

Intelligence Handbook for the Mid-War French Army (July-December 1943)

French Army Company Choices

You can choose to base your French Army force on:

- A French Army Infantry Company,
- A French Army Mechanised Infantry Company, or
- A French Army Tank Company.

After the major battles of the Tunisian campaign, the French forces were re-equipped by the Americans. Initially not included in the plan the Free French were finally integrated into the rearming process in late 1943. The equipment sent by the Americans was not first line but still very good. The veterans of the French armies who fought in Africa would spend the last half of 1943 re-equipping and re-training with their American advisors. As a side note for the *Intelligence Handbook for the Mid-War French Army (July-December 1943)*, only one Division, 2^e DIM (*Division d'Infanterie Marocaine*) was deployed operationally during this period. The 2^e DIM landed first in Corsica and then in Italy mid-November 1943 while the rest of the French Army was in North Africa re-equipping.

Special Rules

Égalité

Since the French revolution the French have believed in equality, this means that a French officer often has to persuade his troops rather than simply order them. This sometimes slows things down but leaves the troops more prepared to keep fighting if the officer is killed.

A French Army platoon may make Motivation tests, even if their Command team was destroyed. However, the platoon may not advance if the Platoon Command team has been destroyed, unless another Command team Takes Over Command.

Colonial Troops

Moroccan Goums always charge shouting war cries to frighten their enemies.

Any platoon that is attempting to fire Defensive Fire against a Goum Platoon must take a Motivation test before doing so.

- If they pass the Motivation test, they fire defensive fire as normal.
- If they fail, the soldiers quail in fear and must re-roll to hit for any hits from the Defensive Fire assigned to Infantry Teams.

Truscott Trott

Eager to reclaim their country from the Boche, infantrymen of the French Army often endured forced marches in their training with US instructors.

French Army Infantry teams move 16"/40cm instead of the normal 12"/30cm when moving At the Double.

Excellent Communications

No army has the communications reserve of the US army. Plentiful radios meant that even the US-equipped French officers could request and range in artillery fire quickly and accurately.

Platoon and 2iC Command teams can act as observers and request artillery fire in the same manner as a Company Command team.

Under Command

The mortar and assault gun platoons cooperate closely with the combat companies. Constant practise and excellent radio communications allow them to bring down quick and effective fire.

Company, 2iC and Platoon Command teams do not suffer their normal +1 penalty to range in when calling for artillery bombardments from platoons taken as Weapons Platoon choices. These include Weapons Platoons, Mortar, Armoured Mortar, Cannon and Assault-gun Platoons.

This does not apply to any form of Field Artillery Batteries.

Time On Target

US-equipped artillery staffs have sophisticated fire control computers. After checking the wind, temperature, and range, the battery staff officer selects the corresponding book and looks up the settings for every gun. This scientific marvel allows the officer to compute the flight time for each shell. By working backwards, they can have every shell land at the same time without warning. With no time to react, troop concentrations caught in such a 'time on target' (TOT) bombardment are smashed before they have time to find cover.

If a Field or Armoured Field Artillery Battery with a Staff team ranges in on their first attempt, they can fire a TOT bombardment. Every team hit by a TOT bombardment re-rolls successful saves in the first turn of the bombardment as they scramble for cover and batten down the hatches. Mortar, Cannon and Assault Gun Platoons cannot perform TOT bombardments.

Hit 'em With Everything You've Got

All requests for artillery fire go through the Poste Central du Groupe, the central fire direction post. This allows the artillery commander to allocate as much artillery as needed to each target.

Any French equipped Artillery Battery observer (but not a Mortar Platoon observer) range in any battery of this type on the table, although they can only range in one battery at a time. They are not restricted to requesting fire from their own battery. Additionally, when these observers have ranged in one battery and order an **All Guns Repeat!** bombardment on the same target point in a subsequent turn, they may attempt to range in another battery on the same point while continuing to control the battery firing the **All Guns Repeat!** bombardment. Next turn the Observer team can order both batteries to fire **All Guns Repeat!** bombardments and add another, and so on. Roll to hit with each battery separately. These observer teams cannot request fire from any form of Mortar, Cannon or Assault Gun Platoons.

French Army Vehicles

Light Trucks and Lorries

The French Army always had supply problems and was especially short of transports. Where light trucks are listed, any truck of ½ tonne to 1.5 tonne may be used. For example: British 15cwt trucks, US Dodge ¾-ton trucks or Italian OM-36 ½-ton trucks. When lorries are listed you may use any truck of greater than 1.5 tonne i.e.: British 3-ton lorry, Italian Dovunque 3-ton truck or US GMC 2½-ton truck

Light Tanks

The M5A1 Stuart light tank has a powerful engine allowing it to move very fast.

Light tanks move 16"/40cm when moving on Roads or Cross-country.

Mortar Carriers

The M4 81mm MMC half-track is a specialist mortar-carrier. Normal practice is to fire the mortar from the vehicle, but if necessary, you can dismount the mortar and send the half-track to the rear.

You may dismount the mortar from an M4 81mm MMC half-track by removing the half-track and replacing it with a 81mm mortar team.

Stabilisers

The US-supplied tanks used in the French tank units are equipped with gyrostabilisers as standard equipment. The stabiliser helps keep the gun level when the tank is moving.

A moving tank fitted with a stabiliser can:

- Fire its main gun at its full ROF, but
- Adds a penalty of +1 to the score needed to hit.

Before shooting, a tank can choose not to use its stabiliser and fire at the normal rate if that would give it a better chance.

French Army Weapons

.50cal Teams

Due to the weight of the weapon and its ammunition, an M2 .50cal MG team is a Gun team, not an Infantry team, so it only moves 2"/5cm in most terrain.

An M2 .50 cal MG team shoots as an HMG team with a Range of 16"/40cm, a ROF of 3, and an Anti-tank rating of 4. Like an HMG team, it has ROF 2 if Pinned Down and cannot fire if it moves.

Light Guns

Light guns can be man-handled at a speed of 4"/10cm per turn on Road or Cross-country.

Light Mortar Teams

French 60mm light mortar teams can choose to fire as normal Light Mortar Teams, but with ROF 2 and firepower 4+, or as Close-support Mortars.

As Close-support Mortars they can fire a bombardment out to twice their normal range.

LMG Teams

An LMG team fights as an HMG team with a Range of 16"/40cm and a ROF of 3. Like an HMG team, it has ROF 2 if Pinned Down and cannot fire if it moves.

Poor HE

Reduce the Firepower rating of 3in anti-tank guns to 4+ against unarmoured targets.

Self Defence Anti-aircraft Guns

Machine guns were mounted on selected vehicles to discourage air attacks.

Self-defence anti-aircraft machine-guns can only shoot at aircraft that are attacking their own platoon.

Small Guns

Small guns that are entrenched and neither moved nor shot in their turn, count as being Concealed and Gone to Ground, even if they are in the open.

Air Support

You may request Sporadic air support at a cost of 50 Points. Sporadic air support will provide supporting ground attack aircraft and fighters on a roll of 6.

You may request Limited air support at a cost of 100 Points. Limited air support will provide supporting ground attack aircraft and fighters on a roll of 5+.

Name	Weapon	Range	ROF	Anti-tank	Firepower
Hurricane IIC	Bombs	4"/10cm	-	4	1+
Hurricane IID	Guns	8"/20cm	3	9	5+
P40 Warhawk	Bombs	4"/10cm	-	4	1+

French Army Infantry Company

Rifle Companies formed the bulk of the French units rearmed by the Americans. They were organised the same as US Rifle Companies but because they never received the excellent M1 Garand semi-automatic rifle, they had to make do with whatever was at hand. Units that had fought with the Allies from Syria to Tunisia still kept their Lee Enfields and Brens, French troops from the Army of North Africa still had a lot of Lebel 86/93 rifles and FM24/29 LMGs and still more had US made Springfield M1908 bolt action rifles combined with either LMG.

What is in a French Army Rifle Company?

A Force based on a Rifle Company must contain:

- A Company HQ, and
- At least two Rifle Platoons

Weapons Platoons available to a Rifle Company are:

- A Mortar Platoon,
- two Machine-gun Platoons, and
- two Anti-tank Platoon.

Support Platoons for a Rifle Company can be:

- Tank Platoons,
- A Cannon Platoon,
- Armoured Recon Platoons, and
- Divisional Support Platoons listed as available to a Rifle Company.

You may have up to **two** Support Platoons attached to your company for each Rifle Platoon you are fielding.

Motivation and Experience

Most French Army Rifle Companies are **Confident Trained**. The exceptions are the Rifle Companies from the French Foreign Legion and Goumier Tabors who are rated **Confident Veteran**.

A French Army rifle company is organised along similar lines to an American rifle company from *Stars & Stripes* (pages 26-29) with the following exceptions:

- A French Army Rifle Company may not select Ammunition & Pioneer or Intelligence & Recon platoons for your force.
- The Weapons Platoon does not exist in a French Army Rifle Company. Instead you may select the components of the Weapons Platoon to add to other platoons as below.
- The T30 75mm HMCs of the Cannon Platoon may not be replaced with T19 105mm HMCs.
- The ¾ ton trucks in the Anti-tank Platoon are Light trucks and are subject to the Light Trucks and Lorries rule for Free French Vehicles.
- The Anti-tank platoons may only be equipped with M1 57mm guns.

Foreign Legion & Goums

Both the veterans of the 13th DBLE and the ex-Vichy REI have joined together to fight the Germans. Ex-Vichy REI Legion platoons do not use the *Methodical Battle* special rule. Foreign Legion units are rated as **Confident Veteran** and use the *Egalite* and *Sous-off* rules. Foreign Legion companies are organised like a French Army Rifle Company (above) with the change in points (below).

Goums are wild Moroccan Colonial troops with distinctive uniforms and considerable expertise in fighting in the mountainous terrain of Tunisia and were later put to good use in Sicily and Italy. In addition to the *Egalite* rule they also gain the benefit of the *Colonial Troops* rule. A Goum Rifle company is organised along similar lines to

an French Army rifle company from *Intelligence Handbook for the Mid-War French Army (July-December 1943)* with the following additional exceptions:

- Goum HQ Section may add 0-3 Pioneer Rifle teams at **25 points** each, 0-2 LMG teams at **20 points** each and only may have 0-1 Bazooka teams and 0-1 60mm Light Mortar teams at **25 points** each.
- Goum *Infanterie* platoons may not select the optional LMG team.
- Goum Anti-tank Platoons may only have a maximum of *three* M1 57mm guns.
- Goum Platoons equipped with Light Trucks must replace them with a single horse-drawn wagon at **-5 points** each instead.
- Tank Platoons or Cannon Platoons may not support Goum Rifle Companies.
- Armoured Recon Platoons may not support Goum Rifle Companies. Instead they have the Intelligence & Recon Platoon (page 29 of *Stars & Stripes*). The platoon consists of a Command Rifle team and 2-3 Rifle teams mounted on horses for **95 points** at full strength and **75 points** for only two sections. This platoon is a reconnaissance platoon and may use the Reconnaissance rules on page 14 of *Stars & Stripes* to avoid enemy fire. All teams are Cavalry teams and are subject to any official cavalry rules published by Battlefront in any rulebook or handbook.

Both Legion and Goum Company HQ sections cost **25 points**, Bazooka teams cost **20 points** each and the optional full strength Foreign Legion Mortar section costs **80 points**. *Infanterie* Platoons are **Confident Veteran** Rifle/MG teams and cost **150 points** at full strength and **105 points** with 2 squads. Machine-gun Platoons are **110 points** at full strength and **60 points** with 1 section. The Mortar Platoon is **190 points** at full strength, **140 points** with 2 sections and **80 points** with 1 section. The Anti-tank Platoon is **220 points** with four M1 57mm guns, **175 points** for three and **125 points** for two. Cannon Platoons for the Foreign Legion are **110 points** for two T30 75mm HMC. Individual Goum platoons are available as a support option to a Rifle Company.

Headquarters Platoon

1 Company HQ

Company Command Carbine team,
2iC Command Carbine team

0-2 Bazooka teams
0-1 Light Mortar Section of:
3x 60mm Light mortar teams

At full strength 20 Points
Add Bazooka teams +15 Points each
Add Light Mortar Section +70 Points

The French Army suffered from a lack of manpower since most of the available resources of manpower were still inside occupied France. As such, many Rifle Companies split their weapons platoon's compliment of Mortars and Light Machine Guns amongst the CHQ and Rifle Platoons.

Combat Platoons

2 to 3 *Infanterie* Platoons

French Army Rifle Platoon

Command Rifle/MG team,
Bazooka team
0-1 LMG teams

2-3 Rifle sections each of:
2 Rifle/MG teams

At full strength 130 Points
With 2 Rifle sections 90 Points
Add Bazooka team 15 Points
Add up to one LMG team +20 Points

French Army Mechanised Infantry Company

As the French Forces rearmed, they formed three Armoured Divisions, each with its own regiment of Armoured Infantry. The 1re Division Blindée's regiment was the Demi-Brigade de Zouaves (DBZ), the 5e DB had the Regiment de Marche de la Legion Etrangere (RMLE) while the ex-Leclerc Column (now 2e DB) was supported by the Regiment de Marche de Tirailleur (RMT).

What is in a French Army Armoured Rifle Company?

A Force based on an Armoured Rifle Company must contain:

- A Company HQ, and
- two or three Armoured Rifle Platoons

Weapons Platoons available to an Armoured Rifle Company are:

- a Mortar Platoon,
- a Machine-gun Platoon,
- a Recon Platoon, and
- an Assault Gun Platoon.

Support Platoons for an Armoured Rifle Company can be:

- Tank Platoons,
- Armoured Recon Platoons, and
- Divisional Support Platoons.

You may have up to **two** Support Platoons attached to your company for each Armoured Rifle Platoon you are fielding.

Motivation and Experience

Armoured Rifle Companies are **Confident Trained**.

A French Army Mechanised Infantry Company is organised along similar lines to an American Armoured Rifle Company from *Stars & Stripes* (pages 37-39) with the following exceptions.

- The M3 37mm gun in the Company Headquarters platoon must be replaced with a Bazooka team
- The Rifle teams in the Armoured Rifle and Recon Platoons do not have the Automatic Rifles rule and they remain ROF 1 for -5 points per section or squad.
- The M3 37mm gun in the HQ Section must be replaced with either a Bazooka team or a Rifle team.
- The T30 75mm HMC of the Assault Gun Platoon may not be replaced with M8 Scott HMCs.

French Army Tank Company

What is in a French Army Tank Company?

A Force based on a Tank Company must contain:

- A Company HQ, and
- two or three Tank Platoons

Weapons Platoons available to a Tank Company are:

- a Mortar Platoon,
- a Recon Platoon, and
- an Assault Gun Platoon.

Support Platoons for a Tank Company can be:

- Armoured Rifle Platoons,
- Armoured Recon Platoons, and
- Divisional Support Platoons.

You may have up to **two** Support Platoons attached to your company for each Tank Platoon you are fielding.

Motivation and Experience

Armoured Rifle Companies are **Confident Trained**.

A French Army Tank Company is organised along similar lines to an American Tank Company from *Stars & Stripes* (pages 34-36) with the following exceptions.

- Light platoons may only be M5A1 Stuart light tanks,
- Medium Tank platoons are equipped with lend-lease M4A2 (diesel) Sherman medium tanks:
5x M4A2 **625 points**, 4x M4A2 **500 points**, 3x M4A2 **375 points**
- The Rifle teams in the Recon Platoon do not benefit from the *Automatic Rifles* rule.
- The T30 75mm HMC of the Assault Gun Platoon may not be replaced with M8 Scott HMCs.

Divisional Support Platoons

The French Army Divisional Support Platoons are organised along similar lines to an American Divisional Support Platoons from *Stars & Stripes* (pages 43-47) with the following exceptions.

- Self-propelled Anti-tank Platoon may only be equipped with M10 3in GMC.
- You may not select Parachute Field Artillery Batteries, Chemical Mortar, Anti-aircraft Artillery (Self-propelled) or Engineer Combat Platoons.
- The trucks in the Truck Section are Lorries and are subject to the Light Trucks and Lorries rule for French Army Vehicles.
- You may select Armoured Recon Platoons from page 41 of *Stars & Stripes*. However the T30 75mm HMC of the Assault Gun section may not be replaced with an M8 Scott HMC, nor may you replace a Bazooka team with an M3 37mm gun
- You may select Self-propelled Anti-tank platoon, Field Artillery Batteries (for Rifle Companies), Armoured Field Artillery Batteries (for Tank and Armoured Rifle Companies), Anti-aircraft Artillery Platoons and Truck Sections for your force.
- Field Artillery Batteries and may be upgraded to **Confident Veteran** for **+40 points** for the battery. This reflects both the higher status accorded to the Artillery or the expertise of the 1e RAC that served with the British.

Divisional Support Platoons available to the Free French are rated **Confident Trained** due to their relative inexperience with their new American equipment.