



## ***Czechoslovak Independent Armoured Brigade Group Spearhead list, 1945***

Compiled by L. D. Ueda-Sarson; version 1.11: 1 August 2013

### ***General notes:***

This list covers the British-backed Czechoslovak Independent Armoured Brigade Group in 1945. In contrast with the Soviet-backed Czechoslovakian Independent Brigade which was able to expand to Corps-size as it pushed towards its homeland, the Czechoslovak Independent Armoured Brigade Group was stuck besieging Dunkirk, and had to drive across Germany after VE-day to arrive in Czechoslovakia over a week after the 1st Corps had made its triumphant entry. The Brigade Group formed the core of the immediate-postwar Czechoslovakian armoured assets, and although Soviet equipment soon came to dominate, the Cromwells and Challengers were retained in storage until 1959. The Formation was officially called a "Brigade Group" rather than a simple Brigade; some of its support units were of a scale more in line with those of a complete Armoured Division.

### ***List notes:***

Items entirely in *italics* (typically FAO or engineering assets) do not add to or deduct from a battalion's morale. Note that the ARVs and AVLBs in this list are complete platoons' worth of equipment, not single vehicles.

Items in **grey** are not available when using Keith McNelly's Spearhead/Modern Spearhead scenario-generation system (available from [http://homepages.paradise.net.nz/mcnelly/scenario/scenario\\_system.htm](http://homepages.paradise.net.nz/mcnelly/scenario/scenario_system.htm)). For the purposes of the scenario-generation system, the 1st Corps (like other Soviet Corps) counts as a Division, and not a true Corps.

See the separate Czechoslovakian Independent Armoured Brigade Group (1945) data card for in-game statistics for vehicles and other stands.

Where I have been unable to find sufficient data to describe a formation, this is noted as "*(data deficient)*" under the formation's title.

In all cases, the rules for British troops and formations apply (note, however, this list uses some nomenclature more typical of non-British units, as this is how the units were described in Czech (or Slovakian), here translated back into English).

# Czechoslovakia *Independent Armoured Brigade Group 1945* *Morale: Regular*

## Brigade Group Core Assets:

### Headquarters Company:

HQ: 1-HQ Cromwell IV

Security: 1-Cromwell IV

AA: 1-M14 MGMC (see notes)

### AA Battery:

2-40 mm Bofors/Chevrolet truck

### AT Battery:

3-17-pdr/Morris tractor

## 2-Tank Battalions (1st, 2nd), each with:

### Battalion Headquarters:

HQ: 1-HQ Cromwell IV

Recon: 2-Stuart VI

AA: 1-M14 MGMC (see notes)

Fire Support: 2-Sherman Firefly or A-30 Challenger

### 3-Tank Companies, each with:

3-Cromwell IV

1-Cromwell VI

## 1-Tank Battalion (3rd, from February only), with: (see notes)

### Battalion Headquarters:

HQ: 1-AEC ACV

Recon: 2-Stuart VI

AA: 1-M14 MGMC (see notes)

### 2-Armoured Car Companies, each with:

6-Humber Scout Cars

### 1-Tank Company, with:

3-Cromwell IV

1-Cromwell VI

1-Sherman Firefly or A-30 Challenger

## 1-Motorized Battalion, with:

### Battalion Headquarters:

HQ: 1-HQ Stand in M5A1

1-Engineer stand in M5A1

### Support Company:

1-3" Mortar in Universal Carrier

2-MG Stands in Universal Carrier

3-6-pdr AT/Lloyd Carrier

### 3-Motorized Companies, each with:

3-Rifle Stands in M5A1

1-Carrier Platoon in Universal Carrier

## 1-Artillery Regiment (44th), with: (see notes)

HQ: 1-HQ Stand in Truck

### 3-Batteries, each with:

1-FO

2-25-pdr/Tractor

## 1-Engineering Battalion (101st), with: (see notes)

HQ: 1-HQ Engineer Stand in Truck or M5A1

### 2-Centaur ARV

1-Covenanter AVLB

### 2-Engineer Companies, each with:

2-Engineer Stands in Truck or M5A1

### 1-Bridging Company, with:

(data deficient, but with 40t Bailey Bridges and various motorboats)

## Brigade Group Attached Assets: (see notes)

### 1-Tank Regiment (7th Royal; to end of February only) (

#### Regimental Headquarters:

HQ: 1-HQ Churchill VII

Recon: 2-Humber Scout Cars

AA: 1-Crusader (see notes)

Fire Support: 2-Churchill VIII

### 3-Tank Squadrons, each with:

4-Churchill VII or Crocodile (see notes)

1-Independent Reconnaissance Tank Squadron (52nd), with:  
(data deficient, but possibly)

4-Stuart VI (see notes)

## 1-Heavy Artillery Regiment (1st, Royal Artillery), with:

HQ: 1-HQ Stand in Truck

### 1-Battery with:

1-FO

2-BL 7.2" Howitzer/Tractor

### 1-Battery with:

1-FO

2-155mm Gun/Tractor

## 1-Locating Troop (4th Survey Regiment, Royal Artillery), with:

1-Counter-Battery Spotter (off-table)

## 1-Anti-aircraft Regiment (2nd Canadian Heavy), with:

HQ: 1-HQ Stand in Truck

### 3-Batteries, each with:

2-QF 3.7"/Tractor

## 1-Anti-aircraft Regiment (109th or 118th Heavy, Royal Artillery), with: (see notes)

HQ: 1-HQ Stand in Truck

### 2-Batteries, each with:

2-QF 3.7"/Tractor

### 1-Battery, with:

2-40 mm Bofors/Truck or QF 3.7"/Tractor

## 1-Anti-aircraft Regiment (125th Light, Royal Artillery), with:

HQ: 1-HQ Stand in Truck

### 3-Batteries, each with:

2-40 mm Bofors/Truck

## 2-Infantry Garrison Regiments (600th, 608th Regiments, Royal Artillery), with:

(data deficient, but presumably)

### Battalion Headquarters:

HQ: 1-HQ Stand in Truck

### 1-Support Company, with:

1-3" Mortar in Universal Carrier

1-Carrier Platoon in Universal Carrier

1-6-pdr AT/Lloyd Carrier

1-Engineer stand in Truck

### 4-Infantry Companies, each with:

3-Rifle Stands in Truck

## 2-Infantry Battalions (2nd Battalion, 51st Infantry Regiment; 2nd Battalion, 33rd Infantry Regiment; both ex-FFI Free French), each with:

(data deficient, but include own artillery and AT; possibly)

### Battalion Headquarters:

HQ: 1-HQ Stand in Truck

1-57 mm M1/Truck

1-105 mm M2A1/Truck

### 1-Support Company, with:

2-HMG in Truck

1-81 mm M1 in Truck

### 3-Infantry Companies, each with:

3-Rifle Stands in Truck

## Notes:

Cross-attachment of tank and infantry companies is permitted (Section 14.0, pages 29-30 of the rules; in real-life this seems to have been done at the platoon level, rather than by company).

Originally only 2 Tank Battalions (i.e. real-life Regiments) were present; the 3rd was formed from the Brigade's Motorized Recon Battalion (i.e. real-life Recon Squadron) in February/March. Challenger had fully replaced the Brigade's 36 Fireflies by the end of May 1945 (it never had this many 17-pdr tanks at one time, however; two dozen being more typical). Swapping the 17-pdr-equipped tanks into the HQ for the 95 mm-equipped CS tanks seems to comport much better with SH's support rules (Section 7.4.1, page 15), allowing the Challengers/Fireflies to sit back in over-watch positions, while the close-support tanks advance to close range. The rules' recommended allocation of 1 CS tank stand per regiment however, gives only half as many CS vehicles as were found in real life, whereas 1 per squadron gives a less imperfect 50% too many (an exact ratio would call for one of the three squadrons to have no CS stand). Many English-language sources say Crusader AA tanks were used, but others say they were not; Czech equipment lists do not mention Crusaders but do mention M14 MGMC half-tracks with twin 12.7 mm HMGs. Although the 3rd Battalion contained some Cromwells, it was still primarily equipped with Humber Scout Cars (the Brigade Group had 50 of these at the start of year, and still had 46 in May).

The Motorized Battalion was missing one of its Motorized Companies until part way through the siege of Dunkirk; whether it arrived before or after New Year is currently unknown; likewise its Support Company was initially 1/3 understrength.

The Group's organic FOA vehicles should be depicted initially as half Sherman Vs and the rest Cromwells, and later solely in Cromwells (both standard and CS versions were used as the basis for the Group's 8 artillery observation post vehicles). The Artillery Regiment (counting as a Spearhead Battalion) initially had just 2 batteries, with at least a 3rd being added during the siege (probably by the start of this list) to give 24 guns. However, other sources claim up to 3 battalions (each with 2 batteries) were present; by the end of the war, it seems that the artillery park had grown considerably, as it was 96-guns strong (although this figure possibly includes the Group's AT- and AA-guns).

The Brigade's Engineering assets were initially just a single company (or possibly each company had a single platoon).

The Brigade could expect to enjoy considerable air support from allied forces, particularly Typhoons, plus it had control over the 7th Royal Tank Regiment (equipped with Churchill VIIIs and Crocodiles), 3 Anti-aircraft regiments (the 2nd Canadian Heavy with 3.7"; the 109th Heavy, Royal Artillery, with 3.7" and 40 mm Bofors; and the 125th Light, Royal Artillery, with 40 mm Bofors), and 2 ex-FFI Free-French infantry battalions.

The 7th RTR progressively rearmed from standard Churchill VIIIs to flamethrower-equipped Churchill Crocodiles during January and early February; it departed the Dunkirk area on February 15. Although AA tanks were retained on its books, it is unlikely any were still in actual service by this date since enemy ground-attack activity was non-existent. It was however accompanied by a Recon Squadron. Exactly what this was armed with is unclear, but likely Stuarts, as when the 7th left, it left many (non-Crocodile) tanks behind, and the best way of reconciling the Group's large numbers of Stuarts at the end of the war is to assume that some of these abandoned machines were not Churchill VIIIs, but Stuarts that were pressed into service by the Brigade Group (in, e.g., the newly-formed 3rd Battalion).

The 150th Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery, supported the Group at Dunkirk in 1944, but apparently not in 1945. Both the 109th and 118th Heavy Anti-aircraft Royal Artillery Regiments were also at Dunkirk, but it is not known if they served at the same time. Both Bofors and 3.7" guns were usually used in the ground support role for lack of aerial targets, often for counterbattery fire in the case of 3.7" guns, using airburst HE. It is not clear if the 118th had Bofors as well as QF 3.7", or only the heavier guns. AA Regiment 3.7" Batteries count as divisional-level assets, but lack forward observers. They can be assigned to counterbattery duties, kept in divisional support, or attached to fighting battalions, but since they lack FOs, may not take advantage of the special divisional-level FO target priority rule (8.4.1, page 19)

Although the 600th and 608th Regiments were Royal Artillery units, they had been recently retrained as infantry, albeit poorly; as late as April officers from the 600th were sent for "extra infantry training" following a botched assault. It should be noted that even tank companies were used in infantry roles at times during the siege.