20	6	0	12 AMD
Combat Group								
Group HQ	2	20	0	0	5	2	0	
Two Reconnaissance Squadrons, each	5	110	0	0	25	7	0	20 AMR
Combat Squadron	5	110	0	0	25	7	0	12 AMC
Dragons Portés Battalion								
Battalion Headquarters & Squadron	11	255	0	0	23	41	6	
Motorcycle Squadron	5	145	0	0	70	6	0	12 LMG, 1 60mm mort
Two Rifle Squadrons, each	5	200	0	0	11	4	32	18 LMG, 4 MG, 1 AAMG, 1 60mm mort
Heavy Weapons Squadron	6	200	0	0	20	10	30	8 MG, 4 81mm mort, 4 25mm AT
Anti-Tank Squadron	4	160	0	0	20	17	40	4 LMG 12 25mm AT
Field Artillery Regiment								
Regiment HQ & Battery	8	120	0	0	6	8	4	
Two Field Gun Battalions, each								* cross-country tractors
Battalion HQ	20	500	0	0	21	45	*40	
Three Batteries, each								1 MG, 4 75mm guns
Service Battery								
Field Howitzer battalion								* cross-country tractors
Battalion HQ	20	525	0	0	8	74	*44	
Three Batteries, each								1 MG, 4 105mm howitzers
Service Battery								
Signal Battalion								
Radio Company	4	228	0	0	9	30	16	
Wire Company	4	224	0	0	20	24	8	
Pigeon Section	0	29	0	0	0	4	0	
Engineer Battalion								
Battalion Headquarters	2	10	0	0	3	1	0	
Two Engineer Companies, each	4	185	0	0	57	15	12	
Bridge Column	3	120	0	0	0	37	4	
Maintenance Squadron	3	150	0	0	25	35	15	
Transport Units								
Draft Company	2	45	35	9	0	0	0	
Motorized Company	9	350	0	0	120	100	0	
Medical Units								
Medical Company	11	140	0	0	1	30	0	
Ambulance	1	49	0	0	1	22	0	

Cavalry Division, 1932-1938

motorized infantry battalions, one of which was carried on half-tracks for cross-country mobility while the other two were carried on road-bound civilian-pattern trucks. In either event, the battalion was to consist of three rifle companies and a heavy weapons company. In the half-track battalion, a rifle company had a strength of 5 officers and 244 other ranks in HQ elements, four rifle platoons, and a mortar squad. Each of the rifle platoons had three 15-man rifle sections, each of which had two vehicles, two light MGs, and a VB rifle grenade launcher. In addition, the platoon HQ, with its own vehicle and a motorcycle, had a fourth VB. The mortar squad had seven men with a half-track and a solo motorcycle, manning a 60mm mortar.

The heavy weapons company had four machine gun platoons, two anti-tank platoons, and a mortar platoon. The 30-man machine gun platoon had four gun squads, each with its half-track, plus a fifth half-track with a machine gun mounted for AA defense in platoon HQ. Each anti-tank platoon had 24 men and was divided into two squads, each with two half-tracks and one 25mm AT gun. The mortar platoon had 19 men and two 81mm mortars with three half-tracks. The truck-borne *Dragons Portés* battalion was similar but slightly smaller in manpower. This was mainly due to a reduced scale of transport, with each rifle section being carried on a single truck.

These plans, however, proved too ambitious for the limited defense budgets of the 1930s, all the more so after the allocations for fixed fortifications had been considered. Thus, during peacetime, both the *Dragons Portés* and armored car components of the cavalry division were reduced to battalion strength, although all the cavalry divisions were active duty formations. The motorized brigades were to be expanded to their full strength only on war mobilization.

The new series of cavalry TO&Es published in December 1936 did not significantly change the composition of any of the components of the motorized brigade of the cavalry division, although they did authorize the establishment of the armored car regiment at full strength. Thus, the motorized components from the end of 1936 to November of 1939 consisted of the armored car regiment and a cross-country *Dragons Portés* battalion.

The Cavalry Light Division

The major change came with the divisional reorganization of late 1939. During that year it had been decided that strategic considerations required five cavalry divisions instead of the existing three. Since the effectiveness of mounted troops and the weakly-armed AMR vehicles had already been questioned, it was decided not to increase the overall numbers of these in the French Army, necessitating a reorganization of the divisional structure. Each of the three cavalry divisions lost one of its two mounted brigades, with two of the brigades thus made surplus being used to form the 4th and 5th Cavalry Divisions and the third becoming an independent formation. In addition, the number of AMRs in the divisional establishment was halved, again to provide assets for the two new divisions being formed. The reduction was accomplished by removing both AMR squadrons from the armored car regiment, splitting one off from the division completely and breaking the other up, and assigning two platoons to each of the new *Dragons Portés* battalions. Replacing the AMR squadrons in the armored car regiments was a redistribution of the motorcycle squadrons to give each of the two battalions an armored squadron and a motorcycle squadron. Meanwhile, the *Dragons Portés* regiment had been reinforced by the four AMR platoons from the armored car regiment and a new second heavy weapons squadron which facilitated the division of the regiment into two small battalions.

The TO&E for the new pattern *Dragons Portés* regiment was published on 1 November 1939 and that for the armored car regiment on 6 December. When the new TO&Es were implemented and the cavalry brigade detached the divisions were redesignated as light divisions (*Divisions Legere*) on 10 February 1940 and then again redesignated as cavalry light divisions (*Divisions Legere de Cavalerie*) on 3 March without any further changes in organization. To eliminate confusion the divisions will hereafter be referred to as cavalry light divisions, or DLCs, as from February.

The DLC Armored Car Regiment

The armored car squadron of the armored car regiment was built around four platoons, each of which had three Panhard AMDs with their four-man crews as well as a field car and driver for the platoon sergeant and two motorcycle dispatch rider/scouts. The Panhard AMD was a very good vehicle for its time, representing a balance of the mobility required for Western Europe, moderate protection, and adequate armament. Its one shortcoming was that not all the vehicles produced had radios. In fact, in the AMD platoon only the platoon

leader's vehicle had the ER.26ter transceiver, the other two having to rely on hand and arm signals, standardized drills, and the dispatch riders. This, of

	Officers	Sergeants	Corporals	Privates	Pistols	Carbines	Light MGs	60mm Mortars	Armored Cars	AMCs	Motorcycles	Field Cars	Light Trucks	Trucks	Tractors
Regiment Headquarters	7	0	0	7	7	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Headquarters Platoon															
Staff Section	0	5	4	11	5	15	0	0	0	0	13	0	0	0	0
Signal Section	0	5	8	37	5	45	0	0	1	0	4	1	1	0	0
Service Squadron															
Squadron HQ & Trains	1	2	2	11	3	13	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	3	0
Service Platoon	1	6	3	39	7	42	0	0	0	0	3	0	5	11	0
Maintenance Platoon	1	4	5	41	5	46	0	0	0	0	2	1	3	8	1
Pioneer Platoon	0	2	2	22	2	24	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	3	0
Medical Platoon	2	5	3	28	33	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	6	0	0
Reconnaissance Battalion															
Battalion Headquarters	2	3	6	14	5	20	0	0	1	0	9	5	0	1	0
Motorcycle Rifle Squadron															
Squadron HQ	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
HQ Platoon															
Signal Section	0	3	3	16	2	19	0	0	0	0	10	0	1	0	0
Trains Group	0	3	1	10	3	9	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	0
Maintenance Squad	0	1	0	3	1	3	0	0	0	0	*2	0	1	0	0
Four Rifle Platoons, each															
Platoon HQ	1	1	1	3	2	4	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0
Two Sections, each	0	1	2	7	2	9	2	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0
Mortar Squad	0	0	1	3	2	2	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
Armored Car Squadron															
Squadron HQ	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
HQ Platoon															
Signal Section	0	4	3	18	4	21	0	0	1	0	10	1	0	0	0
Trains Group	0	3	1	8	3	7	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0
Maintenance Group	0	1	2	10	1	12	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	2	0
Four Armored Car Platoons, each	1	3	3	9	3	13	0	0	3	0	2	0	0	0	0
Combat Battalion															
Battalion Headquarters	2	3	2	11	5	11	0	0	0	1	9	2	0	0	0
Motorcycle Rifle Squadron	5	19	25	101	33	122	16	1	0	0	66	2	4	2	0
Combat Squadron															
Squadron HQ	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
HQ Platoon															
Signal Section	0	3	3	16	3	19	0	0	0	1	9	0	1	0	0
Trains Group	0	3	1	8	3	7	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0
Maintenance Group	0	2	5	19	2	24	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	3	0
Four Combat Platoons, each	1	2	4	5	9	3	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0

* equipment reserve

Armored Car Regiment of Cavalry Light Division, from December 1939

course reinforced the tactical doctrine that armored cars should be employed as a platoon and not separately. The squadron was commanded by a captain in a field car and supported by a 50-man headquarters platoon. The signal section of

the HQ platoon had as its most important, although smallest, component a command version of the AMD with an ER.26ter radio. A special command version of this vehicle was developed in which the turret was replaced by a fixed superstructure, but it seems that some and probably most squadrons used a normal AMD with radio. The rest of the signal section was made up of an optical signal squad of a corporal and eight privates carried on a light truck, and a motorcycle dispatch rider squad of a sergeant, two corporals, and seven privates with a total of nine solo and one sidecar motorcycles. The trains group was led by the squadron first sergeant and included the mess section with its 3½-ton truck, plus a light truck carrying fuel and another 3½-ton for baggage and rations.

The combat squadron consisted of four combat platoons and a headquarters platoon. The squadron used the AMC vehicle. Through most of the 1930s these had been the Schneider P 16 (model 1929) half-track armed with a short-barrel 37mm gun and a machine gun. In 1939 an effort was made to replace these with Hotchkiss H.39 tanks, but this had not been completed by the time of the German invasion and some cavalry units were still using P 16s when they had to face the German onslaught. Each combat platoon had three P 16s or Hotchkiss tanks, each with its three-man crew, plus three motorcycle dispatch riders, two on solo motorcycles and one with a sidecar. The platoon leader's vehicle had an ER.29 radio, but the other AMCs in the platoon were not so equipped. The headquarters platoon of the AMC squadron was almost identical to that of the armored car squadron but with a larger maintenance detachment to handle the needs of semi- or fully-tracked vehicles.

The motorcycle rifle squadron of the armored car regiment had as its combat elements four rifle platoons and a light mortar squad. Although fairly well armed, the squadron suffered from one serious weakness, especially in terms of its reconnaissance role: it completely lacked radios. The squadron signal section relied on 9 dispatch riders and an optical signal squad with two sets of optical signaling equipment and two sets of semaphore flags. This meant that to have effective communications each of the motorcycle platoons had to be assigned to work with an armored platoon with its radio. When the squadron was deployed as a whole communications were plainly inadequate to support the reconnaissance role. On the other hand, the squadron seemingly lacked the strength to act as an effective line unit.

The rifle squad, with its light machine gun, had only four men, insufficient to absorb casualties or provide protection for the machine gun. The motorcycle rifle

platoon was heavily armed, with four LMGs and three rifle grenade launchers (which could be grouped under a corporal in platoon HQ if required) but lacked the personnel strength to act as a line element or to perform dismounted

1 OFF: Squadron Commander (P)
 1 PVT: driver (C)
one field car

HEADQUARTERS PLATOON

1 SGT: Platoon leader (P)
 Signal Section

1 SGT: Section leader (P)
 2 PVT: drivers (C)
one sidecar motorcycle, one light truck

Optical Signal Squad

1 CPL: squad leader (C)
 8 PVT: signallers/observers (C)

Dispatch Rider Squad

1 SGT: squad leader (P)
 2 CPL: dispatch riders (C)
 6 PVT: dispatch riders (C)
nine solo motorcycles

Trains Section

3 SGT: squadron first sergeant (P), clerk (P), mess sergeant (P)
 1 CPL: cook (C)
 10 PVT: 3 cooks (C), 1 medic (unarmed), 1 driver for medic (unarmed), 5 drivers (C)
one field car (for medic), two light trucks (one fuel, one ammo), two 3 ½-ton trucks (baggage & rations, and mess truck)

Maintenance Squad

1 SGT: squad leader (P)
 3 PVT: 2 mechanics (C), 1 driver (C)
two solo motorcycles (squadron spares), one light truck

FOUR MOTORCYCLE RIFLE PLATOONS, EACH

1 OFF: platoon leader (P)
 1 SGT: platoon sergeant (P)
 1 CPL: grenadier leader (C/GL)
 3 PVT: 1 mechanic (C), 2 drivers (C)
three sidecar motorcycles

Two Rifle Sections, each

1 SGT: section leader (C)
 1 PVT: grenadier (C/GL)
sidecar motorcycle

Two Rifle Squads, each

1 CPL: squad leader (C)
 3 PVT: rifleman (C), LMG gunner (P), assistant gunner (C)
one light machine gun
two sidecar motorcycles

MORTAR SQUAD

1 CPL: squad leader (P)
 3 PVT: gunner (P), 2 crewmen (C)
one 60mm mortar
two sidecar motorcycles

MOTORCYCLE RIFLE SQUADRON, From 6 December 1939

scouting. Fire support for the squadron was limited to a single 60mm mortar carried, along with 60 rounds of ammunition¹, on two sidecar motorcycles. The

¹This is the figure given in the official tables, although it must have been quite a feat loading the mortar, four men, and 60 rounds in two sidecar motorcycles. The tables show a further 90

squadron headquarters platoon consisted of signal, trains, and maintenance units.

The trains included mess and supply elements, including two extra light machine guns that were held as equipment reserve against mechanical failure in the line equipment.

The armored car regiment was divided into two battalions, a reconnaissance battalion (*groupe d'escadrons de decouverte et de motorcyclistes*) and a combat battalion (*groupe d'escadrons de combat et de motorcyclistes*). Both were commanded by small tactical HQs, each consisting of a commanding officer, an adjutant, a non-commissioned adjutant, a dispatch rider squad of a sergeant, two corporals, and six privates with eight solo and one sidecar motorcycle, one or two field cars with drivers and a radio squad. For its lighter roles, the reconnaissance battalion HQ had a slightly larger radio squad than the combat battalion HQ. In the latter unit, it consisted solely of a sergeant and three privates in a command-version AMC with an ER.26ter transceiver and an R.15 receiver. In the reconnaissance battalion, the radio squad had an AMD with an ER.26ter, plus four mobile teams, each of a corporal and a private, in field cars. These field cars could be assigned to various elements of the battalion, particularly the motorcycle rifle squadron, to enhance communications, although their contributions must have been somewhat limited since they did not carry transceivers, but only R.15 receivers. To the extent, then, that the radio cars permitted forward units to receive orders (but not to send information back to the HQ) the motorcycle rifle squadron of the reconnaissance battalion was somewhat better off than its counterpart in the combat battalion, which had no such outside help.

In addition to the two battalions the armored car regiment had a headquarters platoon to exercise command and control and a service squadron for non-combat support. The largest component of the HQ platoon was the signal section, which operated under the direction of the regimental signal officer, a staff officer in the regimental HQ itself. The signal section was divided into a telephone squad of a sergeant and two 6-man teams, an 11-man optical squad with four optical signaling devices and four sets of semaphore flags, a radio squad, four dispatch riders, and drivers and assistants. The radio squad was tactically the most important of the signal subunits and it provided a command-version AMD with an ER.26ter and an ER.29 transceivers, an R.15 receiver in a field car, and two reserve radio field cars with ER.29s.

rounds in the squadron trains ammunition truck.

The service squadron provided supply, medical, maintenance, and engineer support to the regiment. The supply section provided the regiment three clerks, nine stores keepers, two butchers, two postal clerks, four armorers, and twenty-five drivers with five light and eleven medium trucks. One of the light trucks was allocated to the regiment rations officer who commanded the supply platoon, one carried water, one food, one for armorer's tools, and one was used by the postal detachment. Of the eleven medium trucks, three were 4,000-liter tanker trucks, two were 5-ton trucks carrying fuel in cans, two 5-ton trucks carried food, one 3½-ton carried anti-tank mines, two ammunition, and one anti-gas equipment. The two 5-ton ammunition trucks were charged with carrying 40 rounds of 25mm ammunition for each AMD in the regiment, a total of 3,726 rounds of 37mm ammunition for the AMCs, 87,000 rounds of 7.5mm ammunition for the LMGs and vehicular MGs, 4,290 rounds of 8mm ammunition for the Hotchkiss MGs when these weapons formed part of the vehicular armament of the regiment (rarely), and rifle ammunition. No 60mm mortar ammunition was carried.

The maintenance platoon was divided into three sections: squadron maintenance, repair, and parts/spares. The 7-man squadron maintenance group had a sidecar motorcycle and a truck and was responsible for first-echelon maintenance on the vehicles of the service squadron. The 36-man repair section included 16 mechanics, 2 blacksmiths, 2 welders, an electrician, a carpenter, a leather-worker, and 7 drivers. They were provided with two trucks set up as machine shops, one more with a closed van body and one for personnel transport, as well as two tractors with cranes, a field car, and a light truck. The parts group had eight men in two light and three 3½-ton trucks. The squadron pioneer platoon consisted of a sergeant platoon leader, another sergeant pioneer chief, two pioneer squads each of a corporal, and eight privates plus four drivers with two 2-ton trucks for personnel and a 3½-ton truck for bridging equipment, along with two motorcyclists.

The armored car regiment of the DLC was thus essentially a motorized reconnaissance battalion with somewhat limited signal assets. For all practical purposes, it consisted simply of a light tank or armored half-track company, an armored car company, and two motorcycle rifle companies. The Panhard armored cars were good vehicles for their time and the Hotchkiss light tanks acceptable for the reconnaissance role, although a bit slow. The motorcycle companies each provided four platoons, each of which fielded four squads, each of which in turn consisted of two sidecar motorcycle combinations including one with a light machine gun. As thus configured the armored car regiment was

capable of reconnoitering a fair amount of frontage. However, they were limited in their ability to get the information back to the higher HQs in a timely fashion. Further, they were not well organized or equipped for line duties and thus added little to the actual combat power of the division.

The DLC Dragons Portés

Initially, the motorized combat power of the division was to be found in the *Dragons Portés* unit. The December 1939 reorganization had, however, somewhat reduced their usefulness as a line unit despite increasing both the size and firepower of the unit. The new *Dragons Portés* regiment was divided into a headquarters, a service squadron, and two motorized battalions. Each of the battalions, in turn, was divided into a headquarters, a mixed squadron, a motorized rifle squadron, and a heavy weapons squadron.

The limited line strength of the motorized battalion was found in its single motorized rifle squadron. Each of the rifle platoons in the squadron was made up of a headquarters group and three rifle sections. The rifle section was identical to that of the regular rifle section of the infantry except that the four riflemen were replaced by two drivers and two scouts. Functionally, it was divided into two squads: rifle and scout.

The rifle squad came directly under the command of the sergeant section leader and consisted of the gunner and assistant gunner for a light MG, three ammo bearer/riflemen, and a driver with a C.6 half-track. The scout squad, under the command of a corporal, consisted of two scout/riflemen (sometimes reinforced by one or more of the ammo bearers), a grenadier, and a driver with a C.6. The main armament of the rifle squad was the M.24/29 light machine gun, supplemented by the squad's carbines. For most operations, the scout squad's armament consisted of its five carbines, one of which was equipped with a VB grenade launcher. When required the scouts' firepower could be supplemented by another M.24/29 carried on their half-track for use when needed.

Since the C.6 was not an armored vehicle it was used only to get the squads to the scene of the battle, whence they would disembark and proceed on foot. During a normal dismounted advance to contact the scout squad would form a line ahead of the rest of the section and try to locate the enemy. Their tactics were very similar to those of the horsed cavalry once dismounted. The main difference was that the *Dragons Portés* were somewhat better suited to defense at the squadron level and below because the scouts were equipped with a supplemental light MG and the vehicles could carry more ammunition than the horses. Thus, the mounted cavalry platoon carried 2,640 rounds of rifle ammunition and 2,290 rounds of ammunition for each of its three light MGs while the *Dragons Portés* platoon carried 3,010 rounds of carbine ammunition and 2,675 rounds for each of its six light MGs. The *Dragons Portés* platoon was

	Officers	Sergeants	Corporals	Privates	Pistols	Carbines	Grenade Launchers	Light MGs	Medium MGs	60mm Mortars	81mm Mortars	25mm AT Guns	AMR Tankettes	Motorcycles	Field Cars	Light Trucks	Trucks	C.6 Half-Tracks
Regiment Headquarters	7	0	0	6	7	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	2
Headquarters Platoon	1	10	20	77														
Staff Section	1	5	8	24	6	32	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	1	1	0	1
Signal Section	0	5	12	53	6	64	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	1	4	0	3
Service Squadron	3	20	17	179														
Squadron HQ	1	2	2	12	3	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	0
Resupply Platoon	1	7	3	62	8	65	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	7	17	4
Medical Platoon	0	4	3	29	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	6	0	0
Maintenance Platoon	1	4	7	54	5	61	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	1	0	11	11
Pioneer Platoon	0	2	2	22	2	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0
Two Battalions, each	19	62	82	439														
Battalion Headquarters	3	0	1	8	3	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	0
Headquarters Platoon																		
HQ & Signal Section	0	3	7	27	2	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	0	0	0	2
Medical Section	0	1	2	23	18	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	0
Mixed Squadron																		
Squadron Headquarters	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Headquarters Platoon																		
HQ & Signal Section	0	4	3	16	4	19	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	9	0	1	0	0
Trains Group	0	3	1	8	3	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0
Maintenance Section	0	2	5	19	2	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	2	1
Two Armored Platoons, each	1	2	3	7	10	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	3	0	0	0	0
Two Motorcycle Platoons, each																		
Platoon HQ	1	1	1	3	1	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0
Two Rifle Squads, each	0	1	2	7	1	9	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0
Rifle Squadron																		
Squadron HQ	1	0	0	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
Headquarters Platoon																		
HQ & Signal Section	0	2	2	7	2	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	1
Trains Group	0	3	1	7	3	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0
Maintenance Section	0	1	2	11	1	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	3
Three Rifle Platoons, each																		
Platoon HQ	1	1	1	5	2	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Three Rifle Sections, each	0	1	1	10	2	10	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Machine Gun Platoon																		
Platoon HQ	1	1	1	4	3	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Two MG Sections, each	0	1	2	9	4	8	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Mortar Squad	0	1	0	6	2	5	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Weapons Squadron																		
Squadron HQ	1	0	0	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
Headquarters Platoon																		
HQ & Signal Section	0	2	2	6	2	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	1
Trains Group	0	3	1	10	3	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	0
Maintenance Section	0	1	2	11	1	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	3
Two Machine Gun Platoons, each	1	3	5	22	11	20	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	5
Two Anti-Tank Platoons, each																		
Platoon HQ	1	1	1	2	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1
Two Gun Squads, each	0	0	1	9	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
Mortar Platoon																		
Platoon HQ	1	1	0	5	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1
Two Mortar Sections, each	0	1	2	10	5	8	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2

Dragons Portés Regiment, Cavalry Light Division, from December 1939

made up of three such rifle sections and a headquarters group consisting of the platoon leader, platoon sergeant, a grenadier corporal, two signal observers, a runner, and a driver, all carried on a C.6, and a dispatch rider with a sidecar motorcycle. The grenadier corporal, who had his own VB grenade launcher attachment, facilitated the centralization of the platoon's grenadiers under platoon command if so desired by the platoon leader.

The motorized rifle squadron was made up of a HQ platoon, three rifle platoons, a machine gun platoon, and a mortar squad. The machine gun platoon consisted of a headquarters and two sections each of two squads. Each squad rode in its own C.6 and consisted of a corporal, a gunner, an assistant gunner, an ammo bearer, and a driver. The sergeant section leader rode in one of the half-tracks and a machine gun repairman in the other. The machine gun platoon headquarters held the platoon leader, platoon sergeant, liaison corporal, a range-finder, a runner, and a driver all in a C.6 and a dispatch rider on a sidecar motorcycle.

In addition to the four Hotchkiss 8mm machine guns manned by the gun squads, the platoon had a fifth machine gun carried in the platoon HQ vehicle that was provided for air defense duties and the protection of the platoon's vehicles when they were left behind when the body of the platoon advanced on foot. The platoon carried a total of 1,140 rounds of rifle ammunition and 23,040 rounds of machine gun ammunition (compared with 1,980 rounds of rifle and 16,128 of machine gun ammunition carried by the mounted cavalry's MG platoon).

The squadron's mortar squad consisted simply of a sergeant, a four-man gun crew and a driver in a C.6, and a dispatch rider on a solo motorcycle. The relatively large size of the gun crew made it possible to transport useful amounts of ammunition forward with the mortar on foot. The half-track carried the squadron's full allocation of 150 rounds of 60mm ammunition (compared with 60 rounds per mortar carried forward with the mounted or motorcycle cavalry, and another 90 rounds per weapon carried in the squadron trains).

The squadron HQ was composed of signal, trains, and maintenance elements. The signal section was built around a dispatch rider group of a corporal and three privates with motorcycles and an optical signal squad of a corporal and three privates carried in a half-track with a driver. The optical signallers, who had an optical signal device and a set of semaphore flags, also operated radios that were lent from the battalion HQ. The trains elements provided a medic and driver in a field car and a 3½-ton truck for baggage and rations and another for

kitchen equipment. The maintenance section was provided with a 3½-ton truck with a crane, a field car, and three half-tracks, one of which had an 800-liter tank on the back for squadron fuel resupply.

The mixed squadron was a reconnaissance unit made up of two platoons of AMRs and two of motorcyclists. The AMR was a light two-man tankette that was built in two models: the AMR 33 armed with a 7.5mm machine gun (123 built) and the AMR 35 with a 13.2mm machine gun (200 built). The light armor and weak main armament had already convinced the French that its utility on the contemporary battlefield was limited and it had ceased production by the time the war broke out. The AMR platoon had three of these vehicles plus three dispatch riders with two solo and one sidecar motorcycles. The platoon leader's AMR had an ER.29 radio but the other vehicles in the platoon were not so equipped. The squadron's motorcycle platoons were identical to those in the armored car regiment. The squadron headquarters was generally similar to that of the motorized rifle squadron except that the signal section was reinforced by an AMR with two radios (an ER.26ter and an ER.29) and an expanded, 9-man, dispatch rider group.

Fire support for the motorized battalion was provided by a heavy weapons squadron of five combat platoons: two machine gun, two anti-tank, and one mortar. The machine gun platoons were identical to those in the motorized rifle squadron. The anti-tank squad had two C.6 half-tracks, one carrying the corporal squad leader, the gunner, assistant gunner, and driver and towing or carrying portée-fashion a 25mm AT gun; and the other carrying four ammunition bearers and a driver. Each squad also had a dispatch rider with a solo motorcycle. The provision of two half-tracked vehicles and a motorcycle for one very light anti-tank gun was wasteful but did enable the squad to carry 200 rounds of 25mm ammunition. The HQ of the anti-tank platoon consisted of the platoon leader, platoon sergeant, and a driver on a C.6, and two motorcyclists (one a corporal) on one solo and one sidecar motorcycle. Considering the very limited effectiveness of the 25mm gun, the anti-tank platoon must be regarded as quite expensive in terms of both manpower and mechanical transport.

The mortar platoon was made up of a HQ and two sections, each section consisting of two 5-man gun crews each with a half-track, an 81mm mortar, and 66 rounds of ammunition (50 HE, 10 smoke, 6 heavy HE). The section HQ consisted simply of the sergeant section-leader and an FDC man, riding in the gun squad half-tracks.

In the squadron HQ the signal section was built around four dispatch riders and two optical signallers. The trains provided two 3½-ton trucks, one for baggage and rations and the other for a mess truck and two light trucks for ammunition. These latter carried 80 rounds per gun for the mortars (43 HE, 25 smoke, and 12 heavy HE) and a total of 28,800 rounds of 8mm ammunition for the Hotchkisses, but no additional 25mm ammunition.

Command and control and medical support for the three squadrons were provided by the battalion headquarters and headquarters platoon. Unlike the intermediate-level commands in the mounted and armored car regiments which were officially denominated squadron-group HQs (*Etat-Major de Groupe d'Escadrons*), those in the *Dragons Portés* were listed as battalion HQs (*Etat-Major de Bataillons*). Thus, although they did not provide the full service support normally found at battalion level in most Western armies, they were permanent commands of specified subordinate units, in contrast to those in the mounted and armored car regiments, which were often used merely as ad-hoc tactical HQs, with the regimental commander exercising direct control over the squadrons.

The signal section of the battalion HQ platoon featured a dispatch rider squad of a sergeant, two corporals, and six privates; a telephone/optical squad of three corporals and fifteen privates with a telephone switchboard, three optical devices, and three sets of semaphore flags; and a seven-man radio squad with an ER.17 transceiver and a receiver that operated on aircraft radio frequency to facilitate air-ground liaison. Just as importantly, the radio squad was assigned six ER.40 backpack transceivers that were to be parcelled out to the squadrons as needed and manned by squadron personnel. Since the mixed squadron already had three radios, this represented a high concentration of modern signal facilities for the French Army in 1940.

Service support for the regiment was provided by the regimental service squadron. The resupply platoon provided four half-tracks each with a 3,000-liter tank for fuel, seven light trucks (2 water, 2 food, 1 rations, 1 armorer, 1 postal service), a 3½-ton truck for anti-gas material, three 5-ton trucks for rations, seven fuel trucks (four with 4,000-liter tanks and three 5-ton trucks) and six 5-ton trucks for ammunition and anti-tank mines. The maintenance platoon was divided into a squadron squad, a resupply section, and a repair section. The squadron squad of 7 men was responsible for maintaining the service squadron's vehicles using a sidecar motorcycle and a 3½-ton truck with crane. The front-line resupply function except for fuel was also a responsibility of the maintenance platoon. To

this end, the resupply section of a sergeant, three corporals, and eighteen privates had six half-tracks and six medium trucks. The repair section was made up of the regimental maintenance officer, two sergeants, three corporals, and thirty-one privates with four trucks (including three set up as shops), three tractors with cranes and five half-tracks as well as small vehicles. The pioneer platoon of the service squadron was identical to that in the armored car regiment but with an additional truck for bridging material.

The regimental signal section was divided into radio, telephone, and optical squads. The radio squad operated four vehicles: a light truck with an ER.26ter transceiver, a half-track with two ER.17 transceivers, another half-track with an ER.17 and an R.11 receiver, and a field car with an R.15 receiver. The telephone squad was commanded by a sergeant and divided into four teams, each of a corporal and five privates. The ten-man optical squad, which like all optical signal units was also responsible for carrier pigeon operations, had four optical signal sets and four pairs of semaphore flags, plus one more of each as reserve equipment. A departure from normal practice was that the 20-man motorcycle dispatch rider group was assigned directly to the staff section of the HQ platoon rather than to the signal platoon.

Despite an increase in manpower and heavy weapons the *Dragons Portés* of the DLC emerged from the December 1939 reorganization a lighter formation than previously. Before the reorganization they had been organized into a battalion, the only weakness of which was that one of the squadrons relied on motorcycles for its transport. It was capable of providing an element of line strength to the division, indeed the only component of the division capable of sustained combat. The reorganization, however, split its two motorized rifle companies into two separate battalions, making coherent defense and offensive coordination difficult. They emerged from the 1939 shuffle as reconnaissance troops, with the mixed squadron for each battalion providing a forward screen and the rifle squadron the heavier reconnaissance force. The high ratio of heavy weapons to line troops provided by the heavy weapons squadron was useful in delaying actions and for reconnaissance by fire, but could not disguise the fact that the regiment, and indeed the division, had only two motorized line combat companies to its name.

Although not technically assigned to the motorized brigade the divisional maintenance squadron drew its administrative support from the *Dragons Portés* regiment and for most purposes was considered a component of the motorized brigade. The squadron was divided into four platoons: HQ, recovery, repair, and replacement. The recovery platoon had eight tractors, four of which pulled

transporter trailers. The 68-man repair platoon had eight medium trucks, including four 5-ton trucks set up as machine shops. The replacement platoon was responsible for the division's stock of spare vehicles, including 20 motorcycles, 10 light trucks, 10 medium trucks, 2 AMDs, 4 AMRs, and 2 AMCs. The armored vehicles were all provided with full crews and each of the trucks with a driver, although the motorcycles were carried as cargo in the trucks.

Another divisional unit usually associated with the motorized brigade was the anti-tank squadron, which was administratively attached to the armored car regiment. The squadron consisted of three anti-tank platoons plus a headquarters platoon. Each of the AT platoons was made up of a headquarters and two sections. The HQ consisted of the platoon leader and platoon sergeant, each with a driver and a sidecar motorcycle, plus a dispatch rider on a solo motorcycle. The anti-tank section was made up of a headquarters squad and two gun squads. The HQ squad was made up of the section sergeant, four ammunition bearers, two observers, two drivers, and a dispatch rider. This squad had a solo motorcycle and two Laffly V.15 6x6 trucks, one of which carried personnel and ammunition and the other a light machine gun for close-in defense of the platoon. Each gun squad had a corporal gun commander, a three-man gun crew, and a driver along with a V.15 towing a 25mm AT gun. The squadron headquarters platoon included small signal, trains, and maintenance squads. The signal squad had only four motorcycle dispatch riders and two optical signallers. The trains squad included three light trucks carrying anti-tank mines and 960 rounds of 25mm ammunition, to supplement the 480 rounds carried by each platoon.

The DLC Artillery

Fire support for the division was provided by a light artillery regiment of one battalion of 75mm field guns, one of 105mm howitzers, and an anti-tank battery. Each of the field artillery batteries was divided into a firing battery, HQ group, and trains. The firing battery was provided with ten tractors, four towing the artillery pieces and six for caissons. The battery HQ fielded a small OP party that included the commander, a sergeant observer, and a corporal computer, supported by a 9-man telephone squad and 4 dispatch riders. It had no other communications assets. Other than the caissons in the firing battery there was no ammunition carriage in the battery. The ammunition complement was carried by the battalion service battery which provided ten 2½-ton (in 75mm battalions) or 3-ton (105mm battalions) trucks to carry 1,989 rounds of ammunition.

The battalion had no command flexibility beyond that of the infantry-supporting artillery. The HQ a large observation liaison group that served as the primary control element for the battalion's weapons. smaller battery OPs served mainly to provide redundancy cover areas to the flanks.

This centralization control was

supported by the battalion's 49-man signal detachment that included a 21-man telephone/optical section and a 27-man radio section. The latter comprised four teams with ER.22 transceivers, one with an ER.17, and two teams with R.11 receivers. This enabled the battalion to assign a radio team to each battery as the battalion net and one more for the liaison and observer group, while the R.11s were used to monitor the air observer frequency. There were no radios, however, to connect the battery OPs with their gun positions, reliance being

	Officers	Sergeants	Corporals	Privates	Light Machine Guns	Machine Guns	Artillery Pieces	Motorcycles	Road Cars	Cross-Country Cars	Road Trucks	Cross-Country Trucks	Cross-Country Tractors
Regiment Headquarters	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Headquarters Battery													
Battery Headquarters	0	5	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Liaison Transport Section	0	2	0	13	0	0	0	6	5	2	0	0	0
Observation & Fuze Section	1	3	5	17	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0
Signal Section	0	3	6	39	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	0
AA MG Squad	0	1	1	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Trains Elements	0	1	0	22	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0
Field Gun Battalion													
Battalion Headquarters													
Headquarters Group	2	1	1	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
Liaison & Observation Group	3	5	2	15	0	0	0	9	4	2	0	1	0
Signal Group	1	4	5	39	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0
Three Batteries, each													
Battery Headquarters	1	2	4	13	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	1
Firing Battery	2	8	8	47	0	1	4	0	0	1	3	0	10
Trains	0	2	2	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Service Battery	5	16	14	104	0	1	0	3	5	0	24	0	2
Field Howitzer Battalion													
as field gun battalion													
Anti-Tank Battery													
Battery Headquarters	1	1	2	13	0	0	0	4	1	1	1	0	0
Four Platoons, each	1	3	3	17	2	0	2	1	0	1	1	0	2
Trains	0	5	2	21	0	0	0	0	0	0	*8	0	2

*includes four for ammunition and mines supporting firing platoons.

CAVALRY LIGHT DIVISION ARTILLERY REGIMENT, 1940

placed on wire communications.

	Personnel	Heavy Weapons
Division Headquarters		
Mounted Cavalry Brigade	2,235	
Brigade Headquarters	67	
Two Cavalry Regiments, each	1,084	
Regiment HQ & Squadron	184	
Two Squadron Groups, each	352	
Group HQ	8	
Two Rifle Squadrons, each	172	12 LMG
Heavy Weapons Squadron	213	8 MG, 4 AA MG, 4 25mm AT, 4 60mm mort
Motorized Cavalry Brigade	2,800	
Brigade Headquarters	87	
Armored Car Regiment	834	
Regiment Headquarters	84	1 AMD
Service Squadron	180	
Reconnaissance Battalion	291	
Battalion HQ	25	1 AMD
Motorcycle Rifle Squadron	150	16 LMG, 1 60mm mort
Armored Car Squadron	116	13 AMD
Combat Battalion	279	
Battalion HQ	18	1 AMC
Motorcycle Rifle Squadron	150	16 LMG, 1 60mm mort
Combat Squadron	111	13 AMC
Dragons Portés Regiment	1,562	
Regiment Headquarters	121	
Service Squadron	219	
Two Motorized Infantry Battalions, each	611	
Battalion HQ	75	
Mixed Squadron	141	8 LMG, 11 AMR
Motorized Rifle Squadron	209	18 LMG, 4 MG, 1 AA MG, 1 60mm mort
Heavy Weapons Squadron	186	8 MG, 2 AA MG, 4 25mm AT, 4 81mm mort
Anti-Tank Squadron	164	6 LMG, 12 25mm AT
Maintenance Squadron	153	2 AMD, 4 AMR, 2 AMC
Motorized Artillery Regiment		
Regiment Headquarters & Battery	134	1 MG
Field Gun Battalion		
Battalion HQ	90	
Three Batteries, each	103	1 MG, 4 75mm guns
Service Battery	139	1 MG
Field Howitzer Battery		
Battalion HQ	90	
Three Batteries, each	103	1 MG, 4 105mm guns
Service Battery	139	1 MG
Anti-Tank Battery	173	8 LMG, 8 47mm AT
Engineer Company		
Signal Company	287	
Transport Services		
Draft Company	47	
Motor Company	359	
Intendance Group		
Medical Group		

Cavalry Light Division, 1940

The regimental HQ also included a signal platoon, a 48-man unit divided into an 18-man telephone/optical section, and a 30-man radio section. The radio section provided five teams with ER.17s and two with R.11s, sufficient to establish a forward command post and the regimental net. The regiment also included a transport section of field cars to support liaison activities and an observation and fuze section. The latter's fuze team of a sergeant, two corporals, 3 instrument operators, and two observers was charged with working the Mle.1924 calculator that provided time-fuze settings to optimize height-of-burst.

The divisional anti-tank battery was a recent addition, having been added in most on mobilization in August 1939. The battery consisted of four platoons plus HQ and trains elements. Each gun platoon was made up of a platoon leader, platoon sergeant, light machine gun squad of four privates with two M.24/29s, a signal squad of a corporal and five privates, a private on a motorcycle, three drivers and two gun crews, each of a sergeant, a corporal, and four privates. The platoon was equipped with two tractors each towing a 47mm AT gun, a light truck for the signal squad and the light MGs, and a field car. That signal squad of the platoon had two telephones, a 4-way switchboard, 2 km of wire, and a radio.

Split among the four platoons as needed were also: two tractors towing ammunition trailers, two light trucks, two 2½-ton trucks, and two 3-ton trucks, each of the 3-tonners carrying 350 light infantry-pattern anti-tank mines. The platoons were thus configured to operate independently where needed by the division. The battery HQ included a signal section similar to that in the platoons but with an extra switchboard and 4 km of wire, and the trains included a 7-man maintenance squad with two recovery tractors.

The DLC Division Base

Divisional signal assets were concentrated in the signal company. Prior to the splitting of the cavalry divisions this had been a battalion formation, but in early January 1940 a new TO&E was published providing for a 287-man company instead. This company had two main components: a 105-man telephone group and a 112-man radio group. The telephone group was divided into a 41-man operating platoon and two wire-laying platoons. The radio group was divided into a reconnaissance support section (3 ER.27s in armored vehicles and 2 more in field cars), an aerial and rear liaison section (5 ER.27s), a medium-range section (5 ER.26ter), a short-range section (7 ER.12 and 2 ER.40), and an aerial receiver section (1 R.11 and 1 R.15). The signal company was responsible for maintaining the internal division net through the running of wire communications

and the attachment of radio teams to the maneuver brigades and artillery command, as well as such specialized tasks to support the division mission as the command would allocate. This could include the attachment of reconnaissance or short-range radio teams to detached or isolated formations.

Engineer support for the division had been provided by two pioneer companies and a bridge equipment company until the 1939 reorganization when one of the companies and the bridge unit were eliminated. Unlike the so-called motorized pioneer companies of the motorized infantry divisions, these "portées" pioneer companies were fully motorized formations. Each of these was made up of a HQ platoon and three engineer platoons. One of the platoons had 37 men mounted on 33 solo and 3 sidecar motorcycles. The 44-man second platoon was carried on six cross-country trucks plus three motorcycles. The 64-man third platoon used 1.5-ton ordinary trucks in place of the cross-country models. Needless to say, none of these platoons carried any pioneer equipment at all. The combat trains of the company had this responsibility instead, operating six cross-country trucks (including three to accompany the platoons with equipment), five 2-ton ordinary trucks (including 3 for explosives), and two 3-ton trucks (including one with a crane).

Supplies for the division were brought forward by the divisional transport command which consisted of a motor company and a horse-drawn company. The motor company had an ambulance platoon with 20 vehicles, four traffic control platoons, each with 31 motorcycles, a maintenance group, a light truck platoon with 25 light trucks and a total capacity of 31 tons, and a medium truck platoon with 20 trucks and a total capacity of 59 tons.

	Mounted Cavalry	Motorized Cavalry	Artillery	Engineer	Transport	Intendance	Medical
5e DLC	6e Bde de Cavalerie 11e Rég't de Cuirassiers 12e Rég't de Chasseurs	15e Bde Légère Mot 5e Rég't d'AM 15e Rég't Dragons Portés	78e Rég't d'artillerie one bn 75mm one bn 105mm 10e Btie antichars	34/1 Comp S-M 34/84 Comp Mixte de Trans	34/9 Comp Hippomobile 134/9 Comp Automobile	31/9 Grp divisionnaire	34 Grp Sanitaire
4e DLC	4e Bde de Cavalerie 8e Rég't de Dragons 31e Rég't de Dragons	14e Bde Légère Mot 4e Rég't d'AM 14e Rég't Dragons Portés 4e Esc div Antichar 4e Esc de Rép	77e Rég't d'artillerie one bn 75mm one bn 105mm	33/1 Comp S-M 33/84 Comp Mixte de Trans	33/9 Comp Hippomobile 133/9 Comp Automobile	33/5 Grp divisionnaire	33e Grp Sanitaire
3e DLC	5e Bde de Cavalerie 4e Rég't de Hussards 6e Rég't de Dragons	13e Bde Légère Mot 3e Rég't d'AM 2e Rég't Dragons Portés 3e Esc div Antichar 3e Esc de Rép	72e Rég't d'artillerie one bn 75mm one bn 105mm 10e Btie antichars	49/1 Comp S-M 49/8 Comp Mixte de Trans	49/21 Comp Hippomobile 149/21 Comp Automobile	49 Grp divisionnaire	49e Grp Sanitaire
2e DLC	3e Bde de Cavalerie 18e Rég't Chasseurs 5e Rég't de Cuiassiers	12e Bde Légère Mot 2e Rég't d'AM 3e Rég't Dragons Portés 2e Esc div Antichar 2e Esc de Rép	73e Rég't d'artillerie one bn 75mm one bn 105mm 10e Btie antichars	48/1 Comp S-M 48/84 Comp Mixte de Trans	48/20 Comp Hippomobile 148/20 Comp Automobile	48/23 Grp divisionnaire	48e Groupe Sanitaire
1re DLC	2e Bde de Cavalerie 1er Rég't de Chasseurs 19e Rég't de Dragons	11e Brigade Légère Mot 1er Rég't d'AM 5e Rég't Dragons Portés 1er Esc div Antichar 1er Esc de Rép	75e Rég't d'artillerie one bn 75mm one bn 105mm 10e Btie antichars	46/1 Comp S-M 46/84 Comp Mixte de Trans	46/21 Comp Hippomobile 146/21 Comp Automobile	46/22 Grp divisionnaire	46e Groupe Sanitaire

Components of Light Cavalry Divisions, May 1940

The DLC in the Field

Contrary to popular belief the DLC appears to have been quite well organized. Unfortunately for the French in the 1940 campaign, it was organized for a role that never existed and almost certainly never could exist, and was so highly specialized that it was incapable of performing any other role. As a reconnaissance force, its only real shortcoming was the scarcity of radios at the lower levels, particularly for the motorcycle and mounted troops. The inclusion of armored, motorized, and mounted troops in the same division led to command and control difficulties, as they did with every other nation that attempted the combination, but in a purely reconnaissance role, this was less important than might otherwise be the case. The problem was that it is almost inconceivable that a full division of reconnaissance troops, let alone five such divisions, could find profitable employment on the crowded Franco-German border. Even on the sprawling eastern front with its war of grand maneuver, neither the Soviets nor the Germans ever fielded divisions in which combat power had been sacrificed to tactical mobility to anything even approaching that demonstrated by the DLC.

The only units in the division capable of sustained combat as line elements were the two motorized rifle squadrons and when equipped with Hotchkiss light tanks, the combat squadron; a total of three companies out of a division. And even these three companies were dispersed into three separate battalions. It should further be noted that even the mobility of the division was of no greater order than that of much more powerful formations fielded by the Germans. Indeed, its main distinguishing organizational feature was that it was optimized for decentralized operations. The combination of light organizational patterns at the company level and decentralized organizational models at the battalion level and higher rendered the division almost completely incapable of undertaking line combat duties. These problems were further exacerbated by the usual shortcomings of French units, including a shortage of artillery FO and liaison staff with adequate signal facilities that limited the artillery to pre-planned fires rather than the desperately needed support on call.

In addition, the supporting services were weak. The pioneer companies had relatively high mobility but at the expense of heavy equipment. It is certainly open to question exactly how useful a pioneer platoon mounted on solo motorcycles can be and the addition of one truck per platoon to carry equipment cannot have helped all that much. The bridge company was a useful idea but was limited to the use of existing roads due to the employment of requisitioned civilian trucks as carriers for the bridge components.

The Mechanized Light Division

A slightly more combat-capable division formed by the cavalry branch was the mechanized light division (DLM, *Division Légère Mécanique*). A decree of 30 May 1933 set forth the new organization of the 4th Cavalry Division as the 1st DLM. It was to consist of a mechanized brigade, a motorized brigade, and division artillery. The mechanized brigade was to consist of an armored car regiment (two squadrons of AMDs and two of motorcyclists) and a combat regiment (three squadrons of AMCs and one of AMRs). The motorized brigade was to be made up of a *Dragons Portés* regiment of three battalions on cross-country vehicles and an AMR regiment of three squadrons. Divisional artillery was to consist of a regiment of two or three battalions of tractor-towed 75mm guns and a platoon of assault guns (*canons blindes automoteurs*). The elements of the division were grouped by General Weygand into four categories according to their primary role. The reconnaissance elements were found in the armored car regiment and consisted of AMD armored cars and motorcycles. These were to perform the distant information-gathering role well in advance of the division. The second was the occupation component, the *Dragons Portés* regiment. This was the only element of the division capable of holding terrain against a determined enemy. The third element was the combat force, the combat regiment of AMCs who were to provide the maneuver force. The fourth was the scouting and security function which was to be undertaken by the AMR regiment reinforced as required by motorcycle units. The difference between the first and fourth roles, that is, between "decouverte" and "reconnaissance" was a fine one, but was essentially that between distant or long-range reconnaissance and close-in scouting.

By 1936 the organization of the DLM had evolved as a result of maneuvers experience and production limitations to a slightly different appearance. The division now consisted, aside from artillery and support units, of an armored car regiment, a light mechanized brigade (*combat*) and a light mechanized brigade (*Dragons Portés*). The armored car regiment was made up of two battalions (*groupes d'escadrons*) each of a motorcycle squadron and an AMD squadron. The combat brigade was made up of two combat regiments, each of which consisted of two AMC and two AMR squadrons. The *Dragons Portés* brigade was made up of two regiments each of two battalions. One of the regiments was equipped with cross-country vehicles and the other with civilian-pattern trucks. In either event, the battalion was made up of three rifle squadrons and a heavy weapons squadron.

A second DLM was formed in 1937 through the transformation of the 5th Cavalry Division on the same pattern as the 1st DLM. By that time, however, the organization of the DLM had evolved somewhat. The two *Dragons Portés* regiments had been replaced by a single cross-country regiment of three battalions and the armored car regiment had been subordinated to the *Dragons Portés* light mechanized brigade. This made the division a completely binary formation, consisting of the two light mechanized brigades and division artillery and services. To strengthen the division, however, the AMRs in the combat regiments were replaced by Hotchkiss light tanks.

Finally, a third DLM was formed from scratch on 1 February 1940. This followed the organizational pattern of its two predecessors except that the supply of AMRs having run out the tankette squadrons of the *Dragons Portés* regiment were equipped with H.39 light tanks.

The Cavalry Tank Regiment

The offensive power of the DLM rested primarily in its two tank regiments (*régiments de combat*). Each of these was made up of headquarters and service elements, a light tank battalion, and a medium tank battalion. The two battalion HQs were identical, consisting of the commander, an assistant, a sergeant adjutant, a 5-man radio team, a 9-man dispatch rider squad, and 5 privates for driving and secretarial duties. The radio team operated a field car and a command tank, each with a transceiver. The light tank squadron borrowed its TO&E from the *Dragons Portés* regiment of the DLC, using an identical HQ and HQ platoon and four platoons, each identical to the AMR platoon, but equipped with Hotchkiss light tanks. The medium tank squadron used the HQ platoon TO&E of the combat (AMC) squadron of the armored car regiment of the DLC augmented by a field car and a cross-country fuel truck. The medium tank platoon had five Somua tanks, each with its three-man crew, and three motorcycle dispatch riders, two with solo motorcycles and one with a sidecar combination. In both light and medium tank squadrons, each tank platoon leader's vehicle had an ER.29 transceiver, while the squadron HQ tank had an ER.26ter. Those in the battalion HQs each had an ER.29 and an ER.26ter.

The headquarters of the tank regiment consisted of the battalion commander lieutenant colonel), three captains (chief of staff, motor officer, medical officer), and three lieutenants (signals, intelligence, and general staff duties), along with their drivers. The main elements of the HQ platoon were the signal section and the motorcycle section, the latter nominally a "platoon" within the HQ platoon. The signal section operated with two 6-man telephone teams, four

	Officers	Sergeants	Corporals	Privates	Pistols	Carbines	Hotchkiss Tanks	Somua Tanks	Motorcycles	Field Cars	Light Trucks	Trucks	Tractors
Regiment Headquarters	7	0	0	7	7	7	0	0	0	7	0	0	0
Headquarters Platoon													
Platoon HQ	0	5	4	9	5	13	0	0	11	0	1	0	0
Signal Section	0	5	6	31	7	35	0	1	4	0	5	0	0
Motorcycle Section	1	2	3	18	3	21	0	0	23	0	0	0	0
Service Squadron													
Squadron HQ & Trains	1	2	2	11	3	13	0	0	3	1	0	3	0
Service Platoon	1	6	3	38	7	41	0	0	3	2	2	14	0
Maintenance Platoon	1	4	5	41	5	46	0	0	2	1	3	8	2
Pioneer Platoon	0	2	2	22	2	24	0	0	2	0	0	3	0
Medical Platoon	2	5	3	28	33	0	0	0	1	1	6	0	0
Light Tank Battalion													
Battalion Headquarters	2	3	3	16	5	19	1	0	9	2	2	0	0
Two Light Tank Squadrons, each													
Squadron HQ & Platoon	1	9	9	44	10	51	1	0	11	2	3	5	0
Four Tank Platoons, each	1	2	3	7	10	3	5	0	3	0	0	0	0
Medium Tank Battalion													
Battalion Headquarters	2	3	3	16	5	19	0	1	9	2	2	0	0
Two Medium Tank Squadrons, each													
Squadron HQ & Platoon	1	9	9	45	10	52	0	1	11	3	3	6	0
Four Tank Platoons, each	1	4	6	7	15	3	0	5	3	0	0	0	0

Cavalry Tank Regiment of DLM, from 11 March 1939

dispatch riders, and two radio teams, one with an armored command vehicle with an ER.26ter transceiver and an R.15 receiver, and the other with a light truck with an ER.26ter. The motorcycle section was to be used for liaison duties and route control.

The service squadron of the tank regiment was identical to that in the armored car regiment of the DLC but augmented by two 5-ton trucks for fuel transport and a 3½-ton truck for ammunition. Ammunition carriage for the regiment consisted of 100 rounds of 37mm in each Hotchkiss (60 HE and 40 AP) as the basic load plus 2,052 rounds (1350 HE and 702 AP) in the regimental service squadron; and 118 rounds of 47mm in each Somua plus 2,000 more rounds in the service squadron. Fuel carriage in the Somua squadron consisted of 410 liters in each tank and two light fuel trucks each with 1,500 liters in squadron HQ. In the Hotchkiss squadron, each tank carried 180 (H.35) or 207 (H.39) liters with the squadron HQ holding a further 1,500 liters in a light tanker truck. The regiment service squadron had three tanker trucks each with a capacity of 4,000 liters and four medium trucks each with 3,000 liters in cans. These gave the regiment a total of 58,370 liters, while the French figured that a Somua tank got 1.6 liters/km and a Hotchkiss 1.4 liters/km, with a total for all the tanks in the regiment of 127.8 liters/km.

The tank brigade of the DLM was made up of two tank regiments plus a small headquarters. The bulk of the headquarters group was found in the signal platoon, which provided two ER.17s, an ER.27, three ER.26ters, all transceivers; and two receivers, an R.11 and an R.15. The platoon did not include any telephone teams. The headquarters also included a motorcycle liaison platoon similar to that in the regiment HQ.

The DLM Dragons Portés

The infantry component of the division was found in the motorized light mechanized brigade, which was nothing more than a small HQ similar to that of the tank brigade commanding a *Dragons Portés* regiment. In many cases this brigade HQ also controlled the divisional armored car regiment, but this does not appear to have been an organic element of the brigade.

The *Dragons Portés* rifle company of the DLM was similar to that of the DLC but used 6x6 cross-country 10-seat trucks in place of the 6-seat half-tracks used in the DLC. This necessitated some restructuring of the smaller units, but the overall layout of the company remained the same.

The heavy weapons company was also similar to that in the *Dragons Portés* of the DLC with allowances made for the use of the 10-seat truck rather than the 6-seat half-track. One major difference between the *Dragons Portés* of the DLM and those of the DLC was the replacement of the mixed squadron found in the DLC by separate motorcycle and AMR squadrons, the former using the standard cavalry motorcycle squadron TO&E and the latter that of the Hotchkiss tank squadron, but equipped with the smaller and faster AMRs.

Communications for the *Dragons Portés* battalion were unexceptional but no worse than most of its contemporaries. The rifle, motorcycle, and heavy weapons squadrons had no organic radios, but the battalion signal platoon included six ER.40 backpack radios for distribution to the line elements as needed along with an ER.17 for the battalion HQ and an R.11 air-ground receiver. These were supplemented by the AMR squadron, where each platoon leader's vehicle had an ER.29 transceiver and the squadron commander's vehicle an ER.26ter.

The regimental HQ and service squadron were similar to those in the *Dragons Portés* of the DLC. The signal platoon provided a light radio truck (with an ER.26ter), two cross-country radio trucks (one with two ER.17s, one with an ER.17 and an R.11), and a field car with an R.15 receiver. The platoon also had four 6-man telephone teams.

1 OFF: Captain (squadron commander) (P)
2 PVT: drivers (C)
one 6-seat field car, one cross-country field car

HEADQUARTERS PLATOON

1 SGT: platoon sergeant (P)

Signal Section

1 SGT: section leader (P)
2 CPL: dispatch rider leader (C), optical signal leader (C)
7 PVT: 3 dispatch riders (C), 3 optical signallers (C), 1 driver (C)
one solo & three sidecar motorcycles, one cross-country field car

Trains Section

3 SGT: clerk/section leader (P), 2 clerks (P)
1 CPL: cook (C)
7 PVT: 3 cooks (C), 2 medic/drivers (unarmed), 2 drivers (C)
two mle.24/29 light machine guns (reserve weapons)
one field car ambulance, two 3 ½-ton trucks (1 rations, 1 rations/baggage), 1 kitchen trailer

Maintenance Section

1 SGT: section leader (C)
2 CPL: supervisors (C)
11 PVT: welder (C), electrician (C), 4 mechanics (C), 5 drivers (C)
two cross-country cargo trucks, one cross-country 800-liter fuel truck, one light truck, one truck with crane

THREE RIFLE PLATOONS, Each

1 OFF: lieutenant (platoon leader)(P)
1 SGT: platoon sergeant (P)
1 CPL: grenadier leader (C/GL)
8 PVT: 3 grenadiers (C/GL), 2 signal observers (C), runner (C), driver (C), motorcycle dispatch rider (C)
one sidecar motorcycle, one cross-country 10-seat truck

Three Rifle Sections, each

1 SGT: section leader (C)
1 CPL: LMG team leader (C)
8 PVT: LMG gunner (P), LMG asst gunner (P), 3 ammo bearers (C), 2 scouts (C), driver (C)
one mle.24/29 light machine gun
one cross-country 10-seat truck

MACHINE GUN PLATOON

1 OFF: lieutenant (platoon leader)(P)
1 SGT: platoon sergeant (P)
1 CPL: range finder (P)
3 PVT: Range finder (P), driver (C), motorcycle dispatch rider (C)
one Hotchkiss 8mm medium machine gun on anti-aircraft mount
one sidecar motorcycle, one cross-country 10-seat truck

Two Machine Gun Sections, each

1 SGT: section leader (C)
2 CPL: gun commanders (C)
8 PVT: 2 gunners (P), 2 asst gunners (P), 2 ammo bearers (C), driver (C), armorer (C)
Two Hotchkiss 8mm medium machine guns
one cross-country 10-seat truck

MORTAR SQUAD

1 SGT: squad leader (P)
6 PVT: gunner (P), armorer (C), 2 ammo bearers (C), driver (C), motorcycle dispatch rider (C)
one 60mm mortar
one solo motorcycle, one cross-country 10-seat truck

DRAGONS PORTES MOTORIZED RIFLE SQUADRON OF DLM, 1940

	Officers	Sergeants	Corporals	Privates	Pistols	Carbines	Light MGs	Medium MGs	60mm Mortars	81mm Mortars	25mm AT Guns	AMR Tankettes	Motorcycles	Field Cars	Light Trucks	Trucks	Cross-Country Trucks	Tractors
Regiment Headquarters	7	0	0	6	7	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	2	0
Headquarters Platoon																		
Staff Section	1	5	8	24	6	32	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	1	1	0	1	0
Signal Section	0	4	12	53	4	65	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	1	4	0	3	0
Service Squadron																		
Squadron HQ & Trains	1	2	2	13	3	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	3	0	0
Resupply Platoon	1	6	3	60	7	63	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	3	18	4	0
Maintenance Platoon	1	4	7	54	5	61	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	11	8	3
Pioneer Platoon	0	2	2	22	2	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	4	0	0
Medical Platoon	0	5	3	28	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	6	0	0	0
Three Motorized Battalions, each																		
Battalion Headquarters	3	0	1	8	3	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	0
Headquarters Platoon																		
Signal Section	0	3	7	27	3	34	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	0	0	0	2	0
Medical Section	0	1	2	23	19	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	0
Tankette Squadron																		
Squadron HQ	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Headquarters Platoon																		
HQ & Signal Section	0	4	3	16	4	19	0	0	0	0	0	1	9	0	1	0	0	0
Trains Section	0	3	1	8	3	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0
Maintenance Section	0	2	5	19	2	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	2	0	0
Four Tankette Platoons, each	1	2	3	7	3	10	0	0	0	0	0	5	3	0	0	0	0	0
Motorcycle Rifle Squadron																		
Squadron HQ	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Headquarters Platoon	0	7	4	29	6	31	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	1	4	2	0	0
Four Motorcycle Rifle Platoons, each																		
Platoon HQ	1	1	1	3	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0
Two Sections, each	0	1	2	7	2	9	2	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0
Mortar Squad	0	0	1	3	2	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Two Rifle Squadrons, each																		
Squadron HQ	1	0	0	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
HQ Platoon																		
HQ & Signal Section	0	2	2	7	2	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	0
Trains Group	0	3	1	7	3	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0
Maintenance Group	0	1	2	11	1	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	3	0
Three Rifle Platoons, each																		
Platoon HQ	1	1	1	8	2	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Three Sections, each	0	1	1	8	2	9	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Machine Gun Platoon																		
Platoon HQ	1	1	1	4	3	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Two MG Sections, each	0	1	2	8	4	7	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Mortar Squad	0	1	0	6	2	5	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Heavy Weapons Squadron																		
Squadron HQ	1	0	0	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
HQ Platoon																		
HQ & Signal Section	0	2	2	6	2	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	1	0
Trains Group	0	3	1	10	3	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	0	0
Maintenance Group	0	1	2	11	1	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	3	0
Two Machine Gun Platoons, each	1	3	5	20	11	18	0	5	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	0
Two AT Platoons, each																		
Platoon HQ	1	1	1	2	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0
Two Gun Squads, each	0	0	1	8	0	10	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Mortar Platoon																		
Platoon HQ	1	1	0	5	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0
Two Sections, each	0	1	2	11	5	9	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0

Dragons Portés Regiment of DLM, from December 1939

DLM Armored Cars

The divisional reconnaissance function was carried out by the armored car regiment. This formation was divided into two battalions (*groupes d'escadrons*) each of a motorcycle and an armored car squadron. The regimental service squadron and the motorcycle rifle squadrons used the same TO&Es as those in the armored car regiment of the DLC. The armored car squadron differed in having five vehicles per platoon rather than only three. The AMD platoon was made up of five Panhard armored cars with their 4-man crews, the platoon sergeant and a driver in a field car, and three dispatch riders with solo motorcycles.

The AMD of each platoon leader and the squadron commander had an ER.26ter transceiver. The squadron signal section also had an optical squad with a corporal and eight privates with a light truck and two optical devices and two sets of semaphore flags; and a dispatch rider squad of ten men with solo motorcycles. The trains section differed from that of the AMD squadron of the DLC in having a second light truck for fuel.

	Officers	Sergeants	Corporals	Privates	Pistols	Carbines	Light MGs	60mm Mortars	Armored Cars	Motorcycles	Field Cars	Light Trucks	Trucks	Tractors
Regiment Headquarters	7	0	0	6	7	6	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0
Headquarters Platoon														
Command Section	0	5	4	9	2	16	0	0	0	11	1	0	0	0
Signal Section	0	5	12	42	8	52	0	0	1	4	7	5	0	0
Service Squadron														
Squadron HQ & Trains	1	2	2	10	3	13	0	0	0	3	1	0	3	0
Service Platoon	1	6	3	39	7	42	0	0	0	3	0	5	11	0
Maintenance Platoon	1	4	5	41	5	46	0	0	0	2	1	3	8	1
Pioneer Platoon	0	2	2	22	2	24	0	0	0	2	0	0	3	0
Medical Platoon	2	5	3	28	33	0	0	0	0	1	1	6	0	0
Two Armored Car Squadron Groups, each														
Group HQ	2	3	3	14	8	14	0	0	1	9	1	1	0	0
Armored Car Squadron														
Squadron HQ	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
HQ Platoon														
HQ & Signal Sect	0	4	3	18	6	19	0	0	1	10	0	1	0	0
Trains Section	0	3	1	9	3	8	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	0
Maintenance Sect	0	1	2	10	1	12	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	0
Four Armored Car	1	5	6	13	21	4	0	0	5	3	0	0	0	0
Motorcycle Rifle Squadron														
Squadron HQ	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
HQ Platoon	0	7	4	29	6	31	0	0	0	12	1	4	2	0
Four Rifle Platoon	1	3	5	17	6	22	4	0	0	13	0	0	0	0
Mortar Squad	0	0	1	3	2	2	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0

Armored Car Regiment of DLM, from 11 March 1939

The battalion headquarters was made up of a major (commander), an officer aide, a sergeant adjutant, a four-man radio team with an AMD with an ER.26ter, nine motorcycle dispatch riders, drivers for a field car and a light truck (both without radios) and four clerks.

The regimental HQ was similar to that in the DLC but featured a radio squad with an entirely different configuration. In this instance, the squad manned an AMD

with an ER.26ter and seven field cars each with an R.15 receiver. The almost exclusive use of receivers rather than transceivers at this level probably limited the usefulness of the regiment as a divisional asset, although it would have been consistent with attaching portions of the regiment to other divisional elements for local reconnaissance and security.

The DLM Division Base

Maintenance support for all these formations was provided by the divisional maintenance squadron. This formation was considerably larger than its counterpart in the DLC, consisting of two recovery platoons and four workshop platoons. It also included a replacement vehicle platoon which followed the standard cavalry practice of providing two spare armored vehicles for each of the armored squadrons in the division. Under the original 1936 TO&E, this meant 12 AMRs and no Hotchkiss tanks, but it is not clear if this ratio was altered to accommodate the introduction of the Hotchkiss.

Communications facilities for the division net were provided by two signal companies: one for telephone and telegraph assets and the other for radios. The main elements of the telephone company were a 48-man operating platoon, two 34-man expedient wire-laying platoons, and two 31-man platoons for more permanent line-laying duties. Each expedient platoon operated two sections, each with two cross-country trucks, and a fifth cargo truck for equipment. In addition, each platoon had two small teams each on a sidecar motorcycle to find and repair breaks in the wire. The other wire platoons each had three cargo trucks for the transport of men and equipment and two sidecar motorcycle wire repair teams. Except for the eight cross-country trucks in the expedient wire-laying platoons all the trucks and cars in the telephone company were requisitioned civilian vehicles.

The radio company was divided into five platoons. The reconnaissance support platoon operated three cross-country field cars and six armored signals vehicles, each equipped with an ER.27 transceiver to support the division's reconnaissance efforts, either in front-line service or as relay links. The rear link and Air Force liaison platoon operated three cross-country field cars and three light trucks with ER.27s. The air-to-ground platoon, which monitored the transmissions of individual aircraft, in contrast to AF liaison which established

communications with air command centers, operated two requisitioned civilian light trucks with a total of two R.15 and three R.11 receivers. The radio intercept platoon, which monitored enemy transmissions, had three R.15 receivers, a

	Personnel	Main Weapons
Division Headquarters	283	
Armored Car Regiment	919	
Regiment Headquarters	90	1 AMD
Service Squadron	179	
Two Armored Car Battalions, each	325	
Battalion HQ	22	1 AMD
Armored Car Squadron	153	21 AMD
Motorcycle Rifle Squadron	150	16 LMG, 1 60mm mort
Light Mechanized Brigade (Tank)	1,711	
Brigade Headquarters	57	
Two Tank Regiments, each	827	
Regiment HQ	98	1 S.35
Service Squadron	189	
Medium Tank Battalion	296	
Battalion HQ	24	1 S.35
Two Medium Tank Companies, each	136	21 S.35
Light Tank Battalion	254	
Battalion Headquarters	24	1 H.39
Two Light Tank Companies, each	115	21 H.39
Light Mechanized Brigade (Motorized)	3,150	
Brigade Headquarters	62	
Dragons Portés Regiment	3,088	
Regiment Headquarters	121	
Service Squadron	216	
Three Motorized Battalions, each	916	
Battalion HQ	75	
Tankette Squadron	115	21 AMR
Motorcycle Rifle Squadron	150	16 LMG, 1 60mm mort
Two Rifle Squadrons, each	198	18 LMG, 4 MG, 1 AAMG, 1 60mm mort
Heavy Weapons Squadron	180	8 MG, 2 AAMG, 4 25mm AT, 4 81mm mort
Anti-Tank Squadron	164	6 LMG, 12 25mm AT
Maintenance Squadron	395	4 AMD, 12 AMR 8 S.35 as spares
Field Artillery Regiment	1,880	
Regiment Headquarters	131	1 MG
Two Field Gun Battalions, each	538	
Battalion HQ	90	
Three Gun Batteries, each	103	1 MG, 4 75mm guns
Service Battery	139	1 MG
Field Howitzer Battalion	538	
<i>as above, but with 105mm howitzers</i>		
Anti-Tank Battery	173	8 LMG, 8 47mm AT
Anti-Aircraft Battery	119	6 25mm AA
Engineer Troops	1,434	
Three Pioneer Companies, each	277	
Bridge Equipment Company	134	
Radio Signal Company	241	
Telephone Signal Company	228	
Service Support Units		
1 st Motor Transport Company	247	
2 nd Motor Transport Company	163	
Intendance Group	52	
Medical Group	201	

Mechanized Light Division, 1940

short-wave receiver, and a short-wave direction finder, but had only one requisitioned civilian truck and a trailer. The largest platoon was that dedicated to maintaining the division/brigade and division/artillery net. It operated eight ER.26ter transceivers in cross-country field cars, seven ER.12 transceivers in four requisitioned civilian trucks, and four ER.40 backpack transceivers with their 2-man crews.

The engineer element of the division was provided by three *portées* pioneer companies and an M1935 bridge company, identical to the units found in the DLC.

The division was supplied by two motor transport companies. The first was primarily a transport support company, half of the strength of which consisted of four 30-man motorcycle route control platoons. The company also included a medical support platoon with twenty ambulances and four laboratory trucks, a rations platoon with eleven trucks, an infantry ammunition platoon with thirteen trucks, a general transport platoon with twenty trucks, and a maintenance platoon. The second company provided fifty-seven trucks for general haulage.

Assessing the DLM

The mechanized light division was certainly a more combat-worthy formation than the cavalry light division. The Somuas were excellent tanks, rated by some as the best in the world for their time. The *Dragons Portés* were well provided with weapons and were fairly mobile. Artillery support was somewhat weak numerically, but no worse than many other divisions of that type around the world.

The division still had its share of shortcomings, however. Line-artillery liaison was as weak as in other French divisions, limiting fire support considerably. The Hotchkiss tanks were a bit slow for employment in a mechanized light division. The incorporation of a motorcycle company into the division's line infantry battalions was anomalous given the presence in the division of a capable reconnaissance battalion. These shortcomings, except artillery coordination, were relatively minor. What doomed the mechanized light divisions was not so much their organization as their employment. Scattered over a broad front in a screening role they never achieved the concentration necessary for mobile armored operations and were quickly overrun and completely disrupted. Within a week of the start of the German offensive the DLMs, potentially the most powerful force in the French Army, had ceased to be effective formations.

Corps Reconnaissance

The smallest independent units raised by the cavalry branch in France were the corps reconnaissance battalions (*Groupes de Reconnaissance de Corps d'Armee*, or GRCA's). These came in to varieties, normal and motorized.

	Officers	Sergeants	Corporals	Privates	Pistols	Carbines	Rifles	Grenade Launchers	Light MGs	Medium MGs	60mm Mortars	25mm AT Guns	Horses	Wagons & Carts	Motorcycles	Field Cars	Light Trucks	Trucks	Tractors
Corps Recon Battalion (Normal Type)																			
Battalion HQ & Platoon	6	6	9	49		8	62	0	0	0	0	0	29	0	9	1	6	0	0
Service Squadron																			
Squadron HQ & Trains	1	3	2	9	2	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	0
Pioneer Section	0	1	2	16	0	19	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	1	0
Rations Platoon	1	3	2	21	2	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	5	5	0
Medical/Veterinary Sections	3	2	1	22	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	5	0	0
Maintenance Section	1	2	3	19	1	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	2	3	0
Mounted Squadron-Group																			
Squadron-Group HQ	1	1	1	5	1	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	2	0	0	0	0
Two Rifle Squadrons, each																			
Squadron HQ & Platoon	1	4	5	19	3	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	19	0	1	0	2	2	0
Four Rifle Platoons, each	1	2	6	27	5	30	0	3	2	0	0	0	39	0	0	0	0	0	0
Machine Gun Section	1	1	3	20	7	18	0	0	0	3	0	0	30	2	0	0	0	0	0
Mortar Squad	0	1	0	7	2	6	0	0	0	0	1	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0
Motorized Squadron-Group																			
Squadron-Group HQ	1	1	2	6	2	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	3	0	0	0	0
Motorcycle Rifle Squadron	5	19	25	101	33	122	0	12	16	0	1	0	0	0	66	2	4	2	0
Heavy Weapons Squadron																			
Squadron HQ & Trains	1	6	3	24	7	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	2	4	3	0
Two MG Platoons, each	1	3	5	21	12	18	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	0	0
Anti-Tank Platoon	1	1	3	18	2	23	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	4	1	0	2	0
Corps Recon Battalion (Motorized Type)																			
Battalion HQ & Platoon	7	6	8	48	9	60	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	7	5	0	0
Service Squadron																			
Squadron HQ & Trains	1	2	2	12	2	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	0	3	0
Pioneer Platoon	0	2	2	22	0	26	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	0
Rations Platoon	1	5	3	25	2	32	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	4	7	0
Medical Section	1	3	2	21	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	4	0	0
Maintenance Platoon	1	4	5	35	1	44	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	7	1
Motorcycle Squadron-Group																			
Squadron-Group HQ	1	1	2	6	2	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0
Two Motorcycle Rifle Squadrons, each	5	19	25	101	33	122	0	0	16	0	1	0	0	0	66	2	4	2	0
Motorcycle-Weapons Squadron-Group																			
Squadron-Group HQ	1	1	2	6	2	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0
Motorcycle Rifle Squadron	5	19	25	101	33	122	0	0	16	0	1	0	0	0	66	2	4	2	0
Heavy Weapons Squadron																			
Squadron HQ & Trains	1	6	4	28	7	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	1	6	3	0
Two MG Platoons, each	1	3	4	15	11	12	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	13	4	0	0	0
Two AT Platoons, each	1	1	3	20	2	25	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	4	1	0	2	0

Corps Reconnaissance Battalions, from 18 July 1938

In both cases, standard cavalry TO&Es were used for subunits. The mounted squadrons of the normal-type reconnaissance battalion were organized identically with those of the reconnaissance battalion of the infantry division; while the motorcycle squadrons of the motorized type battalion followed the standard cavalry 150-man TO&E used by the DLM, DLC, and motorized infantry reconnaissance battalions.

A total of twenty-three corps reconnaissance battalions were raised. Three (numbers 1, 2, and 3) were the motorized type, while the remainder (numbered 6 through 25) were the normal variety. As usual, the greatest weakness of these battalions was the shortage of communications facilities. The corps signal troops provided the communications between the corps HQ and the reconnaissance battalion. Communications within the battalion, however, were the battalion's responsibility. The total stock of radios in the battalions were held at the battalion HQ's signal section. This section had, in the normal-type battalion, two radio trucks (one with a receiver only) for HQ use and six ER.40 backpack radios for distribution to subordinate units. The motorized reconnaissance battalion was, surprisingly, even worse equipped, having three radio trucks but no backpack sets. The provision of only three transceivers for the internal net of an entire reconnaissance battalion that is to cover a corps front is inexplicable. That the French Army was often surprised in combat is certainly understandable.