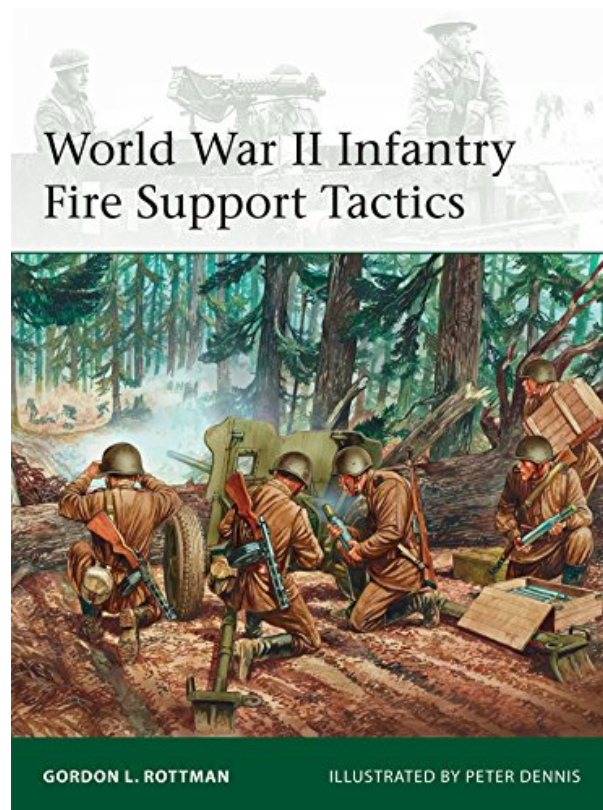


WORLD WAR II INFANTRY FIRE SUPPORT TACTICS (ELITE) BY GORDON L. ROTTMAN



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World War II Infantry Fire Support Tactics



GORDON L. ROTTMAN

ILLUSTRATED BY PETER DENNIS

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Review

"This is an interesting book, and it covers a lot more than just the tactics used in assaults. The unit level examined is the platoon, justifiably so since most attacks were basically combinations of platoon assaults at levels from company upward... Period photographs are accompanied by sketch maps of typical assaults and by good colour plates of the main demolition materials and of typical attacks. Highly recommended." -John Prigent, "Internet Modeler "(April 2008)

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As infantry units advanced across Europe the only support they could rely on from day to day was that provided by the heavy weapons of their own units. While thundering tanks struck fear into the hearts of their enemies, it was the machine guns, mortars, and light cannon that proved to be most important, causing the majority of casualties suffered during World War II. Common principles were shared across units but the wide variety of weapons available to the different armies altered the way they were used in battle.

Focusing on the US, British, German, and Soviet troops, this title offers a comprehensive guide to infantry fire support tactics used through World War II. Combat reports are complemented by specially commissioned artwork to show the way in which tactics varied, and highlight how developments obliged opposing armies to review their own methods.

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5 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

Fire support for the infantry...

By HMS Warspite

An often overlooked aspect of infantry combat is the role played by supporting weapon systems in helping the rifle-armed infantryman survive and thrive on the battlefield. In the Second World War, a variety of machine guns, mortars, anti-tank guns and rockets, and other systems helped the infantry attack and defend. This Osprey Elite Series helps sort out the systems and how they were used.

Author Gordon Rottman can fairly be called an expert on infantry, and "World War II Infantry Fire Support Tactics" reflects that deep understanding of how fire support tactics enable the Infantry. In a concise 62 pages of text, the author describes the various forms of fire support tactics used by the American, British, German, and Soviet armies. In the process, he wrestles with differences of terminology between the various forces, and their distinctive use of what was available. Parts of the discussion may be rather dry for the general reader, but for the student of the conflict, there is real meat here.

This reviewer was especially fascinated by the examples of use cited by the author, included an extended one from the Siegfried Line in 1944. The text is nicely backed by an excellent collection of period photographs and modern illustrations and battlefield diagrams. The latter actually lay out in time and space how supporting arms helped infantry units. Highly recommended to students of infantry combat.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Despite the fact that it covers so much and is so short still does a pretty good job

By Yoda

This book is part of Osprey's "Elite" series. As such it is relatively short, at only 62 pages. Of these, about a

third (very roughly) consist of illustration of one type or another (i.e., maps, contemporaneous photographs, color plates of weapons discussed, etc.). Considering the fact that a large number of weapons are discussed (mortars, grenade launchers, anti-tank and infantry guns, light, medium and heavy machine guns, man-held anti-tank weapons such as bazookas, PIATs, panzerfausts) as well as their tactical use from the perspective of the US, Britain, Germany and the USSR and how they fit into each army from an organizational chart perspective, this reviewer thought, before reading the book, that the book would be spread too thin and, as a result, would at most rate a three-star rating. This is usually a big problem with books in this series that are weak. The most prevalent cause of weakness in books of this series is the fact that so many try to overreach. Quite a problem considering that they are only 62 pages in length. However, this reader was pleasantly surprised to learn that this was not the case with this particular volume. It was surprisingly good despite the fact that it covers so many weapons, their tactical use and organization across four different armies as well as how their use evolved over the course of the war.

The book provides not only a basic overview of each class of weapon but also differences in those weapons across the US, Britain, Germany and USSR. The reader learns of the major differences and similarities between the powers. For example, German machine guns had a rate of fire about double of that of the other three weapons. That, in reality, the same weapons were used many times with different designations depending on tactical use. For example, the German MG 42 was the same basic weapon in both “light” and “heavy” designations but that this nomenclature only referred to the fact that the “light” was intended for relatively close in-use while “heavy” was the same basic weapon (albeit with a heavy tripod instead of a bipod) used for long range fire.

As well as discussing the specific weapon classes and their differences between nations, the author also discusses tactical differences in their use between these nations. In addition, the author discusses the organizational structures relevant to each weapon. Also discussed is the evolution of each weapon over the course of the war and how that, too, differed by the different nations. For example, light man handled anti-tank guns of the 37 mm or so size were gradually phased out as the war progressed and how mortars became more important to the Germans as the war progressed but less so for the allies (because heavier artillery was becoming more available to them and less so for the Germans). The author concludes with a short discussion of how the various classes of weapons discussed in the book evolved over the post-war period. The author does all of this fairly well, especially considering the fact that he is so constrained by the format (and length) of this series.

The book does have a few weaknesses though. One is that there is a shortage of color plates illustrating the weapons, especially on a side by side basis (these are only provided for bazookas and PIATs, not other weapons such as machine guns). A second is that there are no tables that sum up and compare the weapons across the different nations covered (i.e., ranges, etc.). Then again, this book is only 62 pages in length so these weaknesses are easily forgiven.

In short, a very good succinct introduction. Four to 4.5 stars.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Excellent discussion for the amateur tactician. Covers platoon, company, battalion, and regiment levels.

By Bayard B.

Excellent discussion of the subject for the amateur military tactician, especially for a 60-page book. The book describes tactics, organizational structure, and weapons of the British, US, German, and Soviet armies at the platoon, company, battalion, and regiment levels. There are short comparisons or tabulations of weapons performance of the various armies: mortars, infantry guns, anti-tank guns, and so forth. Several reasonably good color maps are provided showing attack and defensive maneuvers.

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