

## British Parachute Battalion

**War Establishment reference X/127/2**

**Notified 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1942, effective 13<sup>th</sup> May 1942**

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Composed of;

<b>Battalion Headquarters</b>	<b>5 Officers, 22 men</b>
<b>Headquarter Company</b>	<b>5 Officers, 164 men</b>
Company Headquarters	(1 Officer, 10 men)
Intelligence Section	(1 Officer, 10 men)
Signal Platoon	(1 Officer, 26 men)
Mortar Platoon	(1 Officer, 36 men) - (four 3-inch mortars)
Protective Section	(6 men)
Administrative Platoon	(1 Officer, 76 men)
<b>Three Rifle Companies, each</b>	<b>5 Officers, 134 men</b>
Company Headquarters	(2 Officers, 12 men)
Two Mortar Detachments, each	(8 men) (one 3-inch mortar)
Anti-tank Section	(7 men)
Three Platoons, each	(1 Officer, 33 men)
<b>Total strength</b>	<b>613 all ranks (25 Officers and 588 men)</b>

### Summary Table, British Parachute Battalion, May 1942

Detail	Headquarter Company								Three Rifle Companies, each				Total, Rifle Company	Total, Battalion
	Battalion HQ	Company HQ	Intelligence Section	Signal Platoon	3-in Mortar Platoon	Protective Section	Administrative Platoon	Total, HQ Company	Company HQ	Two Mortar Dets. (each)	Anti-tank Section	Three Rifle Platoons (each)		
<b>i). Personnel</b>														
Officers	5	2	0	1	1	0	1	5	2	0	0	1	5	<b>25</b>
Warrant officers	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	1	<b>6</b>
Staff-serjeants	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	<b>4</b>
Serjeants	3	0	1	1	4	0	6	12	0	1	0	4	14	<b>57</b>
Corporals	1	1	0	1	5	1	2	10	1	1	1	3	13	<b>50</b>
Privates	17	6	10	24	27	5	67	139	9	6	6	26	105	<b>471</b>
Total, all ranks (including attached)	27	11	11	27	37	6	77	169	14	8	7	34	139	<b>613</b>
<b>ii). Transport</b>														
Bicycles (folding)	1	0	0	8	1	0	0	9	1	0	0	0	1	<b>13</b>
Bicycles	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	13	0	0	0	0	0	<b>13</b>
Motorcycles	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>2</b>
Cars (4-seater)	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
Cars (2-seater)	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	<b>5</b>
Trucks, 15-cwt	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
Lorries, 3-ton	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	8	0	0	0	0	0	<b>8</b>
<b>iii). Weapons</b>														
Pistols	10	5	0	8	28	2	2	45	5	7	0	7	40	<b>175</b>
Machine carbines	2	0	0	9	7	0	0	16	1	1	1	7	25	<b>93</b>
Machine carbines	0	0	0	0	0	0	429	429	0	0	0	0	0	<b>429</b>
Rifles	15	6	11	10	2	4	75	108	8	0	6	20	74	<b>345</b>
Light machine guns	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	3	9	<b>29</b>
Anti-tank rifles, .55-inch	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	3	<b>10</b>
2-inch mortars	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	9	<b>28</b>
3-inch mortars	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	4	0	1	0	0	2	<b>10</b>
Discharger cups	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	1	3	10	<b>32</b>
Smith guns	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	<b>3</b>
Signal pistols	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	9	<b>27</b>

#### Notes

Attached personnel consist of 1 Officer, 4 Serjeants, 6 Corporals and 24 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) 8 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	Pistol	
Second-in-command	Major	1	Pistol	
Adjutant	Captain	1	Pistol	
<i>none stated</i>	Subaltern	1	Pistol	
Regimental serjeant-major	Warrant officer, class I	1	Pistol	
Provost-serjeant	Serjeant	1	Machine carbine	
Orderly room clerk ≠	Serjeant	1	Rifle	
Clerk	Private	3	Rifle	
Batman	Private	6	Rifle	
Regimental Police	Private	1	Machine carbine	
Regimental Police	Private	5	Rifle	
Motorcyclist	Private	2	Pistol	
			Motorcycle, solo	2
Medical officer (RAMC)	<i>not stated</i>	1	Pistol	
Serjeant (RAMC)	Serjeant	1	Pistol	
Nursing orderly (RAMC)	Private	1	Pistol	
			<i>Unallocated equipment</i>	
			Bicycle (folding)	1
			2-inch mortar (modified)	1
<b>Total, all ranks</b>		<b>27</b>		

**Comments**

The W.E. allowed for one Corporal in Battalion Headquarters (excluding attached) but gives no indication of their likely post. From later developments I would suggest it was a Clerk.

### Headquarter Company (5 Officers, 169 men)

#### Company Headquarters (1 Officer, 10 men)

Detail	Rank	No.	Weapon/Vehicle/Other	No.
Company commander	Major	1	Pistol	
<i>none stated</i>	Subaltern	1	Pistol	
Company serjeant-major	Warrant officer, class II	1	Pistol	
Company quarter-master-serjeant	Staff-serjeant	1	Rifle	
Batman (includes 1 ≠)	Private	2	Rifle	
Clerk (includes 1 ≠)	Private	2	Rifle	
Storeman	Private	1	Rifle	
Corporal (RAMC)	Corporal	1	Pistol	
Nursing orderly (RAMC)	Private	1	Pistol	
<b>Total, all ranks</b>		<b>11</b>		

#### Intelligence Section (11 men)

Detail	Rank	No.	Weapon/Vehicle/Other	No.
Intelligence serjeant	Serjeant	1	Rifle	
Intelligence personnel	Private	10	Rifle	
<b>Total, all ranks</b>		<b>11</b>		

#### Signal Platoon (1 Officer, 26 men)

Detail	Rank	No.	Weapon/Vehicle/Other	No.
Platoon commander	Subaltern	1	Pistol	
Signal serjeant	Serjeant	1	Pistol	
Batman	Private	1	Pistol	
Signaller	Corporal	1	Rifle	
Signaller	Private	9	Rifle	
Signaller	Private	5	Pistol	
Signaller	Private	9	Machine carbine	
			<i>Unallocated equipment</i>	
			Bicycle (folding)	8
<b>Total, all ranks</b>		<b>27</b>		

**Mortar Platoon (1 Officer, 36 men)**

Detail	Rank	No.	Weapon/Vehicle/Other	No.
<b>Headquarters</b>				
Platoon commander	Subaltern	1	Pistol	
Rangetaker	Private	1	Pistol	
Batman	Private	1	Machine carbine	
Orderly	Private	1	Machine carbine	
Mortar detachment	Corporal	1	Machine carbine	
			<i>Unallocated equipment</i>	
			Bicycle (folding)	1
<b>Four detachments, each</b>				
Detachment commander	Serjeant	1	Machine carbine	
Mortar detachment	Corporal	1	Pistol	
			3-inch mortar	1
Mortar detachment	Private	6	Pistol	
	<b>Total, all ranks</b>	<b>37</b>		

\*individual weapons for the Mortar Platoon included 2 rifles, which seemingly replaced 2 pistols

**Protective Section (6 men)**

Detail	Rank	No.	Weapon/Vehicle/Other	No.
Section commander	Corporal	1	Rifle	
LMG number and rifleman	Private	2	Pistol	
			Light machine gun	2
LMG number and rifleman	Private	3	Rifle	
			Anti-tank rifle	1
			Discharger cup (for rifle)	1
	<b>Total, all ranks</b>	<b>6</b>		

**Administrative Platoon (1 Officer, 76 men)**

Detail	Rank	No.	Weapon/Vehicle/Other	No.
Quarter-master	<i>not stated</i>	1	Pistol	
Regimental quarter-master-serjeant	Warrant officer, class II	1	Pistol	
Technical storeman	Serjeant	1	Rifle	
Transport	Serjeant	1	Rifle	
Parachute packer	Serjeant	1	Rifle	
Batman ≠	Private	1	Rifle	
Blacksmith	Private	1	Rifle	
Bricklayer ≠	Private	1	Rifle	
Butcher	Private	1	Rifle	
Carpenter and joiner (includes 1 ≠)	Private	2	Rifle	
<b>Continued...</b>				

Detail	Rank	No.	Weapon/Vehicle/Other	No.
Clerk (includes 1 ≠)	Private	4	Rifle	
Equipment repairer	Private	1	Rifle	
Officers' mess orderlies	Private	2	Rifle	
Postman	Lance-corporal	1	Rifle	
Sanitary duties ≠	Private	4	Rifle	
Serjeants' mess orderlies	Private	5	Rifle	
Storeman (includes 1 ≠)	Private	3	Rifle	
Technical storeman	Private	1	Rifle	
Water dutyman	Private	1	Rifle	
Parachute packer	Private	8	Rifle	
Driver, I.C.*	Private	5	Rifle	
			Car, 2-seater	5
Driver, I.C.*	Private	1	Rifle	
			Car, 4-seater	1
Driver, I.C.*	Private	1	Rifle	
			Truck, 15-cwt, water	1
Driver, I.C.*	Private	8	Rifle	
			Lorry, 3-ton, GS	8
<i>(drivers, I.C. includes 4 ≠)</i>			<i>Unallocated equipment</i>	
			Bicycle (non-folding)	13
<b>Attached personnel</b>				
Armourer (RAOC)	Serjeant	1	Rifle	
Fitter, MV (RAOC)	Serjeant	1	Rifle	
Shoemaker (RAOC)	Corporal	1	Rifle	
Shoemaker (RAOC)	Private	2	Rifle	
Serjeant cook (ACC) ≠	Serjeant	1	Rifle	
Officers' mess cook (ACC)	Private	2	Rifle	
Serjeants' mess cook (ACC)	Private	2	Rifle	
Other ranks' cook (ACC)	Corporal	1	Rifle	
Other ranks' cook (ACC)	Private	7	Rifle	
<i>(other ranks' cooks includes 1 ≠)</i>				
Instructors (APTC)	<i>not stated</i>	3	Rifle	
<b>Total, all ranks</b>		<b>77</b>		

\*Of the total 15 drivers, 13 are drivers, I.C. and 2 are driver-mechanics.

### Three Rifle Companies (5 Officers, 134 men), each

#### Company Headquarters (2 Officers, 12 men)

Detail	Rank	No.	Weapon/Vehicle/Other	No.
Company commander	Major	1	Pistol	
Second-in-command	Captain	1	Pistol	
Company serjeant-major	Warrant officer, class II	1	Machine carbine	
Company quarter-master-serjeant≠	Staff-serjeant	1	Rifle	
Batman	Private	2	Rifle	
Clerk	Private	1	Rifle	
Orderly	Private	3	Rifle	
Storeman ≠	Private	1	Rifle	
Corporal (RAMC)	Corporal	1	Pistol	
Nursing orderly (RAMC)	Private	2	Pistol	
			<i>Unallocated equipment</i>	
			Bicycle (folding)	1
<b>Total, all ranks</b>		<b>14</b>		

#### Two Mortar Detachments (8 men), each

Detail	Rank	No.	Weapon/Vehicle/Other	No.
Detachment commander	Serjeant	1	Machine carbine	
Mortar detachment	Corporal	1	Pistol	
			3-inch mortar	1
Mortar detachment	Private	6	Pistol	
<b>Total, all ranks</b>		<b>8</b>		

#### Anti-tank Section (7 men)

Detail	Rank	No.	Weapon/Vehicle/Other	No.
Section commander	Corporal	1	Machine carbine	
Anti-tank personnel	Private	6	Rifle	
			Smith gun	1
			Discharger cup (rifle)	1
<b>Total, all ranks</b>		<b>7</b>		

**Three Rifle Platoons (1 Officer, 33 men), each**

Detail	Rank	No.	Weapon/Vehicle/Other	No.
<b>Headquarters</b>				
Platoon commander	Subaltern	1	Pistol	
Platoon serjeant	Serjeant	1	Machine carbine	
Batman	Private	1	Rifle	
Orderly	Private	1	Rifle	
			<i>Unallocated equipment</i>	
			Anti-tank rifle	1
<b>Three Sections, each</b>				
Section commander	Serjeant	1	Machine carbine	
LMG number and rifleman	Corporal	1	Machine carbine	
LMG number and rifleman	Private	1	Pistol	
			Light machine gun	1
LMG number and rifleman	Private	1	Pistol	
LMG number and rifleman	Private	6	Rifle	
			<i>Unallocated equipment</i>	
			2-inch mortar (modified)	1
			Discharger cup (rifle)	1
<b>Total, all ranks</b>		<b>34</b>		

**Notes**

1. The original War Establishment table does not give any indication as to how individual weapons were allocated to personnel. The above entries are therefore suggested only; this is particularly true for the Signal and Mortar Platoons. The total number of pistols, machine carbines and rifles given for each headquarters and subunit within the Battalion is as per the W.E. table.
2. A batman was provided for each Officer, the Regimental Serjeant-major and the attached Medical Officer.
3. No rank is stated for either the Battalion Quarter-master or the attached Medical officer (RAMC).
4. 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.
5. The annotation ≠ in the foregoing indicates those personnel who 'need not be parachutists'.