

British Parachute Battalion

War Establishment reference I/241/1

Notified 22nd March 1944, effective 28th February 1944

A www.bayonetstrength.uk PDF

Composed of;

Battalion Headquarters	5 Officers, 22 men
Headquarter Company	9 Officers, 226 men
Company Headquarters	(1 Officer, 10 men)
Intelligence Section	(1 Officer, 8 men)
Signal Platoon	(1 Officer, 27 men)
Two Mortar Platoons, each	(1 Officer, 40 men) - (four 3-inch mortars)
Anti-tank Platoon	(1 Officer, 39 men)
Administrative Platoon	(3 Officers, 62 men)
Three Rifle Companies, each	5 Officers, 112 men
Company Headquarters	(2 Officers, 13 men)
Three Platoons, each	(1 Officer, 33 men)
Total strength	613 all ranks (29 Officers and 584 men)

Summary Table, British Parachute Battalion, February 1944

Detail	Headquarter Company							Total, HQ Company	Three Rifle Companies, each		Total, Rifle Company	Total, Battalion
	Battalion HQ	Company HQ	Intelligence Section	Signal Platoon	Two Mortar Platoons (each)	Anti-tank Platoon	Administrative Platoon		Company HQ	Three Rifle Platoons (each)		
i). Personnel												
Officers	5	1	1	1	1	1	3	9	2	1	5	29
Warrant officers	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	1	6
Staff-serjeants	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	4
Serjeants	3	0	1	2	3	1	6	16	0	4	12	55
Corporals	1	1	0	1	6	4	4	22	1	3	10	53
Privates	17	7	7	24	31	34	51	185	10	26	88	466
Total, all ranks (including attached)	27	11	9	28	41	40	65	235	15	34	117	613
ii). Transport												
Bicycles (folding)	1	0	0	10	1	0	0	12	1	0	1	16
Bicycles	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	16	0	0	0	16
Motorcycles (125-cc)	4	0	0	0	2	4	3	11	1	0	1	18
Motorcycles (350-cc)	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Cars (4-seater)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Cars (2-seater)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Cars, 5-cwt	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Trucks, 15-cwt	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	1	5
Lorries, 3-ton	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	8	0	0	0	8
iii). Weapons												
Machine carbines (pool)	0	0	0	0	0	0	300	300	0	0	0	300
Rifles (sniper)	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	8	0	3	9	35
Rifles (pool)	0	0	0	0	0	0	54	54	0	0	0	54
Light machine guns	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	4	12	39
Medium machine guns	0	0	0	0	*	0	0	*	0	0	0	4
Projector, infantry, anti-tank	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	10	0	1	3	19
2-inch mortars	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	9	28
3-inch mortars	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	8	0	0	0	8
Signal pistols	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	2	1	5	19

Notes

Attached personnel consist of 1 Officer, 4 Serjeants, 7 Corporals and 29 Privates* (included in above). *This assumes the 3 physical training instructors to be Privates (their rank is not given).

Of the total Corporals (excluding attached) 10 may be Lance-serjeants.

Of the total Privates (excluding attached) 39 may be Lance-corporals.

Battalion Headquarters (5 Officers, 22 men)

Detail	Rank	No.	Weapon/Vehicle/Other	No.
Battalion commander	Lieutenant-colonel	1		
Second-in-command	Major	1		
Adjutant	Captain	1		
<i>none stated</i>	Subaltern	1		
Regimental serjeant-major	Warrant officer, class I	1		
Provost-serjeant	Serjeant	1		
Orderly room clerk ≠	Serjeant	1		
Clerk	Corporal	1		
Clerk	Private	2		
Batman	Private	6		
Regimental Police	Private	6		
Motor-cyclist	Private	2	Motorcycle, solo, 350cc	2
Medical officer (RAMC)	<i>not stated</i>	1		
Serjeant (RAMC)	Serjeant	1		
Nursing orderly (RAMC)	Private	1		
			Headquarters transport	
			Motorcycle, solo, 125cc	4
			Car, 2-seater	1
			Car, 4-seater	1
			Car, 5-cwt	1
			Bicycle (folding)	1
			<i>Unallocated equipment</i>	
			Light machine gun	1
			2-inch mortar (modified)	1
	Total, all ranks	27		

Headquarter Company (9 Officers, 226 men)**Company Headquarters (1 Officer, 10 men)**

Detail	Rank	No.	Weapon/Vehicle/Other	No.
Company commander	Major	1		
Company serjeant-major	Warrant officer, class II	1		
Company quarter-master-serjeant	Staff-serjeant	1		
Batman	Private	1		
Clerk	Private	2		
Storeman ≠	Private	1		
Corporal (RAMC)	Corporal	1		
Nursing orderly (RAMC)	Private	3		
			Headquarters transport Truck, 15-cwt, GS	1
Total, all ranks		11		

Intelligence Section (1 Officer, 8 men)

Detail	Rank	No.	Weapon/Vehicle/Other	No.
Intelligence officer	Subaltern	1		
Intelligence serjeant	Serjeant	1		
Intelligence personnel	Private	7		
Total, all ranks		9		

Signal Platoon (1 Officer, 27 men)

Detail	Rank	No.	Weapon/Vehicle/Other	No.
Platoon commander	Subaltern	1		
Signal serjeant	Serjeant	2		
Batman	Private	1		
Signaller	Corporal	1		
Signaller	Private	23		
			<i>Unallocated equipment</i> Bicycle (folding)	10
Total, all ranks		28		

Two Mortar Platoons (1 Officer, 40 men), each

Detail	Rank	No.	Weapon/Vehicle/Other	No.
Headquarters				
Platoon commander	Subaltern	1		
Platoon serjeant	Serjeant	1		
Rangetaker	Private	1		
Batman	Private	1		
Orderly	Private	1		
			<i>Unallocated equipment</i>	
			Bicycle (folding)	1
			Motorcycle, solo, 125cc	2
Four detachments, each				
Detachment commander	Serjeant or Corporal*	1		
Mortarman (3-inch)	Corporal	1	3-inch mortar	1
Mortarman (3-inch)	Private	7		
	Total, all ranks	41		

Comments

1. The Platoon included 3 Serjeants and 6 Corporals; it is likely that 2 of the Corporals were Lance-serjeants, who each commanded a Detachment, with the other two Detachments commanded by Serjeants.
2. One of the two Mortar Platoons could be converted to a Machine Gun Platoon by replacing the four 3-inch mortars with four Vickers medium machine guns.

Anti-tank Platoon (1 Officer, 39 men)

Detail	Rank	No.	Weapon/Vehicle/Other	No.
Headquarters				
Platoon commander	Subaltern	1		
Platoon serjeant	Serjeant	1		
Batman	Private	1		
Anti-tank personnel	Corporal	3		
Anti-tank personnel	Private	27		
LMG number and rifleman	Corporal	1		
LMG number and rifleman	Private	6		
			<i>Platoon equipment</i>	
			Light machine gun	2
			Projector, infantry, anti-tank	10
			Motorcycle, solo, 125cc	4
	Total, all ranks	40		

Administrative Platoon (3 Officers, 62 men)

Detail	Rank	No.	Weapon/Vehicle/Other	No.
Quarter-master ≠	<i>not stated</i>	1		
<i>none stated</i>	Captain	1		
<i>none stated</i> ≠	Subaltern	1		
Regimental quarter-master-serjeant	Warrant officer, class II	1		
Storeman (technical) ≠	Serjeant	1		
Transport ≠	Serjeant	1		
Parachute packer	Serjeant	1		
Batman (includes 1 ≠)	Private	3		
Blacksmith ≠	Private	1		
Butchery dutyman ≠	Private	1		
Carpenter and joiner ≠	Private	2		
Clerk (includes 3 ≠)	Private	4		
Equipment repairer ≠	Private	1		
Postman ≠	Lance-corporal	1		
Sanitary dutyman ≠	Private	3		
Storeman ≠	Private	1		
Storeman (technical) ≠	Private	1		
Water dutyman ≠	Private	1		
Parachute packer	Private	4		
Driver, I.C.	Corporal	1		
Driver, I.C.	Private	10		
Driver-mechanic ≠	Private	2		
			Platoon transport	
			Motorcycle, solo, 125cc	3
			Truck, 15-cwt, water	1
			Lorry, 3-ton, GS	8
			Bicycle (non-folding)	16
Attached personnel				
Shoemaker (RAOC) ≠	Corporal	1		
Shoemaker (RAOC) ≠	Private	2		
Armourer (REME)	Serjeant	1		
Vehicle mechanic (REME) ≠	Serjeant	1		
Vehicle mechanic (REME) ≠	Private	1		
Other ranks' cook (ACC)	Serjeant	1		
Officers' mess cook (ACC)	Private	2		
Other ranks' cook (ACC)	Corporal	2		
Other ranks' cook (ACC)	Private	8		
Instructors (APTC)	<i>not stated</i>	3		
	Total, all ranks	65		

Notes

1. The original War Establishment table does include any information on the numbers of individual weapons, aside from sniper rifles. The Administrative Platoon included a pool of 300 machine carbines (Sten guns), for issue to parachutists, and 54 standard No.4 rifles.
2. A batman was provided for each Officer and the attached Medical Officer (RAMC).
3. The water dutyman and 2 batmen across the Battalion were also trained as Drivers, I.C.
4. No rank is stated for either the Battalion Quarter-master or the attached Medical officer (RAMC).
5. There is almost no indication as to how the 39 Lance-corporals posts were likely to be allocated across the Battalion. It seems reasonable to assume this figure would allow for one per Rifle Section.
6. The annotation ≠ in the foregoing indicates 'non-jumpers'.
7. There is no indication in the W.E. of the internal organization of the Anti-tank Platoon. My suggestion would be three Anti-tank Sections, each of a Corporal and 9 men, with 3 PIATs per Section, and a Protective Section of a Corporal and 6 men, with 2 LMGs and 1 PIAT.