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Units

## SMALL UNITS

A Working Bibliography of MHI Sources

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## **SQUADS**

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Ney, Virgil. Organization and Equipment of the Infantry Rifle Squad: From Valley Forge to ROAD. Ft. Belvoir, VA: CORG, CDC, January 1965. 115 p. UD10N49.

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Rigg, Robert B. "Whither the Squad?" Army (Feb 1960): pp. 35-41. Per. Historical survey of the squad as a tactical unit.

**See also:**

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**NOTE: SQUAD FRONTAGE**

The squad did not exist as a tactical unit until after the American Civil War, although certain Civil War-era drill manuals discuss four-man sections as a tactical formation for skirmishers. Organization of small elements dates back to the Roman 10-man squad, the "maniple," ten of which constituted the "century" commanded by a "centurian." In the American Army, the squad as an identifiable element for administrative purposes dates back to the drill regulations of Von Steuben, but the "squads" of 1776 were not assigned distinctive battle missions apart from their parent company or regiment.

During the First World War, squads still did not operate as tactical entities. They remained submerged into four sections of a platoon. Sections were designed around specialties, i.e., grenadiers, trench mortarmen, riflemen, and machine gunners. As before, the squad was merely an administrative formation.

Infantry Regiment: Field Manual 7-40, discusses defensive frontages and those for smaller units are discussed in Rifle Company, Rifle Regiment: Field Manual 7-10, (Jun 1942). Squad frontages were determined by the limits of the platoon area and mission, with the entire platoon frontage ranging from less than 250 to more than 500 yards. The platoon physically occupied no more than 300 yards of front, with the remainder covered by weapons fire.

The Korean War-era edition of Field Manual 7-10 (Oct 1949), states that frontage assigned to a platoon may range from under 300 to more than 600 meters, being determined by the intervals which can be left between foxholes and between adjacent units without jeopardizing the effectiveness of the defense. A review of the later eds indicates specific footage for individual squads first appeared in Infantry, Airborne Infantry and Mechanized Infantry Rifle Platoons and Squads: Field Manual 7-15, (Jan 1962). Accordingly, the defensive frontage for a 10-man squad would vary from approx 30 meters in unfavorable terrain to 100 meters in favorable terrain. These figures reappear in the 1965 ed of FM 7-15 and the manual that superseded the 7-15 series, The Rifle Company, Platoons and Squads: Field Manual 7-10, (Apr 1970). The 1980 manual for infantry squads appears to complete the doctrinal circle. The Infantry Platoon and Squad (Infantry, Airborne, Air Assault and Ranger): Field Manual 7-8 (Dec 1980) does not specify frontage for a squad. Allocation of battle footage for the squad is a decision left to the individual platoon leader. See:

Ney, Virgil. Organization and Equipment of the Infantry Rifle Squad: From Valley Forge to ROAD,

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\_\_\_\_\_. Rifle Company, Infantry Regiment: FM 7-10, dated Mar 1944. 323 p. MilPub-FM.

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