

World War II Infantry Tactics: Company and Battalion

Osprey Elite series No. 122 (2005)

Text by Stephen Bull; colour plates by Peter Dennis

Contents:

Introduction

Company and Battalion

Machine gun support

Mortars

Mines

Anti-tank tactics 1939-42

Anti-tank tactics 1943-5

Infantry anti-tank guns

Motorised infantry

Tank co-operation

Colour Plates:

British street fighting anti-tank team 1940

British company attack 1942

German field positions

The killing ground - German street fighting in defence 1943

German Panzergrenadier platoon assault 1943-4

US battalion attack 1944-5

German Kampfgruppe attack 1944-5

British platoon attack on strongpoint 1944

German minefields

Comments:

This is a companion volume to Elite 105 'World War II Infantry Tactics: Squad and Platoon' and I think the two books should be read together as a set. In fact, platoon tactics are covered in this later volume about company and battalion tactics more than they were in the earlier volume on squads and platoons. That is not a criticism, I'm just pointing out the overlap between the volumes. Both are, in my view, essential reading for anyone wanting to recreate authentic WWII tactics on the wargames table.

The book focuses on German, US and British tactics - it is a shame not to see the Soviet Union represented. The main points under scrutiny are how support weapons play a role at this level of combat - especially mines, machineguns and mortars. I was surprised at how potentially devastating mortars could be. Then we move on to anti-tank tactics and infantry-armour cooperation. This is all excellent and well explained but for further detail I would refer the interested reader to 'World War II Infantry Anti-Tank Tactics' (Elite 124 by Gordon Rottman), or 'Tank Tactics 1939-45' by Kenneth Macksey (Mechanics of War, Almark Publishing, 1976). The latter may be hard to obtain but is worth it and does include the USSR. In the same series - again if you can find it - is 'Infantry Tactics 1939-45' by Anthony Farrar-Hockley.

Regardless of whether you can find these other works (the Osprey anti-tank one should be easy), if you play WWII wargames, you should read this book.

--Paul Le Long

