

FM 3-21.12

The Infantry Weapons Company

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Headquarters, Department of the Army

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The Infantry Weapons Company

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Preface

This field manual provides a doctrinal framework for the Infantry weapons company assigned to Infantry battalions in an Infantry brigade combat team (IBCT). It is a companion to FM 3-21.10, *The Infantry Rifle Company*, much of which applies to the Infantry weapons company and as such will not be repeated herein. This manual will discuss on the unique characteristics of the Infantry weapons company, including principles, tactics, techniques, procedures, and terms and symbols. It will also cover what the Infantry weapons company brings to the Infantry battalion and the battlefield. Among topics covered in FM 3-21.10 but omitted here are the characteristics and fundamentals of urban operations, risk management and fratricide avoidance, heavy and Stryker unit employment, sniper employment, improvised explosive devices, operations in a chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) environment, media considerations, pattern analysis, and situational understanding.

It focuses on the employment of the Infantry weapons company while fighting as a pure company or combined arms team under the command of an Infantry weapons company commander. This framework will help Infantry weapons company leaders effectively--

- Exploit weapons company-unique capabilities.
- Employ the company using unit weapon fundamentals.
- Reduce the vulnerability of the unit.
- Plan and conduct full-spectrum operations.
- Accomplish missions in various tactical situations, from stability and civil support to high-intensity combat.
- Win on the battlefield.

Although organization for combat may require the detachment of individual weapons company platoons to other units, this manual does not cover detailed operations of detached platoons. It only provides a general discussion of coordination and operational issues pertaining to detachments.

The main target audience for this manual includes Infantry weapons company commanders, executive officers, first sergeants, platoon sergeants, and platoon leaders. Others who may find it useful include military instructors, evaluators, training and doctrine developers, and other Infantry company commanders, including those at headquarters and headquarters company and rifle companies; Infantry battalion staff officers; service school instructors; and commissioning source instructors.

This manual applies to the Active Army, the Army National Guard (ARNG)/Army National Guard of the United States (ARNGUS), and the United States Army Reserve (USAR) unless otherwise stated.

The proponent is the US Army Training and Doctrine Command. The preparing agency is the US Army Infantry School. You may send comments and recommendations by any means—US mail, e-mail, fax, or telephone—as long as you use or follow the format of DA Form 2028 (*Recommended Changes to Publications and Blank Forms*). You may also phone for more information.

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Unless this publication states otherwise, masculine nouns and pronouns may refer to either men or women.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

"Battles are won by fire and movement. The purpose of movement is to set the fire in a more advantageous place." -- GEN G.S. Patton Jr.

As the operational environment (OE) in which the Infantry must operate continues to evolve, so does the Infantry. Infantry units must continually adapt in order to meet the threat. The Infantry weapons company is a response to meet these changing conditions. This chapter discusses the mission, organizational structure, characteristics, and weapon systems of the Infantry weapons company found in the Infantry battalions of the Infantry brigade combat team (IBCT).

Section I. OVERVIEW

Infantry weapons companies are uniquely equipped to provide the Infantry battalion with additional capabilities. Their organization structure and equipment provide the battalion with additional heavy weapons firepower, maneuverability, and long-range communications.

ORGANIZATION

1-1. The Infantry weapons company is organic to an Infantry battalion assigned to an IBCT. In each IBCT Infantry battalion, there is a headquarters company, three Infantry rifle companies, and one Infantry weapons company as shown in Figure 1-1. The weapons company has approximately 80 personnel. It is a fully mobile unit consisting of weapons carrier vehicles and a variety of heavy weapons systems.

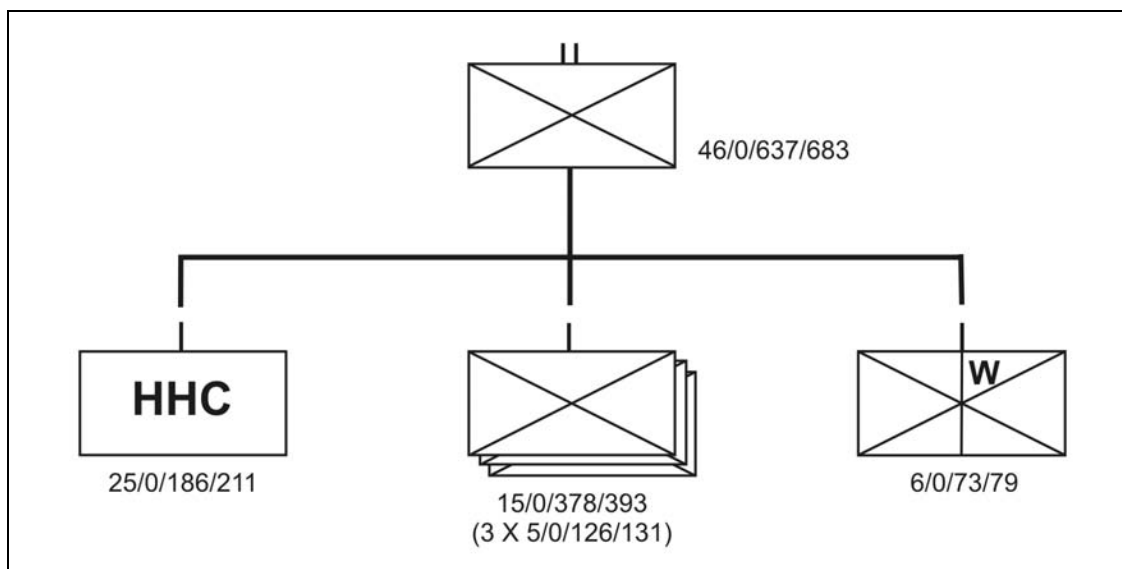


Figure 1-1. The Infantry Battalion, IBCT.

BATTLEFIELD FUNCTIONS

1-2. The mission of the Infantry weapons company is to provide mobile heavy weapons and long range close combat missile fires to the Infantry battalion. The inherent versatility of the weapons company as part of the Infantry battalion also makes it well suited in employment against asymmetrical threats in full spectrum operations. Mass and depth are key components to employing heavy weapons assets. During tactical operations, heavy weapons units can suppress, fix, or destroy enemy at long ranges, allowing other Infantry units or combined arms teams to maneuver. The weapons company provides the Infantry battalion with a highly mobile, multi-functional element that can:

- Deliver precision long-range, large-caliber direct fires to destroy enemy armored vehicles and fortifications.
- Deliver massed heavy machinegun and grenade launcher fires to engage enemy personnel, destroy light vehicles, and provide area suppression.
- Move rapidly on the battlefield to shift combat power where it is needed.
- Communicate over longer distances than units using man-packed radios.
- Employ long-range thermal weapons sights to detect and engage enemy forces during hours of darkness.
- Conduct moving or stationary observation, reconnaissance, screen, and guard missions.
- Provide security and control for armed convoy escorts.
- Coordinate, mass, and shift long-range direct fires.
- Control and execute mounted combat and reconnaissance patrols.
- Support the assaults of other units with massed supporting fires.
- Provide responsive and flexible over-watch of moving elements.
- Provide effective and wide-ranging outer cordon forces.
- Integrate indirect and aerial fires with the unit's direct fire plan.
- Task organize with one or more rifle platoons, or attached armored forces, into a powerful and flexible combined arms team.
- Detach one or more Assault platoons to augment rifle companies within the battalion.
- Conduct unit self-sustainment and maintenance within its capability.

CHARACTERISTICS

1-3. The Infantry weapons company is uniquely equipped with heavy weapons to support the maneuver of the rifle companies within the Infantry battalion. The heavy weapons contained in the weapons company include a mix that can be tailored to a particular mission based on mission, enemy, terrain, troops, time, civilians (METT-TC). The company maneuvers in all types of terrain, climates and visibility conditions.

ARMS ROOM CONCEPT

1-4. Infantry weapons companies are currently equipped with four types of heavy weapons. The selection and employment of weapon system or systems to use for a particular mission is termed the "Arms Room Concept." The heavy weapons systems currently available in the weapons company are the tube-launched, optically-tracked, wire-guided (TOW) Improved Target Acquisition System (ITAS), the MK-19 40mm Grenade Machine Gun, the M2 .50 caliber Machine Gun, and the Javelin Close Combat Missile System. Each vehicle-mounted system is also equipped with a tripod for ground mount operations. Only one of these systems can be mounted on each individual vehicle at a time. Javelins may be carried in the vehicle along with a vehicle-mounted system. During movements, other weapon systems not mounted, along with any additional equipment, may be carried in trailers. When trailers are not feasible, non-mission essential equipment may be left in a stay behind position. During mission planning, leaders must determine which weapons systems are best suited for that particular mission and configure the vehicles appropriately. While all of the heavy weapons vehicles can mount the MK-19 and the M2, only two per platoon are