

Tactical Structure in World War II

France

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Infantry

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Through the 1920s and 1930s and the defeat of France by Germany in 1940 the French infantry was tactically configured into platoons of three sections each, with four platoons per rifle company. A machine gun company and three rifle companies made up the infantry battalion and three infantry regiments supported by two artillery regiments the infantry division.

Doctrine changed little as well. In the attack, frontal assaults were still emphasized, and the feeding of reserves directly into the line in front of the assault position, rather than to flank attacks, was the accepted method of employment. In both offense and defense firepower was highly regarded, but was centralized and strictly controlled, while individual initiative and improvisation were not encouraged.

There were several variations in infantry organization, but by 1937 the reemergence of the German threat meant that the dominant variant was the one denominated *Nord-Est* for service on the German border.

The Army fielded 55 infantry divisions for the defense of France, not including colonial and fortress units. Of those 55, seventeen were regular divisions, composed of active-duty soldiers. Filling out the force structure were two classes of reserve divisions, the Type A, with a mix of active duty and reservists, and Type B, almost entirely reservists.

The active duty divisions were all Type North-East, of which seven were in the configuration the Army referred to as "motorized", in this case meaning that the horse-drawn wagons had been replaced by trucks. The troops still marched. Most of the A Reserve divisions were North-East type, the five exceptions being configured for mountain operations on the Italian border. Three of the B-types were also configured for mountains, the others being NE-version. Those B-class divisions tended to be short of equipment, and ten of them were missing one of the artillery regiments.

<i>Div</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Inf Regts</i>	<i>GRDI</i>	<i>Lt Art Regt</i>	<i>Hvy Art Regt</i>
Regular Infantry Divisions					
1	NE Mot	1, 43, 110	7	15	215
3	NE Mot	51, 67, 91	6	42	242
5	NE Mot	8, 39, 129	1	11	211
9	NE Mot	13, 95, 131	2	30	230
10	NE	5, 24, 46	15	32	232
11	NE	26, 170 + 1 DBCh	16	8	208
12	NE Mot	106 + 8 Zouaves + 12 REI	3	25	225
13	NE	21, 60 + 8 RTM	17	28	228
14	NE	35, 152 + 3 DBCh	25	4	204
15	NE Mot	4, 27, 134	4	1	201
19	NE	41, 117 + 22 RMVE	21	10	210
21	NE	48, 65, 137	27	35	235
23	NE	32, 107, 126	18	41	241
25	NE Mot	38, 92, 121	5	16	216
36	NE	18, 57	39	24	224
42	NE	80, 94, 151	37	61	261
43	NE	158 + 4 DBCh + 3 RTM	32	12	212
Reserve Infantry Divisions					
2	A-NE	33, 73, 127	11	34	234
4	A-NE	45, 72, 124	12	29	229
6	A-NE	36, 74, 119	13	43	243
7	A-NE	93, 102, 130	40	31	231
16	A-NE	29, 56, 89	19	37	237
18	A-NE	66, 77, 125	30	19	219
20	A-NE	2, 47, 115	31	7	207
22	A-NE	19, 62, 116	24	18	218
24	A-NE	50, 63, 78	28	21	221
26	A-NE	86, 98, 105	14	36	236
27	A-MTN	140, 159 + 7 DBCh	20	93	293
28	A-MTN	97, 99 + 25 DBCh	22	2	202
29	A-MTN	112 + 3 RIA + 6 DBCh	34	94	294
30	A-MTN	49, 55 + 22 DBCh	26	96	242
31	A-MTN	81, 96 + 15 RIA	23	56	256
32	A-NE	7, 122, 143	38	3	203
35	A-NE	11, 123 + 12 RMVE	29	14	214
41	A-NE	101, 103, 104	36	13	213
45	A-NE	31, 85, 113	33	55	255
47	A-NE	44, 109 + 23 DBCh	35	5	205
51	B-NE	100, 201, 310	70	27	227
52	B-NE	291, 348 + 41 DBCh	-	17	217
53	B-NE	208, 239, 329	66	22	222
54	B-NE	302, 317, 330	65	44	--
55	B-NE	213, 295, 331	64	45	--
56	B-NE	294, 306, 332	63	26	226
57	B-NE	235, 260 + 8 DBCh	62	47	247
58	B-NE	204, 227, 334	61	48	248
60	B-NE	241, 270, 271	68	50	--
61	B-NE	248, 265, 337	58	51	--
62	B-NE	250, 307, 326	57	52	--
63	B-NE	238, 298, 321	56	53	--
64	B-MTN	299 + 45 DBCh + 47 DBCh	55	93	293
65	B-MTN	203 RIA + 42 DBCh + 46 DBCh	54	--	296
66	B-MTN	215, 281, 343	53	9	209
67	B-NE	211, 214, 220	52	56	--
70	B-NE	223, 279 + 44 DBCh	5	68	--
71	B-NE	120, 205, 246	60	38	--

Infantry Divisions, May 1940

The Rifle Company

The smallest tactical unit of the infantry was the section (*groupe*). It consisted of a sergeant, a corporal, a light machine gunner, an assistant LMG gunner, three ammunition bearers, four riflemen, and a grenadier. The section was subdivided into two squads: one built around the light MG (corporal, gunner, assistant gunner, ammo bearers) and the other of riflemen (the riflemen and grenadier). Theoretically, the section was capable of fire and movement using the two squads, but in practice, the LMG dominated all the section's actions. In fact, the rifle squad was defined in the 1937 infantry school manual as "*un element de protection du F.M.*", a security force for the light machine gun. The French concept of fire and movement seems to have been fire followed by movement, and the relative importance of the two squads was emphasized by the fact that the LMG squad was commanded by the corporal and the rifle squad by a PFC.

Each of the riflemen had an 8mm mle.07/15 or 7.5mm mle.36 rifle, along with 90 rounds of ammunition, three hand grenades, and a 25-round magazine for the LMG. The grenadier had a rifle with a grenade launcher attachment known as a "VB", 90 rounds of rifle ammunition and eight rifle grenades. The light machine gunner carried his mle.24/29 light MG and a pistol, along with three LMG magazines. His assistant was armed with a pistol and carried thirteen magazines. The ammunition bearers were armed with 8mm carbines (or 7.5mm rifles in units so armed) and each carried four magazines plus two 75-round boxes of LMG ammunition. The sergeant and the corporal were armed with rifles, with the former also carrying one and the latter two LMG magazines.

The rifle platoon (*section*) was made up of a lieutenant platoon leader, a platoon sergeant, a grenadier corporal, an observer, and a runner, to command three rifle sections. The grenadier corporal, who had a "VB" attachment of his own, acted as a reserve of HE firepower and commanded the other grenadiers in the platoon should the platoon leader decide to centralize them as a specialized squad.

The 1935 infantry plan envisioned the replacement of the rifle grenade launchers, with their 170-meter maximum range, with miniature mortars. Authorization for the production of the 50mm "grenade launcher" with its 450-meter range, was given in 1937 and in June 1939 the rifle company TO&E was modified to anticipate the introduction into service of this weapon. This modification removed the grenadiers from the rifle sections and concentrated them in a grenade-launcher squad of a corporal and three privates to man one 50mm

COMPANY HEADQUARTERS

1 OFF: Captain (company commander)(P)

1 SGT: HQ platoon leader (P)

Signal Section

1 SGT: Section leader (R)(bicycle)

9 PVT: 2 drummers (R), 2 buglers (R), 1 cyclist (R) (bicycle), 2 signallers (R), 2 observers (R)

Trains Section

2 SGT: 1 clerk/section leader (P), 1 clerk (R) (bicycle)

2 CPL: 1 clerk (R), 1 cook (R)

8 PVT: 4 cooks (R), 1 truck driver (C), 3 teamsters (R)

Mortar Squad

1 SGT: squad leader (R)

1 CPL: gunner (P)

4 PVT: 3 gun crew (R), 1 teamster (R)

one 60mm mortar

one 1-horse cart for mortar and ammunition

FOUR RIFLE PLATOONS, Each

1 OFF: lieutenant (platoon leader)(P)

1 SGT: platoon sergeant (P)

1 CPL: grenadier corporal (R/GL)

2 PVT: 1 (signal) observer (R), 1 runner (R)

Three Rifle Sections, each

1 SGT: section leader (R)

1 CPL: assistant section leader (R)

10 PVT: 2 LMG crew (P), 3 ammo bearers (C), 4 riflemen (R), 1 grenadier (R/GL)

note: if the company is equipped with 50mm mle.37 grenade launchers the grenadiers are removed from the rifle sections and concentrated in a platoon grenade launcher squad under the grenadier corporal. In this case the four "VB" rifle grenade launchers are replaced by one 50mm weapon.

RIFLE COMPANY, from 1937

mle.37 grenade launcher. It was apparently felt that the increased range of the 50mm mini-mortar compensated for the loss of firepower with the deletion of the "VB" units. In the event, very few 50mm weapons had been delivered before the armistice so the modified TO&E was only rarely implemented.

The company HQ commanded four rifle platoons and consisted of a signal/intelligence section, a trains section, and a mortar squad. Communications within the rifle company were based on signal panels and semaphore flags supplemented by runners. The company signal section included two signallers and two lesser-trained signal personnel known as observers, and each platoon had an observer of its own to maintain contact with the company commander. For this signaling the company had a total of four semaphore flag sets. In addition, the signal section had five couriers (including

one on a bicycle) and each rifle platoon one.

Reserves of ammunition and weapons were carried at the company level. Three additional light machine guns and four "VB" grenade launchers were kept at company HQ primarily as replacements for broken weapons but could also be distributed as additional weapons in defense if required.

The rifle company's sole organic fire support element was a mortar squad with one 60mm mortar. Ninety-six rounds of ammunition for this weapon were carried by the mortar squad, with another fifty-four at company HQ. With a range of a thousand meters, the mle.35 was a useful weapon for destroying or neutralizing point targets, but distributed on a scale of only one per company, and without signal facilities or FDC, it clearly could not provide much help to a heavily-engaged rifle company.

The Infantry Battalion

The infantry battalion was made up of a battalion HQ, a HQ platoon, three rifle companies, and a heavy weapons company. The battalion HQ was defined as consisting of the battalion commander (a lieutenant colonel), an adjutant (a captain), an aide (a lieutenant, who doubled as the battalion signal officer), and a medical officer (a lieutenant).

The HQ platoon was divided into a 38-man signal section, a 14-man trains element, and a 24-man medical section. The largest components within the signal section were groups of 6 telephonists, 7 radio operators, 8 signallers (for optical signaling, courier duty, and carrier pigeon handling), and three couriers (two on bicycles, one on a motorcycle). The radio team was charged with manning an ER.17 transceiver and an R.11 receiver and with maintaining six ER.40 backpack transceivers that were held by the signal section for distribution as needed to the rifle and machine gun companies to be manned by local personnel. The telephone team was equipped with two km of wire, a 4-way switchboard, and two field telephones. Other equipment held by the signal section included a signal lamp and two semaphore flag sets. Communications within the line elements of the battalion were thus set up as follows: runners from the sections to platoon HQ, runners or semaphore from platoon to company HQ, radio supplemented by semaphore and runners from company to battalion HQ, and radio, telephone, and flashing lamp from battalion to regiment HQ. This system represented the state of the art for most of the infantries of the world, but the TO&E authorizations were never met; a 3 April 1940 summary prepared for GHQ showed that only 50% of the authorized radios were actually available (with

shortages almost certainly concentrated in the new ER.40 model), and those that were present were plagued by inadequate reliability.

The battalion HQ trains section provided two 2-ton trucks (one for rations and baggage and one for ammunition), and three 2-horse carts for ammunition. The medical section provided four medics and seventeen stretcher-bearers along with a 2-horse cart for medical equipment.

Fire support for the battalion was provided by a heavy weapons company armed primarily with Hotchkiss 8mm mle.14 machine guns. Not having been designed for mobile warfare, the gun was heavy and bulky but had proven sturdy and reliable over many years of service. Each machine gun platoon had four of these weapons and 19,008 rounds of ammunition, supplemented by a further 4,752 rounds per platoon carried in the company HQ trains section. One of the four MG platoons in the company specialized in anti-aircraft fire, being equipped with high-angle mounts for its weapons in addition to the regular tripods. The French were not unaware of the threat of tactical air support, but the effectiveness of 8mm machine guns in the AA role was to prove disappointing.

The battalion's heavier fire support was concentrated in the company's heavy weapons platoon. Anti-tank protection, such as it was, was provided by the anti-tank section with two 25mm mle.34 or mle.37 AT guns. Each of these guns was provided with a caisson carrying 24 rounds of ammunition, while the AT section ammunition cart carried a further 264 rounds. Designed to combine the light weight and portability of the anti-tank rifle with the power of the anti-tank gun the 25mm, the lightest standard AT gun of the war, can equally be viewed as combining the worst of both weapons. It had only marginal armor penetration capabilities and no infantry-support HE round but had the full carriage and shield configuration of larger guns.

Indirect fire support for the battalion was provided by the mortar section with its two 81mm mortars. Its range of 1,900 meters was shorter than its international contemporaries and was probably marginal for the battalion support role. The section had no dedicated FDC personnel or signallers but could draw on the company HQ for two of each if they were not used by the MG platoons. The section carried 232 HE and 24 smoke rounds, and a further 24 HE and 20 smoke rounds were carried as a reserve in the company HQ.

COMPANY HEADQUARTERS

1 OFF: Captain (company commander)(P) (riding horse)

1 SGT: Resupply Sergeant/HQ Platoon leader (P)

Signal Section

1 SGT: section leader (R) (bicycle)

10 PVT: 5 runners (R), 1 cyclist (R)(bicycle), 2 observers (R), 2 range-takers (C)

Trains Section

3 SGT: 1 clerk/section leader (P), 1 clerk (R)(bicycle), 1 transport sergeant (R)(bicycle)

3 CPL: 1 clerk (R), 1 cook (R), 1 armorer (R)

9 PVT: 4 cooks (R), 4 teamsters (R), 1 truck driver (C)

one 2-ton truck (rations, baggage & ammunition)

one 1-horse cart (rations & baggage), two 2-horse wagons (1 kitchen & 1 for ammunition)

FOUR MACHINE GUN PLATOONS, Each

1 OFF: Lieutenant (platoon leader)(P)

1 SGT: Platoon sergeant (P)

1 CPL: Transport NCO (R)

1 PVT: Runner (R)

Two Machine Gun Sections, each

1 SGT: section leader (R)

2 CPL: squad leaders (R)

12 PVT: 2 gunners (P), 2 asst gunners (P), 4 ammo bearers (R), 1 armorer (R), 3 teamsters (R)

two Hotchkiss medium machine guns

three 2-horse wagons (two for MGs, one for ammunition)

HEAVY WEAPONS PLATOON

1 SGT: Platoon leader (P)

2 PVT: runners (R)(bicycles)

Anti-Tank Section

3 SGT: 1 section leader (R), 2 squad leaders (R)

2 CPL: gunners (P)

12 PVT: 1 runner (R), 3 teamsters (R), 2 loaders (P), 6 ammo bearers (R)

two 25mm anti-tank guns, each pulled by one horse

one 1-horse cart for ammunition

Mortar Section

1 SGT: section leader (P)

2 CPL: squad leaders (R)

18 PVT: 2 gunners (P), 2 asst gunners (P), 8 ammo bearers (R), 2 armorers (R), 4 teamsters (R)

two 81mm mle.27/31 mortars

four 1-horse carts (two for mortars, two for ammunition)

note: one machine gun platoon in each company is commanded by an NCO in lieu of an officer.

BATTALION HEAVY WEAPONS COMPANY, from 1937

Overall, fire support for the infantry battalion was insufficient. The French faith in

automatic weapons firepower could have been justified only if heavier weapons support was available on levels higher than that provided. Both mortar and anti-tank sections were too small and were equipped with weapons with important limitations. Equally importantly, command and control facilities were certainly not up to the standards demanded by mobile warfare.

The Infantry Regiment

The infantry regiment consisted of a headquarters, HQ company, service company, heavy weapons company, and three infantry battalions. The regiment HQ was made up of the commander (a colonel), a chief of staff (lieutenant colonel), three staff officers (a captain and two lieutenants), a liaison officer to division infantry HQ (a captain), a medical officer (captain) and a veterinarian (captain or lieutenant).

	Officers	Sergeants	Corporals	Privates	Pistols	Carbines	Rifles	Grenade Launchers	Light MGs	Medium MGs	60mm Mortars	81mm Mortars	25mm AT Guns	Horses	Carts	Wagons	Motorcycles	Field Cars	Trucks	Chenillettes	Bicycles
Regiment Headquarters	8	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Headquarters Company	4	23	25	151																	
Company HQ	1	2	2	11	1	1	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
Regiment HQ Section	0	7	2	19	2	2	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	2	0	0	10
Signal Platoon	1	7	11	64	5	75	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	3	0	2	0	10
Pioneer Platoon	1	4	6	39	2	45	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	3	0	0	0	0	5
Motorcycle Scout Platoon	1	3	4	18	2	24	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	26	0	0	0	0
Service Company	6	20	12	137																	
Company HQ	1	2	2	9	2	0	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	1	1	0	0	1	0	1
Resupply Platoon	1	9	3	49	3	10	49	0	0	0	0	0	0	32	0	14	1	0	2	6	1
Rations Platoon	1	3	2	29	2	13	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	18	0	9	1	1	12	0	1
Maintenance Section	1	1	2	11	4	5	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	5	0	0
Medical Platoon	2	5	3	39	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	2	1	0	1	0	5
Weapons Company	3	14	10	76																	
Company HQ	2	5	2	20	5	6	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	1	1	1	0	1	3	4
Two Anti-Tank Platoons, each	1	4	3	19	8	0	19	0	0	0	0	0	3	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	3
Mortar Section	0	1	2	18	5	0	16	0	0	0	0	2	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Three Infantry Battalions, each	20	95	90	662																	
Battalion HQ & Platoon	4	6	6	64	8	28	19	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	1	4	1	1	2	0	12
Three Rifle Companies, each	4	22	19	149																	
Company HQ	1	5	3	21	3	5	22	0	0	0	1	0	0	5	2	1	0	0	1	0	4
Four Rifle Platoons, each	*1	4	4	32	8	10	23	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Weapons Company	4	23	27	151																	
Company Headquarters	1	5	3	19	5	3	19	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	1	2	0	0	1	0	4
Four MG Platoons, each	*1	3	5	25	10	0	24	0	0	4	0	0	0	6	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Weapons Platoon	0	5	4	32	12	0	29	0	0	0	0	2	2	7	7	0	0	0	0	0	2
<i>*one platoon commanded by sergeant in lieu of officer.</i>																					
<i>Note: Weapons do not include reserve equipment</i>																					

Infantry, Zouaves and Foreign Legion Regiment (in the Metropole), 1939

The HQ company provided a regiment HQ section and signal, pioneer, and

motorcycle scout platoons. The HQ section provided the regiment headquarters with eight clerks, five liaison sergeants, ten grooms for the officers' horses and other miscellaneous personnel.

The signal platoon provided three radio teams each with an ER.17 transceiver, one more with an R.11 receiver and four 6-man telephone teams with a total of 11 telephones, seven 4-way switchboards, 24 km of wire, and four signal lamps. It also provided nineteen radio/telephone operators for distribution within the regiment, primarily to help operate the ER.40s that were to be distributed to the companies by the battalions. Radio communications between the regiment and division HQ was the responsibility of divisional signals which provided each regiment with a radio team with an ER.12 transceiver as a standard attachment.

The pioneer platoon was built around six squads, each of a corporal and six privates. The platoon was not particularly well equipped, carrying a total of only 14 kg of explosives with which to destroy obstacles and apparently no mines for hasty defense, nor were any power tools available to speed digging in or removal of obstacles.

Reconnaissance for the regiment was carried out by the motorcycle scout platoon, which was made up of a HQ and two sections. The scout platoons were not identically organized, in some regiments being equipped with solo motorcycles, in others with sidecar vehicles, and others with a mix of both. In any case, the section consisted of a sergeant and a dispatch rider as the section HQ and two squads, each of a corporal and three privates. Platoon headquarters was made up of a lieutenant, a platoon sergeant, a signaller, two dispatch riders, and a mechanic. All the personnel of the platoon were armed with 8mm carbines or 7.5mm rifles except the platoon leader and platoon sergeant, who were armed with pistols. Each squad was assigned a light MG that was carried with the squad, probably with some difficulty in the case of solo-motorcycle units, but this was defined as a "reserve" weapon in the TO&Es as it would probably have overburdened the scouts in the reconnaissance role.

The regimental trains were concentrated in the service company. The resupply platoon provided nine 2-horse wagons for anti-gas equipment and two for blacksmiths forges as well as two 1-ton trucks for postal service. The most notable feature of the resupply platoon, however, was the inclusion of six "*chenillettes*", light armored tractors designed to carry out resupply of forward troops over bullet-swept ground. Although these vehicles proved hopelessly fragile when the Germans attempted to use captured models on the eastern front, for operations in France they were probably adequate and they

represented one of the few examples of the Army drawing a constructive conclusion from the bloodbath of World War One, where advancing units were often cut off from resupply by barrages and machine gun fire behind them. Unfortunately, the chenillettes were too slow and had too limited a payload to be of much use in a war of maneuver. Nevertheless, a potential bright spot for the regiment was the designation of these vehicles as alternate towing vehicles for 25mm AT guns, in which role they could have proven quite useful.

The regimental heavy weapons company was essentially a small anti-tank company equipped with the same 25mm weapons as in the battalion weapons company. The anti-tank platoons were similar to the AT section in the battalion weapons company but had an additional gun squad, a lieutenant as a platoon leader, and two additional runners (all runners being provided with bicycles in this unit). The mortar section was identical to that in the battalion weapons company. Company HQ was made up of a signal section (3 runners, a bicyclist, a motorcyclist, 2 observers, 2 range-finders) and a trains section. The latter was distinguished for including three more chenillettes with the primary role of forward resupply and a secondary role of gun tractors.

It cannot be said that the regimental structure provided much in the way of compensating for weaknesses at the battalion level. Reconnaissance capabilities were probably much hindered by the lack of radios in the scout platoon, which meant that dispatch riders had to be sent back with each piece of information. The pioneer platoon appears to have been equipped for little other than maintenance of existing field works and presumably mine-lifting. Indirect fire support throughout the regiment was weak in terms of numbers, range, and responsiveness. The line elements were trained and organized solely for frontal assaults. Anti-tank firepower was marginal and lacked the communications to be very responsive to mobile warfare. The only bright spot in the infantry organization was the number of automatic weapons and the proficiency with which they were manned. This was largely negated, however, by the refusal to adopt fire and movement techniques, which removed the light MGs from action during the actual attack (and possibly retreat) itself.

The heart of the infantry division was its three infantry regiments. These were provided combat support by a reconnaissance battalion and two artillery regiments, along with smaller units including an infantry anti-tank company and an artillery anti-tank battery.

Divisional Reconnaissance

The reconnaissance function was carried out by the mounted and motorcycle squadrons of the recon battalion. The mounted rifle squadron consisted of a HQ platoon, four rifle platoons, a machine gun platoon, and a mortar squad. Unlike the infantry, the mounted cavalry was organized for simultaneous fire and movement.

Each section was made up of a sergeant, a rifle squad, and a scout squad. Each squad consisted of a corporal and five privates and the rifle squad had a light machine gun to provide a base of fire, while in the scout squad, one of the riflemen had a "VB" grenade launcher attachment. The mounted platoon had a HQ, two sections, and an extra squad. Unlike the line cavalry of the cavalry regiments, which had a "heavier" role and thus needed the firepower of an extra machine gun, the cavalry

	Officers	Sergeants	Corporals	Privates	Pistols	Carbines	Grenade Launchers	Light MGs	Medium MGs	60mm Mortars	25mm AT Guns	Horses	Wagons	Motorcycles	Field Cars	Trucks
Battalion Headquarters	5	0	0	7	5	7	0	0	0	0	0	12	0	0	3	0
Headquarters Platoon																
Platoon HQ & Command Section	0	2	2	6	2	8	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	1
Signal Section	0	4	7	35	3	45	0	0	0	0	0	13	0	9	1	3
Service Squadron																
Squadron Headquarters	1	3	2	9	4	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3
Pioneer Section	0	1	2	16	1	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0
Rations Platoon	1	3	2	19	2	23	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	9
Medical Platoon	3	1	1	19	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4
Veterinary Section	1	0	1	3	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1
Maintenance Platoon	1	1	3	19	1	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	4
Mounted Rifle Squadron																
Squadron HQ & Trains	1	4	5	19	3	24	0	0	1	0	0	19	0	0	0	4
Four Mounted Platoons, each																
Platoon HQ	1	0	1	1	1	3		0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0
Two Sections, each	0	1	2	10	2	11	1	1	0	0	0	14	0	0	0	0
Scout Squad	0	0	1	5	0	6	1	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0
Machine Gun Platoon																
Platoon HQ	1	1	1	4	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0
Two MG Squads, each	0	0	1	8	2	7	0	0	1	0	0	12	0	0	0	0
Mortar Squad	0	1	0	7	2	6	0	0	0	1	0	10	0	0	0	0
Motorcycle Rifle Squadron																
Squadron HQ & Trains	1	7	4	30	8	32	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	2	6
Four Rifle Platoons																
Platoon HQ	1	1	1	3	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
Two Sections, each	0	1	2	7	2	8	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0
Mortar Squad	0	0	1	3	2	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0
Heavy Weapons Squadron																
Squadron HQ & Trains	1	6	3	24	7	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	2	7
Two Machine Gun Platoons, each																
Platoon HQ	1	1	1	5	4	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Two MG Sections, each	0	1	2	8	4	7	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Motorized Anti-Tank Platoon																
Platoon HQ	1	1	1	2	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0
Two AT Sections, each	0	0	1	8	0	9	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1
Anti-Tank Platoon																
Platoon HQ	1	1	0	3	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	1	0	0
Two AT Sections, each	0	0	1	10	0	11	0	0	0	0	1	13	1	0	0	0

Divisional Reconnaissance Battalion, from December 1936

platoon of the reconnaissance battalion incorporated a supplementary scout squad.

Presumably, since the machine guns of the heavy weapons squadron were carried on trucks and thus might not be available to the mounted squadron in some tactical situations, the squadron included its own machine gun platoon. Two types of machine gun platoons could be authorized for the mounted squadron, one utilizing pack horses and the other small four-horse wagons. In both cases, the platoon was made up of two squads but was armed with three machine guns, the third being held for use by platoon HQ personnel in the anti-aircraft role. In the wagon-type platoon it was a fairly simple matter to throw the third gun in one of the two MG wagons and dismount it as needed, but in the case of the pack platoon it had to be carried in the transport of the squadron trains, and it seems likely that more often than not it would be manned by those personnel.

Reconnaissance near roads was carried out by the motorcycle rifle squadron. This utilized the standard 150-man cavalry TO&E for a motorcycle squadron the basic combat unit of which was the section. This consisted of a sergeant and a "VB" grenadier on a sidecar combination and two squads each of a corporal and three privates on two more sidecar mounts. One of the motorcycle combinations in each squad was equipped with a light machine gun on a pedestal mount in the front of the sidecar, giving the squadron considerable automatic weapons firepower.

These two components of the reconnaissance battalion were responsible for the "lighter" roles assigned to the battalion. During the advance to contact of the division they were to screen 8-12 km in front of the division, preceding the regimental scout platoons by 2-4 km. Once contact was made the two squadrons were to determine enemy strengths and locations and once combat began in earnest they were to maintain liaison between the line elements, insuring complete observation of the front. During a retreat, they were to maintain contact with the enemy to keep the division commander apprised of what he could expect.

The reconnaissance battalion was also envisioned as a mobile reserve of firepower for the division, as a flank security force, and, in retreat, as a force capable of delaying the enemy long enough to permit the infantry to dig in further back. For these missions, the battalion included a motorized heavy weapons squadron that could be used either to strengthen the firepower of the line

squadrons (primarily the similarly motorized motorcycle squadron) or as a line element itself. For these roles the weapons squadron had two machine gun platoons and an anti-tank platoon. Each of the machine gun platoons had two sections, each of two MG teams, plus a fifth machine gun in platoon HQ for AA fire and protection of the transport pool. The squadron's anti-tank platoon was a smaller version of that used by the Dragons Portees, having only one cross-country truck per section, rather than two. The battalion also included a horsed anti-tank platoon to supplement the efforts of the mounted squadron if required.

For a unit whose primary role was scouting the communications within the reconnaissance battalion were only fair. Organic communications within the squadrons were based on dispatch riders with horses or motorcycles. The battalion radio net was provided by the signal section of the HQ platoon, which included a light truck with an ER.17 transceiver and an R.11 receiver, a field car with an R.15 receiver, and six ER.40 backpack transceivers for distribution to the squadrons as needed. The radios were supplemented by battalion stocks of two telephones and seven sets of semaphore flags.

Divisional Fire Support

Fire support for the division was provided by two regiments of artillery, one of three battalions (*groupes*) of the famous "French 75" field guns and the other of two howitzer battalions, one with 105mm weapons and the other with 155mm. Since both the infantry and cavalry within the division lacked organic HE weapons in significant numbers, the role of the division artillery was critical. Any threat that could not be dealt with by machine gun fire or 25mm anti-tank guns would be fatal if the artillery was not responsive, accurate, and flexible. Unfortunately, French doctrine remained mired in the bogs of World War One battlefields, and the artillery tended to define its missions almost exclusively in terms of pre-planned fires and set-piece barrages.

The divisional light artillery regiment provided a 75mm field gun battalion to be associated with each infantry regiment in the direct support role. This battalion was made up of a headquarters, three 4-gun batteries, and a service battery. Given that the field artillery was technically competent, the most important components of the battalion organization were those dedicated to directing the fire of the weapons.

A battery would send its commander, an observer sergeant, a corporal for computing gun data, and a telephone team forward for observation duties. The battery held a total of three telephones and eight km of wire, with no radios. The battalion HQ had a much larger liaison staff that included observer and fire planning specialists (three lieutenants), seven liaison sergeants, and thirteen corporals and privates for dispatch rider and observer duties. The staff, often accompanied by the artillery battalion commander, would set up shop close to the supported infantry regiment commander to ensure continual liaison with the infantry. One of the battalion's battery OPs would set up nearby as well. The other two battery OPs would set up near the flanks of the supported infantry regiment. The battalion commander usually exercised close control over the battalion's fires, with the battery OPs providing redundancy and the ability to see areas not visible to the battalion commander. The battalion signal section was divided into two 22-man groups, one for telephone/optical communications and the other with radios, with the latter equipped with four ER.22 and one ER.17 transceivers and two R.11 receivers.

The tragic weakness of this organization was its lack of flexibility. The artillery staff was permanently located with the infantry regiment HQ and its only contact with the forward infantry was through the liaison sergeants at battalion headquarters with their runners. The infantry could contact their regimental HQ, and through it the artillery staff, on their own radio net, of course, but the infantry received virtually no training in calling in or adjusting fire and this potential remained largely unexplored. A special artillery liaison staff for an infantry battalion was authorized only if the battalion was detached.

	Officers	Sergeants	Corporals	Privates	Light MGs	Medium MGs	75mm Guns	105mm Howitzers	155mm Howitzers	Horses	Wagons	Motorcycles	Field Cars	Trucks	Bicycles
Light Artillery Regiment															
Regiment HQ & Battery															
Regiment HQ	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0
Battery HQ & Trains	0	5	5	38	0	2	0	0	0	26	3	0	0	3	0
Reconnaissance/Liaison Section	0	3	0	12	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	4	0	3
Fuze Adjustment Section	1	3	5	17	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	3	1
Signal Platoon	0	3	6	40	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0
Three Field Gun Battalions, each															
Battalion Headquarters															
HQ & Liaison	6	11	8	59	0	0	0	0	0	48	4	1	3	0	15
Trains Section	0	1	1	12	0	0	0	0	0	8	3	0	0	0	0
Three Batteries, each															
Battery Headquarters	1	2	2	14	0	0	0	0	0	12	1	0	0	0	1
Firing Battery	2	7	7	63	1	2	4	0	0	80	8	0	0	0	0
Trains	0	3	3	27	0	0	0	0	0	28	5	0	0	0	0
Service Battery															
Battery HQ & Trains	1	6	5	34	0	0	0	0	0	34	6	0	0	0	1
Medical Section	2	0	2	13	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0
Resupply Column	1	6	4	73	0	1	0	0	0	111	13	0	0	0	0
Battalion Trains	1	6	2	24	0	0	0	0	0	19	7	0	2	5	2
Heavy Artillery Regiment															
Regiment HQ & Battery (as above)	7	14	16	107	0	2	0	0	0	42	5	0	4	11	4
105mm Howitzer Battalion (as in field gun bn)	20	66	58	527	3	7	0	12	0	582	75	1	5	7	21
155mm Howitzer Battalion															
Battalion HQ (as in field gun bn)	6	12	9	71	0	0	0	0	0	56	7	1	3	0	15
Three Batteries, each															
Battery Headquarters	1	2	2	14	0	0	0	0	0	12	1	0	0	0	1
Firing Battery	2	7	7	102	1	2	0	0	4	91	9	0	0	0	0
Trains	0	3	3	31	0	0	0	0	0	34	6	0	0	0	0
Service Battery															
Battery HQ & Trains	1	6	5	39	0	0	0	0	0	41	7	0	0	1	1
Medical Section	2	0	2	13	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0
Resupply Column	1	6	4	85	0	1	0	0	0	111	13	0	0	0	0
Battalion Trains	1	6	2	25	0	0	0	0	0	19	7	0	2	6	2
Infantry Division Artillery, from December 1936															

In practice, the artillery staff was limited to planning fires for set-piece battles. Improvisation was almost unknown and responsiveness limited. The system would have worked fairly well in First World War-type battles, with the infantry lining up shoulder-to-shoulder for frontal assaults, but once the battle became fluid the artillery lost most of its effectiveness. The attacking German formations took losses from artillery fire when they approached long-established French positions, but once the French divisions were dislocated their artillery became much less of a factor. A further limitation was a technical one: while the 75mm mle.97 field gun was a sound weapon with a high rate of fire, its flat trajectory limited its usefulness in more broken terrain.

The division's heavy field artillery regiment provided general support with one battalion each of 105mm and 155mm howitzers. The command and control organization for these battalions was identical to those of the 75mm battalions. Each of the two artillery regiment HQs had its own observation and liaison groups. The HQ included a 23-man section dedicated specifically to the adjustment of mechanically-timed fuzed rounds as well as a reconnaissance/liaison staff similar to that included in the battalion HQs.

The anti-tank reserves of the division consisted of two company-size units: one of 25mm guns manned by the infantry and the other of 47mm guns by the artillery. In both cases, these were horse-drawn units. The infantry anti-tank company was made up of a HQ and four platoons. Each of these platoons consisted of a platoon leader, platoon sergeant, a bicyclist, two runners, a driver with a one-horse cart for ammunition and a light machine gun, and three gun squads each of a sergeant, a corporal, and five privates. Other than the bicyclist and the runners the platoon had no signal elements, and the company HQ had only six telephonists (with 2 km of wire, a switchboard and two telephones) and four signallers (with a signal lamp and four pairs of semaphore flags).

The artillery anti-tank battery was first assigned to the infantry division in 1936, but as the new 47mm anti-tank gun was not yet available the units were temporarily armed with 75mm field guns. The 75mm battery had a total strength of 196 men and was divided into three platoons. Each of these platoons was a relatively independent unit with its own signal section with a radio, two telephones, and a switchboard. The platoon manned two 75mm guns and had two light MGs for close-in defense.

The TO&E for the 47mm battery was published two years later and represented a substantial departure. The new battery had four platoons, each again with its own ER.12 radio and telephone facilities. The anti-tank platoon was made up of a lieutenant, a platoon sergeant, four observer/machine gunners (with two light MGs), a signal detachment of a corporal and five privates, a runner, a truck driver, and two 12-man gun crews. The platoon had a total of six riding horses and twenty-four draft horses to tow the two guns and two caissons. Each caisson carried 72 rounds of ammunition, while a further 24 were carried with the gun itself and the platoon truck carried 160 more. The artillery anti-tank platoon was thus fairly independent, with good communications and sufficient ammunition, had enough men to be able to function after taking losses and was equipped with powerful weapons. On the debit side, it was still limited to the speed of its draft horses, and this compounded the stark fact that there were simply not enough of these platoons to support a division whose only other

protection against tanks was the light 25mm weapon of the infantry.

	Officers	Enlisted	Rifles	Light Machine Guns	Medium Machine Guns	60mm Mortars	81mm Mortars	25mm AT Guns	47mm AT Guns	75mm Guns	155mm Howitzers	Telephone Wire (km)	Telephones	ER40 radios	other Radios	Horses	Wagons & Carts	Motorcycles	Cars	Light Trucks	Trucks	Chenillettes
Division Headquarters	49	43	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Wire Signal Company	4	223	200	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	236	78	0	0	6	4	20	6	11	7	0
Radio Signal Company	3	158	125	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	23	0	0	8	4	17	7	0
Reconnaissance Group	28	657	520	24	13	2	0	4	0	0	0	16	2	6	3	270	4	99	12	36	19	0
Three Infantry Regiments, each	81	3,009	2,800	112	48	9	8	12	0	0	0	30	17	18	10	292	190	42	6	39	5	9
Infantry Anti-Tank Company	4	142	125	4	0	0	0	12	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	20	18	1	0	2	0	3
Pioneer Company	3	215	205	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	3	2	0	2	0	0
Light Artillery Regiment	67	2,090	850	11	21	0	0	0	0	36	0	135	54	0	28	1,788	266	4	19	32	3	0
Heavy Artillery Regiment	47	1,673	740	8	14	0	0	0	0	0	24	92	29	0	19	1,320	187	3	14	27	2	0
Anti-Tank Battery	5	200	105	8	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	8	8	0	3	148	4	4	2	3	2	0
Artillery Workshop	4	251	25	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	8	6	38	0
Two Pioneer Companies, each	5	277	240	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	21	2	0	0	38	18	0	1	4	0	0
Motorized Trains Company	3	165	110	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	20	32	14	0
Horsed Trains Company	7	323	180	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	283	122	0	0	0	0	0
Intendance Section	2	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	1	0	1	0
Medical Group	14	216	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	78	36	1	1	0	1	0

* included in the trains companies

Infantry Division, NE Type, 1939-40

The Division Base

Engineer support for the division was provided by two large companies, each of which was built around four 57-man engineer platoons. Each of these platoons was supported by three 2-horse carts attached from company HQ. The company HQ also had two carts each carrying a machine gun for distribution as needed. Although possessed of adequate manpower, the engineer companies were not particularly well-equipped and were certainly not mobile enough for any but relatively static warfare.

Divisional signal troops consisted of a telephone/telegraph company and a radio company. Both were motorized formations, although not on an impressive scale. The telephone company had four wire-laying platoons, one of which was denominated a hasty unit, but that was equipped with only four field cars for laying cable and two sidecar motorcycles for the repair of cable; while the regular line-laying platoons each had just a requisitioned civilian truck and a motorcycle. In fact, except for the cross-country field cars of the hasty line platoon, almost all the vehicles in the telephone company were civilian trucks taken over by the army on mobilization.

The radio company was similarly equipped with civilian-model vehicles. The company was equipped mainly with ER.12 transceivers and R.11 receivers and was functionally divided into a division command group (5 radios), a division artillery group (3 radios), a division infantry group (4 radios), and a detachment of six radios for use as needed. The radio company also included a small signal intelligence section with two R.15 receivers, an ultra-short wave receiver, and a short-wave direction finder.

The almost exclusive reliance on requisitioned vehicles for the division signals, as well as their small numbers, reflected a belief in a return to a war of relatively leisurely movement for division HQs. Inevitably, once the Germans broke through and the French divisions were forced to displace rapidly under combat conditions communications broke down quickly and almost completely.

The transport service for the division consisted of two elements: a motorized "company" of two officers and 30 enlisted with five field cars and 15 trucks, and a horse-drawn company of four officers and 200 enlisted with 220 horses and 80 wagons.

Infantry Divisions in the Force Structure

The peacetime army included seventeen infantry divisions¹, all of the NE type, as well as two division equivalents of mountain infantry. Each division, except two, was responsible not only for its own readiness but was also responsible for the mobilization of two reserve divisions. With the creation of training centers, depots, etc., this meant that the active division would surrender two-thirds of its officers, one-third of its NCOs, and about 45 percent of its other ranks on mobilization, these to be replaced by reservists in the first three years of service. The first-line reserve division, known as a type "A" division, would be made up of 23 percent active officers, 17 percent active NCOs, and 2 percent active other ranks, with the remainder being reservists with more than three years off active duty. The second-line reserve, or type "B", divisions were filled almost entirely with reservists. The reserve divisions were not expected to perform particularly well without further training since during the period 1928-35 the active duty tour for conscripts had been reduced to one year as an economy measure and reserve training severely curtailed.

All the infantry divisions, active, A and B, used the same TO&Es and were theoretically identical in structure and armament. However, and as could be expected, the B divisions were the lowest priority for new material and consequently were often short on equipment. In fact, nine of the B divisions had only a single artillery regiment with three battalions of 75mm guns and one of 155mm howitzers, thus effectively losing the 105mm howitzer battalion found in the active and A divisions.

The two mountain division equivalents were not retained as such but completely reorganized with the arrival of reservists and contributions from two other infantry divisions to form five type A and three type B mountain divisions.

The Infantry Division in Combat

The performance of the French infantry divisions in the 1940 campaign must be regarded as one of the major disappointments of the war. The disappointment must have been all the greater at the time for a cursory examination of their overall organization would have shown them to be strong in artillery and automatic weapons and possessed of supporting arms and services on a level comparable to most of their contemporaries. A closer examination, however, shows them shot through with fatal flaws.

The most striking of these was the complete absence of modern signal facilities.

¹ ?not including the colonial divisions, which are discussed later.

The infantry organization at regiment level and below had been predicated on the availability of massive artillery support. Lacking infantry guns or mortars on any significant scale the infantry simply could not function against a numerous and determined enemy without artillery support. Unfortunately, the artillery was so sluggish and unresponsive due to lack of communications with the front that once the infantry had to move it lost its artillery support. Similarly, division communications were lamentably weak and accounts of the May 1940 campaign are filled with examples of division commanders losing contact with their subordinate elements once the division displaced. It seems to have been the rule rather than the exception that the movement of a division during combat resulted in a complete breakdown of communications.

The lack of mobility of the infantry divisions was a further stumbling block. Much has been made by French historians of the use of horses to pull the division artillery, but German infantry divisions used horsed artillery right to the end of the war and do not appear to have suffered problems of the same magnitude. Rather, the problem appears to have been one of planning. The Germans expected to have to move frequently and on short notice while the French procedures for displacement were of a much more leisurely nature and when forced to move in a hurry chaos was the most common result. Similarly, little thought appears to have been given to resupply in a fluid battle. The supply echelons had very little in the way of communications and once line units began to move it became very difficult for the supply trains to find them.

Light Infantry Components

Within an infantry division, there could be several patterns or types of infantry. Seven of the infantry divisions included a light infantry regiment (*demi-brigade de chasseurs*) in place of the third infantry regiment. The Chasseurs came in several varieties: field infantry (*Chasseurs à Pied*), mountain (*Chasseurs Alpins* and *Chasseurs Pyreneens*), and motorized (*Chasseurs Portees*). Although the titles of the brigades did not distinguish between the various types, they invariably were homogenous, consisting of three chasseurs battalions of the same type. The seven *chasseurs* regiments assigned to the regular (non-mountain) infantry divisions were the field, or *Chasseurs à Pied*, variety.

	Officers	Sergeants	Corporals	Privates	Pistols	Carbines	Rifles	Grenade Launchers	Light MGs	Medium MGs	60mm Mortars	81mm Mortars	25mm AT Guns	Horses	Carts	Wagons	Motorcycles	Field Cars	Trucks	Chenillettes	Bicycles
Regiment Headquarters	7	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Headquarters Company																					
Company Headquarters	1	4	2	11	1	1	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	1	0	0	4	0	2
Regiment HQ Section	0	7	2	17	2	2	26	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	2	0	0	10
Signal Platoon	1	7	11	64	5	75	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	3	0	2	0	14
Pioneer Platoon	1	4	6	39	2	45	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	3	0	0	0	0	5
Motorcycle Scout Platoon	1	3	4	18	2	24	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	26	0	0	0	0
Maintenance/Chenillette Section	0	1	2	23	1	0	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	5	6	0
Medical Section	1	3	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	5
Weapons Company	3	14	10	76	26	6	70	0	0	0	0	2	6	16	13	1	1	0	1	3	10
<i>(as in infantry regiment)</i>																					
Three Infantry Battalions, each																					
Battalion HQ & Platoon	5	3	4	40	11	35	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	1	0	2	1	1	0	13
Three Rifle Companies, each																					
Company HQ & Trains	1	5	3	21	3	5	22	0	0	0	1	0	0	5	2	1	0	0	1	0	4
Three Rifle Platoons, each	1	4	4	32	8	10	23	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Weapons Company																					
Company HQ & Trains	1	5	3	19	5	3	19	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	1	2	0	0	1	0	4
Four MG Platoons, each*	1	3	5	25	10	0	24	0	0	4	0	0	0	6	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Weapons Platoon	0	5	4	32	12	0	29	0	0	0	0	2	2	7	7	0	0	0	0	0	0
Service Company																					
Company HQ & Trains	1	2	2	8	2	3	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	1	0	2
Battalion Trains Platoon	1	7	5	35	6	8	34	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	0	6	1	1	7	0	3
Medical Section	0	4	2	32	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	0	1	0	1

* one platoon commanded by NCO instead of officer

Demi-Brigade Chasseurs à Pied, 1939-40

The *Chasseurs à Pied* regiments used the same TO&Es as the regular infantry previously discussed for the rifle company and battalion and regiment heavy weapons companies. There were minor changes to the regiment and battalion HQs, but the only significant difference between the *Chasseurs a Pied* and the

regular infantry was in the service support elements. Endeavoring to grant greater operational autonomy to the battalions the service company found in the infantry regiment was disbanded and replaced by smaller service companies in each of the three chasseurs battalions. This may have marginally increased the independence of the battalions but did little to aid the regiment as a whole: where the regular infantry regiment had 31 horse-drawn wagons and 20 two-ton trucks in its "rations" and "resupply" trains, the *Chasseurs à Pied* regiment had 30 wagons and 21 trucks. During the 1800's the chasseurs had filled an important role as light infantry, but by the 1930s the doctrine, communications facilities, and heavy weapons support were identical to those of the regular line infantry, much to the detriment of the *chasseurs*.

The army also raised three other light infantry regiments (*demi-brigade d'infanterie legere*) that were identical in organization to the *Chasseurs a Pied*. These were also incorporated into infantry divisions in lieu of normal infantry regiments, again with no appreciable effect on the divisions' capabilities.

The Motorized-Type Division

Another type of infantry division was the "motorized type". These were not motorized divisions in the sense that other armies used the term, and indeed the French Army rarely referred to them as such in their official documentation, but unofficially the term "motorized division" came into vogue for these formations, particularly among historians after the war, and has led to some confusion.² In fact, the divisions were motorized only in the sense that draft horses were replaced by motor vehicles. The five motorized-type divisions were still tied to the pace of walking infantry.

The organization of the motorized-type infantry regiment was exceptionally fluid in the years leading up to war as the general staff tweaked and experimented with a new type of organization. Indeed, the initial organization of early January 1937 provided for a very unusual rifle company, consisting of three standard rifle platoons (each with three rifle sections) and a fourth platoon with two rifle sections and a 60mm mortar squad.

The standard rifle platoon had three sections, each in turn made up of a sergeant, a corporal, a five-man light machine gun squad, and a four-man rifle squad, one of whom was provided with a VB grenade launcher for his rifle. The four-man platoon HQ included a grenadier corporal who could consolidate and command the grenadiers of the platoon if desired. The fourth platoon was similar, but replaced one of the rifle section with a mortar squad with a 60mm mortar. Infantry manuals of the time seem to deal only with the normal-type company, so there is no clue as to how the company commander was supposed to handle this disparate collection of subordinate units.

At the company level, the horse-drawn transport found in the normal infantry regiment was replaced by motor vehicles. A sidecar motorcycle was issued to replace the company commander's riding horse and the trains element was reequipped with a 3.5-ton truck for rations and baggage (towing a kitchen trailer), and a 1.8-ton truck carrying supplemental weapons and ammunition, the former including eight light machine guns for issue as needed when in defensive posture.

² The Army distinguished only between the *Division d'Infanterie (Type Normal)* and the *Division d'Infanterie (Type Motorisé)*. Proposals raised in the mid-1930s to form motorized divisions (*divisions motorisée*) never reached fruition.

The battalion heavy weapons company differed from its non-motorized counterpart primarily in having one less machine gun platoon. The machine gun platoon consisted of a headquarters (a lieutenant, platoon sergeant, a transport

	Officers	Sergeants	Corporals	Privates	Pistols	Carbines	Rifles	Light MGs	Medium MGs	60mm Mortars	81mm Mortars	25mm AT Guns	Horses	Carts	Motorcycles	Field Cars	Light Trucks	Trucks	Chenillettes	Bicycles
Regiment Headquarters	8	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Headquarters Company																				
Company HQ & Trains	1	3	2	15	3	3	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	1	0	1
Regiment HQ Section	0	7	2	15	8	0	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	4	0	0	0	1
Signal Platoon	1	7	11	69	7	7	74	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	1	3	0	0	1
Pioneer Platoon	1	4	6	39	3	10	37	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	8	0	0	0
Service Company																				
Company HQ & Trains	1	2	2	8	3	3	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	0	1
Resupply Platoon	1	7	2	41	3	28	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	11	6	0
Rations Platoon	1	3	1	24	3	19	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	14	2	0	0
Maintenance Platoon	1	6	6	39	3	0	49	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	2	9	*4	0
Medical Section	2	5	1	39	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	1
Motorcycle Company																				
Company HQ & Trains	1	5	4	26	3	33	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	0
Light Motorcycle Platoon	0	4	4	18	0	26	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	0	0	0	0	0
Two Heavy Motorcycle Platoons ,each	1	3	5	17	1	25	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	13	0	0	0	0	0
Machine Gun Platoon	1	3	5	21	1	?	?	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	5	0	0	0
Weapons Company																				
Company HQ & Trains	1	4	3	18	4	3	19	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	2
Three Machine Gun Platoons, each	1	3	4	21	2	1	22	0	4	0	0	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Two Anti-Tank Platoons, each	1	4	3	18	13	2	10	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	2	0	0	0	3	0
Mortar Platoon	1	6	4	30	12	9	20	0	0	0	4	0	4	4	1	0	0	0	0	0
Three Infantry Battalions, each																				
Battalion HQ & Platoon	4	6	7	61	6	6	41	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	1	6	0	0	1
Three Rifle Companies, each																				
Company HQ & Trains	1	4	2	16	5	4	14	(8)	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	0	2
Three Rifle Platoons, each																				
Platoon HQ	1	1	1	2	2	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Three Rifle Sections, each	0	1	1	10	2	0	10	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
One Rifle Platoon																				
Platoon HQ	1	1	1	2	2	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Two Rifle Sections, each	0	1	1	10	2	0	10	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mortar Squad	0	1	1	4	1	1	4	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Weapons Company																				
Company HQ & Trains	1	4	3	18	4	4	18	0	(6)	0	(1)	0	0	0	2	0	3	1	0	2
Three MG Platoons, each	1	3	5	23	4	3	25	0	4	0	0	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Heavy Weapons Platoon	1	4	4	27																
Platoon HQ	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Anti-Tank Section	0	3	2	11	4	0	10	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Mortar Section	0	1	2	16	5	2	12	0	0	0	2	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0

* tractors

(parentheticals represent reserve weapons)

Infantry & Zouaves Regiment, Motorized Type, from January 1937

corporal, and runner) and two sections, each of a sergeant and two six-man gun crews with a horse-drawn cart. The heavy platoon had an AT section with two 25mm guns towed by chenillettes and a mortar section with two 81mm mortars carried by carts. The medium MGs and mortars were unique within the motorized-type division in using horses for transport. Both types were carried in the new *mle.1937* infantry cart, which could be pulled by a horse, a light motor vehicle, or, for short distances, by the crew.

The most notable feature of the motorized-type infantry regiment was the incorporation of a motorcycle company. The company had a light motorcycle platoon for scouting, two heavy platoons for combat and a machine gun platoon. The light platoon was built around two sections, each of which had two squads, each of four men on two sidecar motorcycles. Each squad had a light machine gun, but this was specifically noted as being a reserve weapon as their primary role was scouting. The two heavy platoons each had a six-man HQ (with three sidecar motorcycles and a VB grenade launcher), a ten-man light section (5 sidecar motorcycles with a VB and two light MGs), and a ten-man heavy section (5 sidecar motorcycles with two medium MGs). The machine gun platoon had two sections, each of two five-man teams with a machine gun and a 1.2 ton light truck.

Trials and maneuvers over the next few years showed the motorized-type regiment to be flawed, and organization evolved. Showing some prescience, a June 1938 modification added five light trucks to the regimental pioneer platoon specifically for the carriage of anti-tank mines. Modifications of a year later replaced the VB grenade launchers in the rifle platoons with a 50mm mortar squad, and one of the MG platoons in the regimental heavy weapons company was to see its medium MGs replaced by a similar number of 20mm AA guns. It seems likely that the light mortars made it into the hands of troops, but the 20mm guns would remain a pipe-dream.

At the lower levels the incorporation of two different types of maneuver platoons in the rifle company made no sense. In 1940 the company organization was revised to mirror that of the regular rifle company, with four identical rifle platoons. Apparently, the motorized-type infantry had a higher priority in terms of receiving the diminutive 50mm mortar, but so few were built that this appears to have made little difference. The biggest change for the regiment was the abolition of the motorcycle company, its scouting role being taken over by a platoon added to the headquarters company.

Another significant change of the 1940 TO&E was the retirement of the horse from the motorized-type divisions. The newly-developed *Unic TU-1* light half-track was chosen to tow the *mle.1937* infantry carts used by the machine guns and mortars, which provided the added benefit of a cargo bed that could carry ammunition and supplies. In addition, a TU-1 with *mle.37* cart was added was added to the rifle company HQ for 7.5mm and 50mm ammunition and grenades. This improved company mobility and independence, but the vehicle was completely unarmored and may have presented quite a target to enemy gunners when deployed at the company level.

	Officers	Sergeants	Corporals	Privates	Pistols	Carbines	Rifles	Light MGs	Medium MGs	50mm Mortars	60mm Mortars	81mm Mortars	25mm AT Guns	Motorcycles	Field Cars	Trucks	TU.1 Tractors	Chenillettes	Bicycles
Regiment Headquarters	7	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Headquarters Company																			
Company HQ & Trains	1	3	2	15	3	3	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	3	0	0	1
Regiment HQ Section	0	7	2	15	12	4	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	1	3	0	0	1
Signal Platoon	1	7	11	69	7	7	78	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	3	4	0	1
Pioneer Platoon	1	4	6	47	3	0	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	8	2	0	0
Motorcycle Scout Platoon	1	3	5	20	2	0	24	4	0	0	0	0	0	26	0	0	0	0	0
Service Company																			
Company HQ & Trains	1	2	2	8	3	3	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	1
Resupply Platoon	1	7	2	41	3	28	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	13	0	6	0
Rations Platoon	1	3	1	24	3	19	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	16	0	0	0
Maintenance Platoon	1	6	6	29	3	0	49	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	12	1	0	0
Medical Section	2	5	3	39	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0
Weapons Company																			
Company HQ & Trains	1	4	3	18	4	3	19	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	2
Three Machine Gun Platoons, each**	1	3	4	21	4	3	22	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Two Anti-Tank Platoons, each	1	4	3	18	13	2	10	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	0	0	3	0	0
Mortar Platoon	1	6	4	30	12	9	20	0	0	0	0	4	0	1	0	0	4	0	0
Three Infantry Battalions, each																			
Battalion HQ & Platoon	4	6	7	61	8	6	42	0	0	0	*2	0	0	4	0	5	3	0	1
Three Rifle Companies, each																			
Company HQ & Trains	1	5	3	21	5	5	18	*8	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	2	2	0	1
Four Rifle Platoons, each	1	4	4	32	8	0	33	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Weapons Company																			
Company HQ & Trains	1	4	3	17	4	4	16	0	*6	0	0	*1	0	2	0	3	0	0	2
Three MG Platoons, each**	1	3	4	21	4	3	22	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Heavy Weapons Platoon	1	6	4	27	14	4	18	0	0	0	0	2	2	1	0	0	4	0	0

* supplemental reserve

** one platoon commanded by NCO instead of officer

Infantry & Zouaves Regiment, Motorized Type, from 4 April 1940

In the battalion heavy weapons company each machine gun section was carried in a TU-1 tractor with trailer and consisted of a sergeant, an armorer, a driver, and two 5-man gun crews. Each tractor carried 4,892 rounds of ammunition as

well as the two Hotchkiss weapons and one or two of the platoon HQ personnel. Unlike the non-motorized machine gun platoon, the motorized version did not include the fifth machine gun for AA defense.

The battalion weapons company also included a heavy weapons platoon organized along the same lines as in the non-motorized infantry except that the animal transport was deleted and replaced by a TU-1 tractor for each 25mm gun and a tractor and trailer for each mortar. Each tractor carried 156 rounds of 25mm or 48 rounds of 81mm ammunition. In the case of the anti-tank guns, this was the same load per gun as was carried by the carts of the AT section in the non-motorized infantry. The mortar section of the non-motorized battalion, however, carried 128 rounds per gun with it. The motorized-type infantry compensated for this by carrying larger stocks in the company HQ.

The company HQ was similar to that of non-motorized infantry, but carried 360 rounds of 81mm ammunition as a reserve and also included sizeable holdings of "supplemental" weapons. These comprised six more Hotchkiss machine guns (complete with accessories except for indirect fire equipment) and an 81mm mortar. As with the rifle company, no additional personnel were provided to man these weapons, which were to be distributed when the battalion was on the defensive. Presumably, once the company took over static positions a third machine gun would be issued to each MG section and a third mortar to the mortar section to be manned by personnel normally used to bring the weapons into action and carry ammunition.

The battalion HQ was analogous to that of the non-motorized infantry but once again included a holding of supplemental weapons: this time two 60mm mortars. These could be manned by HQ personnel or, undoubtedly more efficiently, by rifle company mortar personnel supplemented as needed by one or two administrative troops. Once again, these weapons were to be distributed and manned only once the battalion was in relatively static positions.

The regimental heavy weapons company was considerably larger than its non-motorized counterpart, including three machine gun platoons as well as the two anti-tank platoons (one of the latter replacing the horse-drawn platoon in the normal infantry regiment). In addition, the mortar section was expanded to a platoon of four weapons. The three MG platoons were the platoons specializing in AA fire formerly found at the battalion level, and one of them was to be reequipped with 20mm mle.39 (Oerlikon JL) anti-aircraft guns. This AA platoon was to get four of these weapons with the organization probably remaining the same, but production was interrupted by competing Swiss requirements and only

a small portion of the required weapons were delivered. The 1st and 12th motorized-type Infantry Divisions are known to have received theirs but whether the others did as well is unknown.

As thus configured the motorized-type infantry regiment represented an advance on both the regular infantry and the earlier, experimental, forms of the motorized regiment.

Unfortunately, no improvements were made to the radio communications within the regiment, these being identical to those in the non-motorized type regiment. The use of motor vehicles, especially cross-country half-tracks, to carry the infantry's heavy weapons should have made it possible to create a force capable of dealing a strong blow to any enemy formations. As usual, however, the sterile defensive doctrines dominating the high command came to the fore and these new vehicles were used to transport weapons that could be used only when the regiment was in static positions.

The infantry also contributed an anti-tank company to the divisional structure, not to be confused with the divisional anti-tank battery provided by the artillery branch.

Under the 1937 TO&Es such a company was built around four platoons, each with three squads armed with a 25mm AT gun towed by a chenillette. The chenillettes were slow and possessed of limited payload, limiting the company's ability to serve a division's frontage. Exacerbating that, the company HQ had no radios and had to rely on a six-man team with two telephones and two km of wire, two optical signallers and four motorcycle messengers. The only modification subsequently made to the company was the addition of ten light trucks to carry anti-tank mines.

The full reorganization, nominally at least, came in November 1939 when a replacement TO&E was issued. The chenillette used in the 1937 table was

	Officers	Sergeants	Corporals	Privates	Light Machine Guns	25mm AT Guns	Motorcycles	Cars	Light Trucks	Trucks	Chenillettes	Bicycles
Divisional Anti-Tank Company, from January 1937												
Company Headquarters												
Command Group	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Signal & Liaison Squad	0	1	2	15	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	2
Trains Section	0	2	4	9	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	1
Four Anti-Tank Platoons, each												
Platoon HQ	1	1	0	4	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Three Squads, each	0	1	1	5	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Divisional Anti-Tank Company, from November 1939												
Company Headquarters												
Command Group	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Signal & Liaison Squad	0	1	3	23	0	0	4	0	5	0	0	0
Trains Section	0	1	3	10	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
Maintenance Squad	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
AT Mine Squad	0	0	1	10	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	0
Four Anti-Tank Platoons, each												
Platoon HQ	1	1	0	4	1	0	4	0	0	0	0	0
Three Squads, each	0	1	1	4	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Infantry Division, Motorized Type, Anti-Tank Company												

a handy little vehicle, but it was slow and had limited cargo capacity. In 1937 the infantry ordered the Latil M7, a 4x4 light tractor with room for five men and 250 kg of ammunition, but the order was delayed and first deliveries did not occur until March 1940. About a hundred had been delivered by the end of April, but most of those had been allocated to the armored divisions, and it seems likely that few of these infantry division companies had received theirs.

That was a shame, as a few other improvements had been added. In particular, five Latils were to be added to the company headquarters, including one fitted with an R11 receiver and signal panels to communicate with observer aircraft. Communication with ground elements, however, continued to rely on telephones. The platoon was to have four Latils, three towing guns and one for the platoon HQ. In addition, the platoon HQ held a sidecar motorcycle for the platoon sergeant and three solo motorcycles for messengers.

	Officers	Sergeants	Corporals	Privates	Pistols	Carbines	Grenade Launchers	Light MGs	Medium MGs	60mm Mortars	25mm AT Guns	AMRs	AMDs	Motorcycles	Field Cars	Trucks	Tractors
Battalion Headquarters	7	6	8	50	13	58	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	10	7	4	0
Service Squadron																	
Squadron Headquarters	1	2	2	11	3	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	3	0
Battalion Trains Group	1	6	3	39	7	42	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	16	0
Medical Platoon	2	5	3	28	26	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	6	0
Pioneer Platoon	0	2	2	22	2	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	3	0
Armored Car Group																	
Group Headquarters	2	3	6	14	5	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	9	5	0	0
Armored Car Squadron																	
Squadron HQ & Trains	1	8	6	37	9	41	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	12	2	7	0
Four Platoons, each	1	3	3	9	12	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	1	0	0
Motorcycle Rifle Squadron																	
Squadron HQ & Trains	1	7	4	30	8	32	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	2	6	0
Four Rifle Platoons, each	1	3	5	17	6	20	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	13	0	0	0
Mortar Squad	0	0	1	3	2	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
Reconnaissance Group																	
Group Headquarters	2	3	2	11	5	11	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	9	2	0	0
Reconnaissance Squadron																	
Squadron HQ & Trains	1	9	9	44	10	51	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	11	2	8	0
Four Recon Platoons, each	1	2	3	7	9	3	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	3	0	0	0
Motorcycle Rifle Squadron	5	19	25	101	34	114	12	16	0	1	0	0	0	66	2	6	0
Heavy Weapons Squadron																	
Squadron HQ & Trains	1	6	4	28	7	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	1	9	0
Two Machine Gun Platoons, each	1	3	4	15	11	12	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	9	0	0	0
Two Anti-Tank Platoons, each	1	1	3	20	2	23	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	4	0	7	0
Tank Destroyer Platoon	1	2	3	7	9	4	0	0	0	0	0	*4	0	3	1	0	0

* 25mm anti-tank version

Infantry Division (motorized) Reconnaissance Battalion, from 18 July 1938

The one area in which the motorized division had substantially greater flexibility than its non-motorized counterpart was its reconnaissance battalion. Originally this unit consisted of a headquarters, service squadron, two motorcycle rifle squadrons, and a heavy weapons squadron. As armored cars became available from new production and AMR reconnaissance vehicles from reorganized cavalry units they were fed into the motorized reconnaissance battalions. By the start of the war only the 9th and 25th Motorized Divisions still lacked armored vehicles, and these had been filled out by the time of the German offensive.

Possibly the greatest advantage possessed by the motorized reconnaissance battalion over the non-motorized version was improved communications, although these were still not fully up to contemporary standards. The platoon leader's vehicle in each AMD platoon was equipped with an ER.26ter radio, as were the squadron commander's vehicles in both AMD and AMR squadrons. The group HQs were made up almost entirely of signal personnel. The armored car group HQ had an ER.26ter in its AMD, along with four field cars each with an R11 receiver. The reconnaissance group HQ had a radio truck with an ER.26ter and an R.11, and a field car with an R.11.

The artillery was organized on an all-motor basis, which conferred somewhat greater mobility, but the liaison and signal arrangements were identical to that in the horsed artillery, that is, telephones between the OP and gun position for the batteries, and a radio net between the batteries and the battalion HQ and, presumably, between the battalion forward position and the main HQ. The use of trucks should have permitted the carriage of greater amounts of ammunition, but it does not appear that advantage was taken of this factor. The motorized 75mm battalion carried the same 3,285 rounds as the

	Officers	Sergeants	Corporals	Privates	Motorcycles	Cars	Light Trucks	Trucks	Tractors
Light Artillery Regiment									
Regiment Headquarters									
Headquarters	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Headquarters Battery									
Battery HQ	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Liaison Section	0	2	0	13	6	7	0	0	0
Observation & Ranging Team	1	3	5	17	2	1	2	0	0
Signal Section	0	3	6	39	1	0	4	1	0
MG Team	0	0	1	3	0	0	1	0	0
Trains	0	3	2	22	0	0	3	1	0
Three Light Battalions, each									
Battalion Headquarters									
Command Group	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Liaison & Observation Group	3	5	2	15	9	6	1	0	0
Signal Section	1	4	5	39	0	0	6	0	0
Trains	0	1	0	12	0	0	2	1	0
Three 75mm Batteries, each									
Battery Headquarters	1	2	4	13	3	1	1	0	0
Firing Battery	2	8	3	46	0	1	2	1	10
Trains	0	2	2	11	0	0	0	2	0
Service Battery									
Battery Headquarters	1	1	3	3	3	2	0	0	0
Medical Section	1	0	2	13	0	0	2	0	0
Supply Section	1	5	4	41	1	1	1	10	0
Maintenance Section	1	1	2	12	0	1	0	2	0
Regimental Trains	1	6	1	17	0	1	3	4	0
Battery Trains	0	3	2	18	0	0	2	2	0
Heavy Artillery Regiment									
as above, except:									
only two battalions									
Three 155mm Batteries, each									
Battery Headquarters	1	2	4	13	3	1	1	0	0
Firing Battery	2	8	3	66	0	1	3	3	10
Trains	2	2	0	8	0	0	0	2	0
Service Battery									
Supply Section	1	5	4	47	1	1	1	10	0
Anti-Tank Battery									
Battery Headquarters	1	1	2	13	4	1	1	0	0
Firing Battery (4 platoons)	4	12	12	92	4	4	6	4	10
Battery Trains	0	5	0	21	0	0	1	3	2
Infantry Division (motorized) Artillery Personnel & Vehicles									

horse-drawn version, while the motorized 155mm battalion carried only 4% more ammunition than the 696 rounds carried by the horse-drawn battalion.

Another contribution by the artillery branch was a motorized 47mm anti-tank battery. The battery's firing battery was built around four platoons. The heart of each of these platoons was its two gun squads, each with a 47mm gun towed by a light tractor. The platoon also had two more tractors carrying ammunition, two trucks carrying anti-tank mines, two more for ammunition, a light truck for light machine guns and signal equipment, and a field car for the platoon commander. Initially, the firing battery had only a single radio, plus telephones, but in 1940 each platoon was allocated one.

Another area in which the motorized type division should have had something of an advantage over the non-motorized type was the inclusion of a light anti-aircraft battery, this part of the 1940 reorganization. The battery was made up of a headquarters platoon, a firing battery of two platoons, and the trains elements. The primary elements of the headquarters platoon were two fire control teams and a signal section. Each of the fire control teams was made up of a sergeant, two corporals, and three privates with a 1.25-meter stereoscopic rangefinder, a Mle.34 director, and a truck. Each of the anti-air platoons had three 8-man gun squads each with a 25mm *mle.38* AA gun and a Latil or Laffly W 15.T truck carrying 18 ammunition clips. In fact, these batteries did not join the divisions until a day or two after the German offensive began in May 1940.

The engineer companies supporting the motorized division had roughly the same capabilities, or lack thereof, as in the regular division. The only difference of any significance was the replacement of the three horse-drawn wagons attached to each platoon by a 1-ton requisitioned civilian truck. The divisional radio company was organized identically to that in the regular division, while the telephone company differed in no material aspects.

In sum, the motorized division did not represent much of an advance over the earlier non-motorized infantry division. Its offensive power was no greater, nor were its communications any better. In fact, the only advantage the Army took of the new motor vehicles was to create a slightly more mobile blocking force.

	Officers	Enlisted	Rifles	Light Machine Guns	Medium Machine Guns	60mm Mortars	81mm Mortars	25mm AT Guns	47mm AT Guns	75mm Guns	155mm Howitzers	Telephone Wire (km)	Telephones	ER40 radios	other Radios	Horses	Wagons & Carts	Motorcycles	Cars	Light Trucks	Trucks	Chenillettes
Division Headquarters	49	43	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Wire Signal Company	4	225	200	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	248	84	0	0	0	0	20	6	18	8	0
Radio Signal Company	3	158	125	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	23	0	0	8	4	17	7	0
Reconnaissance Group	42	943	675	16	8	1	0	4	0	0	0	16	2	0	15	0	0	254	45	38	39	**
Three Infantry Regiments, each	83	2,962	2,400	112	48	9	10	12	0	0	0	56	17	18	10	67	67	99	12	71	31	18
Infantry Anti-Tank Company	4	150	120	4	0	0	0	12	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	7	1	12	1	12
Pioneer Company	3	215	205	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	3	1	0
Light Artillery Regiment	68	1,677	1,060	11	21	0	0	0	0	36	0	136	54	0	28	0	0	69	59	55	209	0
Heavy Artillery Regiment	48	1,273	850	8	14	0	0	0	0	0	24	92	29	0	19	0	0	48	42	44	155	0
Anti-Tank Battery	5	168	110	8	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	8	8	0	3	0	0	8	6	8	19	0
Artillery Workshop	4	251	25	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	8	6	38	0
Two Pioneer Companies, each	5	272	240	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	21	2	0	0	0	0	8	2	12	0	0
Motor Transport Company	8	460	300	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	113	34	65	44	0
Motorized Trains Company	5	200	160	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	12	57	34	0
Intendance Section	2	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	1	0	1	0
Medical Group	14	213	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	9	5	29	0

* included in the trains companies

** 16 AMD and 16 AMR

Infantry Division, NE Motorized Type, 1939-40

Mountain Infantry

The third type of infantry division was the mountain, or alpine, type. As in the normal infantry division, two varieties of infantry could be assigned to the division: mountain infantry or *Chasseurs Alpins*.

The rifle platoon in the mountain infantry regiment was identical to that in the regular (flat-land) infantry and the company HQ and trains elements were similar, but since pack animals replaced wagons additional personnel were required to lead the larger numbers of animals. The company retained one 2-ton truck for rations, baggage, and ammunition but otherwise, aside from one riding horse for the company commander, relied entirely on pack mules. One was assigned, with a handler, to the signal section (which was otherwise identical to that in the

	Officers	Sergeants	Corporals	Privates	Pistols	Carbines	Rifles	Grenade Launchers	Light MGs	Medium MGs	60mm Mortars	81mm Mortars	25mm AT Guns	37mm Infantry Guns	Mules	Horses	Carts	Motorcycles	Field Cars	Trucks	Chenillettes	Bicycles
Regiment Headquarters	8	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0
Headquarters Company																						
Company HQ & Trains	1	2	2	12	2	5	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Regiment HQ Section	0	7	2	19	0	10	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	0	0	0
Signal Platoon	1	7	13	73	6	11	77	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	0	4	0	2	0	0
Pioneer Platoon	1	4	6	38	2	2	45	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Motorcycle Scout Platoon	1	3	4	18	2	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	26	0	0	0	0
Service Company																						
Company HQ & Trains	1	2	2	9	2	4	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
Resupply Platoon	1	9	3	30	4	15	23	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	7	3	1
Rations Platoon	1	4	4	27	2	24	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	19	0	0
Maintenance Section	1	1	2	10	2	0	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0
Medical Platoon	2	5	3	38	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0
Weapons Company																						
Company HQ & Trains	1	5	2	24	6	11	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	1	0	1	0	2	3	3
Two Anti-Tank Platoons, each	1	4	3	22	9	1	20	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	7	1	1	0	0	0	0
Mortar Section	0	1	2	20	5	6	12	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Three Infantry Battalions, each																						
Battalion HQ & Platoon	4	6	9	86	10	12	49	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	17	4	0	5	1	2	0	0
Ski Scout Platoon	1	4	4	32	8	10	23	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Three Rifle Companies, each																						
Company HQ & Trains	1	5	4	37	3	26	18	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	20	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
Four Rifle Platoons, each*	1	4	4	32	8	10	23	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Weapons Company																						
Company HQ & Trains	1	5	3	35	5	24	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	19	1	0	0	0	2	0	3
Four MG Platoons, each*	1	3	5	25	10	10	14	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Weapons Platoon	0	5	4	37	10	10	25	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	10	0	0	1	0	0	0	0

* one platoon commanded by NCO instead of officer

Infantry Regiment (Mountain Type), from 16 January 1937

regular infantry rifle company) to carry signal stores. Two were assigned to the mortar squad, one to carry the mortar itself and the other for 84 rounds of ammunition. The remaining seventeen mules in the company were concentrated in the company trains section: three carrying a total of 7,650 rounds of light MG ammunition, two carrying a total of 5,888 rounds of rifle ammunition, two carrying 96 VB and 75 hand grenades each, one for tools, two for rations and the remainder for general supplies and relief.

The battalion weapons company was likewise the regular weapons company adapted to pack mule carriage. The only significant difference in armament was the replacement of the 25mm anti-tank guns found in the regular infantry by the much lighter 37mm infantry gun. Weight, however, was not the only factor as it was considered unlikely that significant enemy armor would be met on the Franco-Swiss and Franco-Italian borders where these units were deployed and the 37mm gun had the HE round that the 25mm AT gun lacked.

At the battalion level the main differences, aside from the use of pack mules, were the addition of a skier platoon and expansion of the telephone signal group. The ski platoon was organized exactly like a rifle platoon but equipped with skis to facilitate movement in alpine snow. The platoon should have been capable of deep raids and distant reconnaissance, but lacking even a single pack mule or sleds to carry rations or cold weather gear it seems unlikely that much advantage could have been taken of this. Rather, they appear to have been used for close reconnaissance, liaison duties, and as a mobile reserve.

The battalion signal platoon was identical to that in the regular infantry except for the substitution of six pack mules for one cart, and a tripling in size of the telephone group. Where in the regular infantry this consisted of a single squad of one corporal and six privates, the mountain battalion had three such squads. This was forced on the organization branch first, by the heavier reliance on wire communications in the mountains where radios did not work well, and second, by the increased difficulty in laying landlines in those conditions.

The mountain battalion HQ held six pack mules for the signal section and a further eleven for the medical section but used trucks for carrying rations. Thus, the battalion and regiment service elements would establish a road head distribution point with their trucks, from which it was the responsibility of the companies, with their pack mules, to get the supplies they needed and transport them as needed. The use of motor vehicles at the battalion level and pack horses at the company level, with no horse-drawn wagons or carts, was a response to the conditions of the French Alps, with their good road net but

extremely rugged terrain off the roads.

The regimental weapons company was made up of three platoons. The two anti-tank platoons were of the normal variety, horse-drawn with an ammunition wagon per platoon. The mortar section, however, was transported on a pack basis identical to that of the mortar section in the battalion weapons company: one gun-carrying and two ammunition-carrying mules per mortar.

The regimental service company was similar to that of the motorized infantry regiment, being on an all-truck basis. The main difference between the two was that the mountain regiment had only three chenillettes in the service company and none of the six 5-ton trucks used to carry them in the motorized regiment.

Communications within the regiment used both radios and telephones. There were nine ER.17 radio teams (one in each battalion HQ and six in the regiment signal section for distribution to the companies as needed) that were essentially geared towards maintaining battalion nets. In addition, the division radio company provided a standard attachment to each regiment consisting of five

	Officers	Sergeants	Corporals	Privates	Pistols	Carbines	Rifles	Grenade Launchers	Light MGs	Medium MGs	60mm Mortars	81mm Mortars	25mm AT Guns	37mm Infantry Guns	Mules	Horses	Carts	Motorcycles	Field Cars	Trucks	Chenillettes	Bicycles
Regiment Headquarters	7	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0
Headquarters Company																						
Company Headquarters	1	4	2	16	4	8	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	5	0	2
Regiment HQ Section	0	7	2	17	6	0	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	2	0	0
Signal Platoon	1	7	13	72	7	11	75	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	0	4	0	2	0	0
Pioneer Platoon	1	4	6	38	2	2	45	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Motorcycle Scout Platoon	1	3	4	18	2	24	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	26	0	0	0	0
Maintenance/Chenillette Section	1	1	2	16	14	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	4	3	0
Medical Section	1	3	1	6	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0
Weapons Company																						
Company HQ & Trains	1	5	2	24	6	11	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	1	0	1	0	2	3	3
Two Anti-Tank Platoons, each	1	4	3	22	9	1	20	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	7	1	1	0	0	0	0
Mortar Section	0	1	2	20	5	6	12	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Three Infantry Battalions																						
Battalion HQ & Platoon	5	3	6	54	10	8	49	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	5	0	5	1	1	0	0
Ski Scout Platoon	1	4	4	32	8	10	23	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Three Rifle Companies, each																						
Company HQ & Trains	1	5	4	37	3	26	18	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	20	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
Four Rifle Platoons, each *	1	4	4	32	7	19	23	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Weapons Company																						
Company HQ & Trains	1	5	3	35	5	24	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	19	1	0	0	0	2	0	3
Four MG Platoons, each*	1	3	5	25	10	10	14	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Weapons Platoon	0	5	4	37	10	10	25	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Service Company																						
Company HQ & Trains	1	2	2	9	2	4	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
Resupply/Rations Platoon	1	8	4	31	5	17	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	13	0	1
Medical Platoon	0	4	2	41	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	110	0	0	1	0	0	0	0

* one platoon each company commanded by NCO in lieu of officer

Demi-Brigade Chasseurs Alpins, from 16 January 1937

ER.12 radio teams for the regimental net and an ER.13 team for the division net.

The mountain regiment apparently did not use the smaller but weaker ER.40 radios used in the regular infantry. As noted, the battalion telephone section in the mountain battalion was considerably larger than in the regular infantry, but the same was not true at the regiment level, where both types had four teams, each of a corporal and four privates. This may have been due to the existence of a fairly good road net in the French mountains, which made laying wire an easier job at the higher echelons.

Several divisions included regiments (*demi-brigades*) of *Chasseurs Alpins* in place of the regular mountain infantry regiment. The composition of these regiments, vis-a-vis the mountain infantry, was analogous to that of the *Chasseurs a Pied* compared to the regular infantry. The only real difference between the *Chasseurs Alpins* and the mountain infantry was that the former dispensed with the regimental service company in favor of decentralized service support in the form of smaller battalion service companies. This did not appreciably increase the load-carrying capacity of the regiment, however.

As in the case of the normal infantry, fire support for the division was provided by two artillery regiments, one of light artillery and one of heavy field artillery. The latter was identical to that of the normal infantry division and consisted of one battalion each of 105mm and 155mm howitzers or two battalions of 155mm. The light artillery regiment could be one of several types: normal, motorized, or mountain.

The mountain artillery came in two varieties: motorized and non-motorized. The terms were a bit misleading since they referred only to the mode of transport of the ammunition columns, the guns themselves being carried by pack mules in both cases. The non-motorized type of organization was applied only to the 65mm battalions and by 1939 this combination of transport and guns was to be found only in the overseas territories.

	Officers	Sergeants	Corporals	Privates	Light MGs	Medium MGs	Artillery Pieces	Horses	Mules	Wagons	Motorcycles	Field Cars	Trucks	Bicycles
Headquarters Units														
Regiment Headquarters	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Regiment HQ Battery														
Battery HQ & Liaison Section	1	6	6	31	0	0	0	10	0	0	1	4	3	5
Signal Platoon	0	3	5	45	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	5	0	0
Battery Trains	0	5	3	23	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	5	1
Battalion HQ (non-motorized)														
HQ Group	6	12	8	37	0	0	0	18	6	2	1	0	0	2
Trains Group	0	1	1	15	0	0	0	2	10	4	0	0	0	0
Battalion HQ (motorized)														
HQ Group	6	12	8	43	0	0	0	20	5	2	1	2	2	2
Trains Group	0	1	1	17	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	3	1
Artillery Batteries														
65mm Battery (non-motorized)														
Battery Headquarters	1	4	5	24	0	1	0	5	4	0	0	0	0	1
Firing Battery	2	5	8	62	0	0	4	3	34	0	0	0	0	0
Pack Trains	0	1	1	12	0	0	0	1	12	0	0	0	0	0
Wagon Trains	0	2	2	20	0	0	0	3	18	8	0	0	0	0
65mm Battery (motorized)														
Battery Headquarters	1	4	5	24	0	1	0	5	4	0	0	0	0	1
Firing Battery	2	5	8	76	0	0	4	3	46	0	0	0	0	0
Pack Trains	0	3	2	28	0	0	0	4	23	0	0	0	0	0
Motorized Trains	0	0	1	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	5	0
75mm Battery (motorized)														
Battery Headquarters	1	4	5	25	0	1	0	5	5	0	0	0	0	1
Firing Battery	2	5	8	98	0	0	4	3	66	0	0	0	0	0
Pack Trains	0	3	2	28	0	0	0	4	23	0	0	0	0	0
Motorized Trains	0	0	1	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	5	0
105mm Battery (motorized)														
Battery Headquarters	1	4	5	25	0	1	0	5	5	0	0	0	0	1
Firing Battery	2	5	8	108	0	0	4	3	70	0	0	0	0	0
Pack Trains	0	3	2	28	0	0	0	4	23	0	0	0	0	0
Motorized Trains	0	0	1	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	5	0
Service Batteries														
Service Battery (non-motorized)														
Battery Headquarters	1	1	6	28	0	1	0	6	7	1	0	0	0	1
Ammunition Column (pack)	1	5	3	31	0	0	0	2	24	0	0	0	0	0
Ammunition Column (draft)	1	5	2	31	0	0	0	5	48	24	0	0	0	0
Battery Trains	2	4	2	47	0	0	0	11	69	22	0	0	0	2
Service Battery (motorized)														
Battery Headquarters	1	1	6	21	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	1	1	3
Ammunition Columns	2	4	4	35	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	21	0
Battery Trains	2	11	4	55	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	15	2

Mountain Artillery Units, from December 1936

In the 65mm (motorized) battery the gun section consisted of a sergeant, two corporals, six gun crew and eleven (twelve for two of the guns) pack mule handlers. Eleven (or twelve) mules were assigned to each section: four to carry the gun and seven for ammunition, as well as one for tools in two of the four sections of the firing battery. The 75mm section had one additional gun crew

and five additional mules and handlers (7 mules to carry the gun and 9 for ammunition), while the 105mm howitzer section had a further additional gun member and pack mule and handler. The service battery for the mountain artillery battalion had a single fixed organization regardless of what type of weapon the battalion was equipped with, being built around three ammunition columns each with seven trucks in the motorized type battalion, or a pack column and two wagon columns in the non-motorized type. The motorized service battery carried 815 rounds of 65mm, 648 rounds of 75mm or 432 rounds of 105mm, while in the non-motorized service battery, the bulk of the ammunition was carried in Mle.1909 wagons, each with a capacity of 63 rounds of 65mm.

The use of pack mules for the carriage of the guns contributed to mobility in mountainous terrain, but the observer and signal facilities of the artillery, the fatal weakness of the regular artillery, were no better in the mountain artillery. Signal assets of the battery consisted simply of an eight-man telephone squad supported by two mules with their drivers, while the battalion HQ could provide radio communications only for their one observer/liaison detachment.

The rest of the mountain-type infantry division was identical to that of the regular infantry division, including a reconnaissance battalion, anti-tank and pioneer companies, anti-tank battery, engineer, motor and horsed transport companies, and service troops. Thus the only changes to the divisional organization to create a mountain division were in the infantry regiments and the light artillery regiment.

Light Infantry Divisions

An analogous type of division was created in February 1940 for operations in Norway: the *Division Legere de Chasseurs*. Two such divisions were formed, each consisting of two demi-brigades of *chasseurs* (a total of three alpine and one field type), an infantry anti-tank company, a ski reconnaissance company, a 75mm motorized artillery battalion, and a 25mm AA battery, along with division services. In fact, only a combat group of the *1st Division Legere de Chasseurs* ever made it to Norway in the form of the "*Brigade de Haute Montagne*".

The so-called high mountain brigade was made up of the 5th and 27th demi-brigade of *Chasseurs Alpins* (each of three battalions), a 48-man radio platoon, a 238-man ski reconnaissance company, a 154-man anti-tank company (25mm), and a 62-man brigade HQ. The brigade thus comprised most of the line strength of the division but lacked the fire support and service support elements. These eventually did make it to Norway, but the division was largely scattered about and never fought as an entire unit under unified command. The 2nd Division Legere de Chasseurs never made it to Norway at all.

Fortress Infantry

The last major category of infantry were those dedicated to the defense of the Maginot Line. Construction of the fortifications had begun in 1930 and by 1932 was sufficiently far advanced for the creation of two fortified regions: Metz and Lauter. The troops to man the line were organized into two units denominated infantry regiments in each region. Each of the regiments in RF (*Région Fortifiée*) Metz included six battalions, while those in RF Lauter each had five.

The five- and six-battalion regimental organization proved unwieldy in practice and in 1935 the four infantry regiments of the fortified regions were split into eight, each of three battalions. At the same time, General Gamelin issued a memorandum that provided the basis for future fortress troop organization. Analogizing the forts to naval vessels, he split off a separate group of fortress troops to be known as "crews" (*équipage*) who would man the forts in times of peace. This signaled the beginning of two years of confusion and continual changes in the organization of fortress troops.

In March 1936 a new set of TO&Es were issued for the fortress infantry regiment. Under these tables the regiment was to consist of two fortress battalions and, in some cases, an external defense battalion. The fortress battalion consisted of a headquarters platoon, a heavy weapons company, and four mixed companies. The heavy weapons company was made up of a mortar platoon (six 81mm), an anti-tank platoon (three 25mm and three 37mm), and an anti-aircraft platoon (eight machine guns, nominally 13.2mm but actually 8mm). The 199-man mixed company was made up of three mixed platoons, each of a headquarters, two 13-man rifle sections, and two 13-man machine gun sections. The exterior defense battalion, when present, was made up of a headquarters platoon and four defense companies. Each of these companies was composed of three rifle platoons (each three rifle and one machine gun sections), and two of the companies had a two-gun 25mm anti-tank platoon as well. This TO&E created a three-tiered system of fortress troops: the crews in the actual Maginot fortifications themselves, the fortress infantry in prepared field positions, and the external defense troops manning the forward outposts and as "interval" troops defending the areas between the forts.

Four months later another TO&E for fortress troops was published to be applied to fortress troops in certain areas: the fortress machine gun regiment (*demi-brigade de mitrailleurs de forteresse*). In this document, the distinction between fortress and external defense troops was abolished and all the field infantry organized into fortress machine gun battalions. The fortress machine gun

battalion was made up of a headquarters, a service company, a heavy weapons company, and three machine gun companies. The service company included pioneer, trains, and medical platoons, while the heavy weapons company was broken down into a mortar platoon (six 81mm), three anti-tank platoons (each three 25mm), and two rifle platoons. The machine gun company was made up of three platoons, each of two machine gun sections and a light MG squad, and a rifle platoon. Thus, under this organization, there were only two types of fortress troops: the crews in the underground forts and the machine gun regiments.

Finally, in January 1937, when the infantry branch issued a whole new set of TO&Es covering the entire branch, the opportunity was taken to issue the definitive tables of organization for the fortress troops. These new tables adopted the organization of the former fortress machine gun regiments almost verbatim, but retitled them fortress infantry regiments (*regiments d'infanterie de forteresse*), each made up of two or three machine gun battalions. In addition, provision was made for the manning of permanent fortifications. Normally these would be manned by specialist troops on no fixed TO&E but when troops from the fortress infantry regiment were used to man the infantry positions they would be deleted from the regiment TO&E and placed in special units, *unités d'équipages d'ouvrages*, for which the TO&E varied from one locale to another depending on the type and number of positions to be manned. Thus, a fortress infantry regiment would usually include one or more weapons crew companies (*compagnies d'équipages d'ouvrages*) the strengths of which might or might not (usually not) have been deducted from the other elements of the regiment.

A unit of the British 51st Division, which briefly took over covering duties in the Hombourg-Budange portion of SF Boulay in 1940, described the positions they found in their new role of fortress infantry:

The countryside dominated by the Maginot Line had been entirely stripped of every shrub, bush, and tree for about two miles until the "Bois Militaires" were reached, in which was the "Ligne de Recueil", consisting mainly of trenches and outposts, then about two miles further on was the "Ligne de Contacte" about six miles from the Siegfried Line The "Ligne de Contacte" consisted of scattered outposts, mere dug-outs made of logs and surmounted by barbed wire. In a wood of about 400 yards in length, there would be generally four outposts about 100 yards apart, consisting of a machine gun section at each end of the wood and two infantry sections in the centre.³

³ ³Harpur, B.V.C., and others, *"The Kensingtons", Princess Louise's Kensington Regiment* (Regimental Old Comrade's Assn., n.d., London), pp.22-23.

The machine gun battalion of the fortress infantry regiment used the same TO&E as the field machine gun battalion held as reserve troops by Army GHQ. The line strength of the battalion consisted of its three 173-man machine gun companies each of four platoons. At each level platoon through battalion, a maneuver unit was included to screen, counterattack, and guard flanks. Each machine gun platoon included a light MG section, a source of mobile firepower. The machine gun company included a rifle platoon, while the machine gun battalion had two rifle platoons in its heavy weapons company. The inclusion of regular infantry rifle units in the machine gun battalion was unique to the French Army and increased the flexibility of these formations. The drawback to this scheme was that it limited the rotation of units. The machine gun sections/platoons/companies would always be in the line while the rifle platoons would always be in reserve.

In addition to the two rifle platoons, the battalion weapons/rifle company included a mortar platoon and three anti-tank platoons. The mortar platoon consisted of a headquarters and three sections, each section having four one-horse carts: two to carry mortars and two for ammunition, each of the latter wagons carrying 116 rounds of HE and 12 rounds of smoke ammunition. Each of the anti-tank platoons was made up of three squads, each of which had a draft horse, a caisson with 90 rounds of ammunition, and a 25mm anti-tank gun. The anti-tank platoon headquarters had a fourth caisson for ammunition reserve. The rifle platoons of the heavy weapons company were, like those of the machine gun companies, identical to those in the regular infantry rifle companies. The headquarters of the heavy weapons company included three ammunition trucks and three chenillettes with trailers. The ammunition trucks carried 144 rounds of 25mm, 164 rounds of 81mm HE and 48 rounds of 81mm smoke ammunition, along with 6,075 rounds of LMG and 1,440 rounds of rifle and carbine ammunition. The chenillettes were to be used to resupply the anti-tank guns and to move them under fire when necessary. For the former role, each vehicle carried 24 rounds of 25mm.

The battalion service company consisted of trains and medical groups. The former was made up of a resupply section (four 2-horse wagons and six chenillettes), a rations section (four 2-horse wagons and five trucks), and an 18-man maintenance section.

COMPANY HEADQUARTERS

1 OFF: Captain (company commander)(P) (on riding horse)

1 SGT: HQ Platoon Leader (P)

Signal Section

1 SGT: Section Leader (C)(bicycle)

2 CPL: Telephone Squad Leader (C), Radio Squad Leader (C)

19 PVT: 4 runners (C), 1 motorcyclist (C), 5 telephonists (C), 3 radio operators (C), 4 optical signallers (C), 2 rangefinders (P)

Trains Section

2 SGT: 1 clerk/section leader (P), 1 clerk (C) (bicycle)

3 CPL: 1 clerk (C), 1 cook (C), 1 armorer (C)

10 PVT: 4 cooks (C), 3 drivers (C), 2 teamsters (C), 1 aide (C)

three 2-ton trucks (2 for ammunition, 1 for rations & baggage)

one 2-horse wagon (kitchen), one 1-horse cart (rations & baggage)

THREE MACHINE GUN PLATOONS, Each

1 OFF: Lieutenant (Platoon Leader)(P)

1 SGT: Platoon Sergeant (P)

1 CPL: Transport NCO (C)

1 PVT: dispatch rider (C)(bicycle)

Two Machine Gun Sections, each

1 SGT: Section Leader(C)

2 CPL: gun commanders (C)

12 PVT: 2 gunners (C), 2 asst gunners (C), 4 ammo bearers (C), 1 armorer (C), 3 wagoners (C)

two Hotchkiss 8mm machine guns

three 1-horse carts (2 for guns, 1 for ammunition)

Light Section

1 CPL: Section Leader (C)

6 PVT: 2 gunners (C), 2 asst gunners (C), 2 ammo bearers (C)

two Mle.24/29 light machine guns

RIFLE PLATOON

1 OFF: Lieutenant (Platoon Leader) (P)

1 SGT: Platoon Sergeant (P)

1 CPL: Grenadier Leader (R/GL)

2 PVT: 1 signal observer (R), 1 dispatch rider (R) (bicycle)

Three Rifle Sections, each

1 SGT: Section Leader (R)

1 CPL: Assistant Section Leader (R)

10 PVT: 2 LMG crew (P), 3 ammo bearers (C), 4 riflemen (R), 1 grenadier (R/GL)

one mle.24/29 light machine gun

note: one platoon is commanded by a sergeant in lieu of a lieutenant

Machine Gun Company, From 1937

The battalion HQ platoon, actually a company in all but name, was made up of signal, pioneer, and motorcycle scout sections. The most important of these, the signal section, included two 4-man radio teams, two 6-man telephone teams, eleven optical signallers, and thirteen radio/telephone operators for distribution to subordinate elements. The signal facilities for the machine gun battalion were slightly better than those in any other infantry-branch battalion for reasons that are not entirely clear. Each of the machine gun companies had a radio team with an ER.17 transceiver; a telephone team with two telephones, a switchboard, and 5 km of wire; two optical signallers; and five messengers, including one on a motorcycle. The heavy weapons/rifle company did not have any organic radio or telephone personnel, relying on two optical signallers and six messengers, including two with motorcycles. The battalion signal section filled many of the gaps, providing six ER.40 backpack radios for distribution to platoons, along with two ER.17 transceivers and an R.11 receiver. Telephone assets held by the section consisted of six telephones, five switchboards, and 20 km of wire, along with two TM.32 telegraphs.

The battalion pioneer section was built around three squads, each of a corporal and six privates, and was supported by two mle.1909 two-horse wagons for tools. The heart of the motorcycle scout section was its two squads, each of four men on two sidecar motorcycles. Each squad was armed with a light machine gun, but this was defined as a reserve weapon, with the carbines of the scouts used as the primary weapons.

	Officers	Sergeants	Corporals	Privates	Pistols	Carbines	Rifles	Grenade Launchers	Light MGs	Medium MGs	81mm Mortars	25mm AT Guns	Horses	Wagons & Carts	Motorcycles	Field Cars	Trucks	Chenillettes	Bicycles
Battalion Headquarters	6	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Headquarters Platoon																		0	
HQ Section	0	5	1	14	7	1	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	1	0	5
Signal Section	1	4	9	47	5	50	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	5
Pioneer Section	1	1	3	20	1	22	2	0	0	0	0	0	4	2	0	0	0	0	2
Motorcycle Scout Section	1	2	2	11	0	16	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0
Service Company																			
Company Headquarters	1	2	2	8	2	0	11	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	1	0	2
Battalion Trains Group	1	8	4	50	19	1	43	0	0	0	0	0	22	10	4	1	8	6	3
Medical Group	0	4	2	30	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	1	0	1
Weapons/Rifle Company																			
Company HQ & Trains	1	4	2	24	3	28	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	2	2	0	4	3	2
Mortar Platoon																			
Platoon HQ	1	1	0	3	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Three Sections, each	0	1	2	18	7	14	0	0	0	0	2	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	0
Three Anti-Tank Platoons, each																			
Platoon HQ	1	1	0	4	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	3
Three Squads, each	0	1	1	5	2	5	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Two Rifle Platoons, each																			
Platoon HQ*	1	1	1	2	2	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Three Sections, each	0	1	1	10	2	3	7	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Three Machine Gun Companies, each																			
Company HQ & Trains	1	4	5	29	5	34	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	2	1	0	3	0	2
Three MG Platoons, each																			
Platoon HQ*	1	1	1	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Two MG Sections, each	0	1	2	12	0	15	0	0	0	2	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0
Light MG Section	0	0	1	6	0	7	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rifle Platoon	1	4	4	32	8	9	24	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

* one platoon commanded by sergeant instead of officer

Machine Gun Battalion, from December 1936

The fortress infantry regiment was made up of a headquarters and headquarters company and a variable number of machine gun battalions, usually three. The headquarters company was identical to that of the *Chasseurs a Pied* regiment except that it did not include the pioneer, motorcycle scout, and maintenance/chenillette platoons. Two of the fortress infantry regiments were designated as infantry machine gun regiments manned by volunteers for overseas service (*regiment de mitrailleurs d'infanterie coloniale*), apparently with no change in organization.

Because of the inclusion of the weapons crew companies in the regiments, it is difficult to generalize about the total weaponry available. A typical unit was

probably the 149th Fortress Infantry Regiment, which consisted of three battalions. The First and Second Battalions each consisted of a headquarters company, three MG companies, a weapons/rifle company, and a weapons crew company; while the Third Battalion was similar but had only two MG companies. Functionally, it had three elements: the bulk of the unit as field infantry on "interval" duty in the field, those in the forts themselves, and those in the pillboxes ("casemates"⁴) in front of and between the forts. The weapons breakdown for this regiment at the end of March 1940 was as follows:

Weapon	Interval	Forts	Casemates	Total
Revolver, Mle 73 or 92	337	406	182	925
Pistol, various models	103	0	1	104
Carbine Mle 16	863	5	0	868
Rifle Mle 86-93	78	0	1	79
Rifle Mle 07-15	1688	0	0	1688
Rifle Mle 07-15/34	0	32	39	71
Grenade Launcher, VB	70	0	1	71
Light MG, Mle 24/29	153	81	35	269
Medium MG, Mle 14 Hotchkiss	140	0	0	140
Medium MG, Mle 31 Reibel	0	22	21	43
Mortar, 50mm Mle 35	0	23	15	38
Mortar, 81mm Mle 27	18	0	0	18
AT Gun, 25mm, Mle 34	21	0	0	21
Naval Gun, 47mm	14	0	0	14
AT Gun, 47mm, Mle 34	0	8	9	17
Naval Gun, 65mm	2	0	0	2

It will be noted that even the interval troops used some static weapons, especially the 47mm naval gun on a pedestal mount in an open pit. These presumably replaced the missing 25mm AT guns in the battalion heavy weapons companies.

Another example of a fortress infantry regiment as actually fielded is the 168th Regiment, which had the following authorized strength:

	Officers	NCOs	Other Ranks
Regiment HQ	16	0	0
HQ Company	4	42	178
I Battalion			
Battalion HQ	2	7	39
Three MG Companies, each	3	18	181

⁴ ?The French used the term casemate in two different senses in reference to the Maginot Line. As used here it means a pillbox unconnected with the main fort with a crew of 10-30 men armed with single or twin-mount Reibel machine guns, M24/29 light MGs, and sometimes an anti-tank gun or 50mm mortar. The term was also used to refer to the concrete structure housing a gallery of artillery weapons firing through embrasures (as opposed to the turreted weapons) that formed the artillery component of most of the forts.

Rifle/Weapons Company	5	21	194
1st Weapons Crew Company	8	25	200
2nd Weapons Crew Company	4	12	100
II Battalion			
Battalion HQ	2	7	39
Three MG Companies, each	3	18	181
Rifle/Weapons Company	5	21	194
Two Weapons Crew Companies, each	4	16	150
III Battalion			
as II Battalion but only two MG companies			
Total	93	371	3225

With this organization the fortress infantry regiment was not only more heavily armed than the regular infantry regiment, but also had better internal communications and, surprisingly, equal mobility. With its integral rifle units, the fortress infantry regiment even had some counterattack potential although, of course, nowhere near those theoretically held by an infantry regiment. To the extent the fortress infantry regiment had a fatal flaw, it would have been this limited counterattack component. Once a penetration had been made the regiment, and indeed the division-sized fortified sector, had no counterattack forces larger than the rifle platoons held at the company and battalion level.

In June of 1939 a provisional amendment to the fortress infantry's machine gun battalion TO&E was issued. This, for the first time, distinguished between the field machine gun battalions held at GHQ level as reserve units and those that formed constituent parts of the fortress infantry regiments. The purpose of this distinction was to conserve transport by reducing the number of horses, wagons, and trucks in the fortress machine gun battalions. Under this amendment, the machine gun company lost the ammunition cart in each machine gun section and the two ammunition trucks in company headquarters. The weapons/rifle company lost the ammunition carts in the mortar platoon, the platoon HQ caisson in the anti-tank platoons, and the three ammunition trucks in the company headquarters. At the battalion level there was some minor realignment of the transport, but no significant changes. The tactical mobility of the battalion was thus substantially reduced under this amendment, for ammunition for the weapons could no longer be carried during a move, but it is not certain to what extent this amendment was implemented, if at all.

The extension of modern fortifications to the Italian border created a requirement for additional specialized fortress troops and this was met by the inclusion in the January 1937 tables of a set of TO&Es for a mountain fortress regiment (*demi-brigade alpine de forteresse*). Unlike the regular fortress infantry regiment, which was largely composed of machine gunners, the mountain fortress regiment was

clearly a mountain infantry formation with additional 81mm mortar support.

	Officers	Sergeants	Corporals	Privates	Pistols	Carbines	Rifles	Grenade Launchers	Light MGs	Medium MGs	81mm Mortars	25mm AT Guns	Horses & Mules	Wagons & Carts	Motorcycles	Field Cars	Trucks	Chenillettes	Bicycles
Regiment Headquarters	7	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0
Headquarters Company																			
Company HQ & Trains	1	4	2	17	4	2	18	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	6	0	2
Regiment HQ Section	0	7	2	17	9	0	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	2	0	0	0
Signal Platoon	1	7	12	64	6	78	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	4	0	2	0	0
Pioneer Platoon	1	4	6	38	2	47	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Motorcycle Scout Platoon	1	3	4	18	2	24	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	26	0	0	0	0
Maintenance/Chenillette Platoon	1	1	2	16	4	0	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	4	3	0
Medical Section	1	3	1	8	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	2	0	0
Heavy Weapons Company																			
Company HQ & Trains	1	5	2	24	5	27	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	1	0	3	0	3
Three Anti-Tank Platoons, each*	1	4	3	18	6	20	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	0	3	0
Mortar Platoon	1	4	6	63	18	56	0	0	0	0	6	0	18	0	1	0	0	0	0
Three Mountain Fortress Battalions, each																			
Battalion HQ & Section	5	4	10	65	9	59	14	0	0	0	0	0	11	0	3	1	3	0	0
Ski Platoon	1	4	4	32	8	33	0	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mortar Platoon	1	4	6	69	18	61	0	0	0	0	6	0	19	0	1	0	1	0	0
Service Company																			
Company HQ & Trains	1	2	2	9	2	3	9	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	2
Battalion Trains	2	8	4	29	5	2	34	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	13	0	1
Medical Section	0	6	2	39	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	1	0	0	0	0
Two Mixed Companies, each																			
Company HQ & Trains	1	4	3	36	3	23	15	0	0	0	0	0	19	0	0	0	1	0	2
Three Rifle Platoons, each*	1	4	4	32	5	9	23	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Machine Gun Platoon	0	4	5	25	3	31	0	0	0	4	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0

* one platoon commanded by NCO instead of officer

Mountain Fortress Regiment (Demi-Brigade Alpine de Forteresse), from 16 January 1937

The primary line element, the mixed company, consisted of three rifle platoons and a machine gun platoon, all identical to those of the mountain infantry except that the machine gun platoon had an extra light MG as a reserve weapon. The company HQ was identical to that of the mountain rifle company except for the addition of a private with a range-finder.

At the battalion level, the main differences between the *Chasseurs Alpins* and the mountain fortress troops were the loss of one line company and the replacement of the heavy weapons company by an expanded mortar platoon. The reason for adopting a binary configuration for the mountain fortress battalion is not clear. Certainly neither the mountain infantry nor the flat-land fortress troops ever used such an organization. Perhaps it was thought that the combination of mountainous terrain and prepared defensive positions made the retention of reserves at this level superfluous, but the lack of flexibility inherent in this organization must have been felt. Nevertheless, the Italians, at least, were never able to penetrate the alpine fortresses on the French border, so the organization must be judged successful on that basis.

The regimental heavy weapons company consisted of three platoons of 25mm anti-tank guns and one of 81mm mortars. The mountain fortress troops were unique in that chenillettes were used as the primary motive power for the anti-tank guns. Communications within the regiment were approximately on par with

those of the mountain infantry regiment. The battalion signal platoon had four 4-man radio teams, each with an ER.12 transceiver, plus a 4-man team with a receiver. These radios formed the battalion net. For communications between the battalion and regiment level the regiment signal platoon had four ER.12 teams plus a receiver team. Liaison between the regiment and the fortified sector was the responsibility of an ER.12 team assigned from sector assets. Telephone personnel consisted of three 6-man teams in each battalion signal platoon and four more in the regimental signal platoon. In all cases, the lack of transport for the signal personnel must have degraded their capabilities.

The higher HQ for the fortress infantry and mountain fortress regiments was the fortified sector, a roughly division-sized unit. There was no fixed composition for a sector, the organization being dependent on the type and length of the front to be defended. The sectors covering the Maginot Line proper, SFs Montmedy, La Crusnes, Thionville, Boulay, Faulquemont, La Sarre, Rohrbach, Haguenau, and Bas-Rhin, followed a general pattern consisting of three or four fortress infantry regiments, a fortress artillery regiment, a static artillery regiment, a variable number of infantry and artillery fortification crew companies, and service support troops.

The fortress artillery regiment did not, as the name seemed to imply, man the artillery of the fortifications themselves. Instead, they were mobile units that used the same TO&Es as the normal divisional artillery and thus complemented the mobility of the fortress infantry regiments. In general, the fortress artillery regiment consisted of two battalions of 75mm field guns and one of 155mm howitzers. In a few cases, such as the 46th Fortress Artillery Regiment, these were motorized formations with half-tracked Citroen and Somua prime movers.

The static artillery regiment (*regiment d'artillerie de position*), on the other hand, was a non-mobile formation on set TO&Es but of variable composition. It manned both the artillery casemates of the Maginot Line itself and heavier pieces in open emplacements further to the rear. Static artillery components were defined as consisting of the battery (5 officers and 141 enlisted), battalion headquarters (12 officers and 93 enlisted), and transport platoons, either horsed (21 four-horse wagons) or motorized (11 tractors and 17 trucks). This organization did not change with the number or types of weapons used. These weapons were generally set in open field positions and, barring the attachment of a motorized transport platoon, stayed there.

The composition of the static artillery regiments varied considerably. The nine static regiments of the sectors holding the Maginot Line had a total of 21 battalion

HQs and 96 batteries (not including the batteries manning the casemates), including 15 of 75mm, 8 of 105mm L13, 4 of 120mm L, 10 of 155mm C, 11 of 155mm L77, 3 of 155mm L16, 10 of 155mm L17, 6 of 155mm L18, 2 of 155mm L, 3 of 220mm, 1 of 240mm, and 3 of 280mm.

The bulk of the firepower for the Maginot Line sectors was clearly provided by these static and fortress artillery regiments, firing from open field positions. In contrast to the impressive numbers given above of 26 mobile and 21 non-mobile artillery battalions, the artillery emplaced in the concrete forts of the Maginot Line itself and manned by the personnel of the fortress crew batteries totaled only a hundred and two 75mm guns and thirty-seven 135mm howitzers in twenty-one artillery forts. The majority of these weapons, particularly the 75mm guns, were set in thick concrete emplacements with limited fields of fire, further limiting their usefulness, although a smaller number were set in fully-retracting turrets with 360-degree traverse. Despite their small numbers, however, they provided great service because they could be neutralized only with the greatest difficulty, that they had fully registered on all targets within their field of fire, and that ammunition was plentiful and quickly delivered as needed.⁵

On the Italian border, none of the fortified sectors had fortress artillery regiments and only one of them had a full static artillery regiment. They were well equipped with artillery under concrete, however, having half of the 344 75mm and 135mm pieces emplaced during 1932-39. As before, these were manned by personnel from special artillery crew batteries rather than within the static artillery regiments.

To complete the strength of the Maginot Line fortified sectors, which averaged about 30,000 men, many service troops were included in each, among them an engineer battalion, a radio company, a telephone company, and a motor transport company. The fortress engineer battalion was made up of a headquarters and two 279-man engineer companies. A fortress engineer company consisted of four platoons, each of 57 men with two 2-horse wagons.

⁵ These guns also had a higher rate of fire due to their semi-automated loading system, with the 75mm gun firing 30 rounds per minute in trials. In actual usage, the maximum rate was held to 12 per minute normal and 24 per minute rapid fire to conserve ammunition, tube life, and crew strength, but even at this the French figured a 3-gun casemate equaled the firepower of an 8-gun field unit.

Major Command	Infantry (no of bns)	Fort Art Regt	Static Art Regt
SF des Flandres	three bns	none	two bty
SF de Lille	none	none	none
SF de L'Escaut	54 RIF (3)	none	I bn/161
101st Fortress Div (ex-SF de Maubeuge)	84 RIF (2), 87 RIF (2)	none	II bn/161 III bn/161
102nd Fortress Div (ex-SF des Ardennes)	148 RIF (3), 42 DBMC (2), 52 DBMC (2)	none	160
SF de Montmedy	132 RIF (3), 136 RIF (3), 147 RIF (3), 155 RIF(3)	99	I bn/169
SF de Thionville	167 RIF (3), 168 RIF (3), 169 RIF (2)	70	151
SF de Boulay	160 RIF (3), 161 RIF (3), 162 RIF (3), 164 RIF (3)	23	153
SF de Faulquemont	69 RIF (3), 82 RIF (3), 146 RIF (3), 156 RIF (3)	39	163
SF de la Sarre	133 RIF (3), 174 RIF (3), 41 RMIC (3), 51 RMIC (3)	49	166
SF de Rohrbach	37 RIF (3), 153 RIF (3), 166 RIF (3)	59	150
SF de Hagenau	22 RIF (2), 23 RIF (2), 68 RIF (3), 70 RIF (3), 79 RIF (3)	69	156
103rd Fortress Div (ex-SF du Bas-Rhin)	34 RIF (2), 172 RIF (2), 226 RI, 237 RI	none	155
104th Fortress Div (ex-SF de Colmar)	28 RIF (2), 42 RIF (2), 242 RI	none	I bn/170
105th Fortress Div (ex-SF de Mulhouse)	10 RIF (3)	none	II bn/159
SF d'Altkirch	12 RIF (2), 171 RIF (3)	none	III bn/159 IV bn/159
SF de Montgelliard	2 DBCP (2)	none	VII bn/159
SF de Jura	1 DBCP (3)	none	II bn/170
SF du Rhone	230 DBAF (2), one alpine bn	none	I bn/164
SF de Savoie	16 DBAF (3), 30 DBAF (3)	none	164 (-)
SF du Dauphine	75 DBAF (3), 157 DBAF (3)	none	154 & 162
SF des Alpes Maritimes	40 DBAF (3), 58 DBAF (3), 61 DBAF (3)	none	157, 158, 167
42nd Fortress Corps	128 RIF (3), 139 RIF (3), 149 RIF (3)	46	152
43rd Fortress Corps	154 RIF (3), 165 RIF (3)	60	168

Abbreviations:

DBCP
DBMC
RI
RIF
RMIC

DBAF Demi-Brigade alpine de Forteresse
Demi-Brigade Chasseurs Pyreneens
Demi-Brigade de Mitrailleurs Coloniaux
Regiment d'Infanterie
Regiment d'Infanterie de Fortresse
Regiment de Mitrailleurs de l'Infanterie Coloniale

Maginot Line Troops, May 1940

As thus constituted the fortified sector, at least those manning the Maginot Line proper, were actually heavily-armed infantry divisions supplemented by several companies of fortress crews. When it finally became apparent to the French high command on 13 June that the Maginot Line had been outflanked orders were issued for most of the fortified sectors to split in two: a defensive group made up of the fort crew companies, such of the static artillery as could not be moved and a few service troops and usually one or two rifle platoons per fortress infantry battalion to serve as interval troops; and an improvised field division made up of the fortress infantry regiments, the fortress artillery regiment, such of the static artillery for which transport was available, and the bulk of the service units. The improvised divisions were pulled out of the line on 13-14 June and moved to secure the west flank of the line. Although their mobility was not greatly less than that of a regular infantry division, the improvised divisions had not practiced such maneuvers and lacked the infrastructure to support movement under pressure. As a result, they lasted only about a week before disintegrating under the pressure of continual withdrawals.

Five of the fortified sectors were redesignated as fortress divisions in early 1940, with the 102nd Division being activated on 1 January, the 103rd on 5 March, the 101st on 15 March, and finally the 104th and 105th Divisions on 16 March. For the most part, these divisions retained the organization of the fortified sectors from which they derived, although signal, pioneer, and transport companies were added where they did not exist before. Another aspect of the reorganization was begun on 5 March when the Vosges FS was abolished and its troops assigned directly to a new XLIII Fortress Corps, this followed on 16 March by the abolition of the Las Crusnes FS and its absorption into the new XLII Fortress Corps. Each of these two corps comprised the troops of one fortified sector plus one or two infantry divisions; the 20th and 58th in the XLII Corps and the 30th in the XLIII Corps.

Machine Gun Battalions

Related to the fortress infantry was the group of machine gun battalions held as GHQ reserve. Nineteen battalions and eighteen separate companies were raised for this role. Eleven of the machine gun battalions were of the "standard" variety, using animal transport and the same TO&Es as those specified in 1937 for the fortress infantry regiment. The other eight battalions were motorized units that differed from the standard primarily in having an attached motor transport company.

The motorized machine gun platoon was similar to the non-motorized type, but lost all three of its teamsters. The three wagons with their horses were also replaced by two mle.37 infantry wagons without horses or harnesses. The motorized machine gun company had no organic motor vehicles, relying on attachments from the battalion motor transport company. This attachment consisted of a corporal and six privates with a field car for the use of the company commander, three 2-ton trucks for ammunition, and a 3.5-ton truck carrying rations and baggage and towing a kitchen trailer.

The weapons/rifle company was also equipped primarily with mle.37 wagons without horses or harnesses in place of the normal horsed wagons. The company attachment from the motor transport company was identical to that of the machine gun companies.

The service company was also dependent on attachments from the motor transport company. The resupply platoon received a 1-ton truck for postal duties, a 2-ton truck for personnel transport, three 2½-ton trucks for ammunition, a 3½-ton truck for anti-gas equipment, and eleven 3½-ton trucks to provide mobility for the wagons held by

	Officers	Sergeants	Corporals	Privates	Pistols	Carbines	Rifles	Grenade Launchers	Light MGs	Medium MGs	81mm Mortars	25mm AT Guns	Wagons	Motorcycles	Field Cars	Trucks	Chenillettes	Bicycles
Battalion Headquarters	6	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Headquarters Platoon																		
Platoon HQ	1	5	1	6	7	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	1
Signal Section	0	4	9	46	4	55	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	4
Pioneer Section	1	1	3	19	2	22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Motorcycle Scout Section	1	2	2	11	2	14	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0
Service Company																		
Company HQ	1	2	2	5	3	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Resupply/Rations Section	1	5	3	22	16	0	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	6	0
Medical Platoon	0	4	2	28	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Weapons/Rifle Company																		
Company HQ & Trains	1	4	2	17	7	0	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	1
Mortar Platoon	1	4	6	45	18	0	38	0	0	0	6	0	6	1	0	0	0	2
Three AT Platoons, each*	1	4	3	15	9	0	14	0	0	0	0	3	3	1	0	0	0	2
Two Rifle Platoons, each*	1	4	4	32	9	9	23	4	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Three Machine Gun Companies, each																		
Company HQ & Trains	1	4	5	23	4	16	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1
Three MG Platoons, each*	1	3	5	25	11	0	26	0	2	4	0	0	4	1	0	0	0	0
Rifle Platoon	1	4	4	32	9	9	23	4	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Motor Transport Company (attached)																		
Company Headquarters	2	1	1	9	5	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	3	1	0	2
1st Platoon	1	4	6	90	2	0	99	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	3	46	0	0
2nd Platoon	1	3	3	57	2	0	62	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	3	27	0	0
3rd Platoon	1	8	12	95	3	0	115	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	12	47	0	0

* one platoon commanded by NCO instead of officer

Machine Gun Battalion (motorized type), from 1 February 1940

the machine gun and weapons companies. The rations platoon received a 2-ton truck for food and four 3½-ton trucks for rations.

The final type of machine gun unit was the static machine gun company (*compagnie de mitrailleuses de position*). TO&Es were published for the static machine gun battalion, but the companies were not thus consolidated. All eighteen separate machine gun companies were the static type.

The static machine gun company was made up of four small MG platoons. The platoon consisted of the platoon leader, an armorer, and two sections each of a commander and two 4-man gun crews. The 19-man company HQ provided support only in the form of a 4-man mess section, four runners, a 2-horse wagon for rations and baggage, a 2-horse wagon for kitchen use, a motorcycle for the company commander, and a few other service personnel, giving a total company strength of three officers and ninety-six enlisted. Two of the machine gun platoons were commanded by NCOs rather than officers, and two were specially trained for anti-aircraft fire.