

The Bridging Platoon, Royal Engineers

The Bridging Platoon was part of the divisional field park company until it became a separate unit in July 1943. It was responsible for the loading of the equipment, checking and maintaining it. The platoon would take the equipment to where it was required, but the user unit (a field company) was responsible for unloading and constructing the bridge. Usually, the bridging platoon would not remain during the construction of the bridge, but return to the field park to reload the vehicles in case of further requests for bridging equipment.

War Establishment II/196/1, issued in June 1943, determined the structure and personnel within a bridging platoon during the campaign in North West Europe in 1944 and 1945. It remained consistent throughout the campaign.

A Subaltern commanded each bridging platoon with a serjeant as his second-in-command. There were thirty-two other ranks within the platoon, and a cook from the Army Catering Corps attached. Each platoon was issued with one Bren gun, one PIAT anti-tank weapon, nineteen Sten guns, and twelve Lee-Enfield rifles. The subaltern was issued with a .38 pistol.

BRIDGING PLATOON OR TROOP – PERSONNEL

- Subaltern.

- Serjeant.
- Lance Serjeant, sapper class, general dutyman;
- 2 x Transport Corporals;
- 1 x Lance Corporal, sapper class, general dutyman;
- 2 x Lance Corporals, driver class;
- 9 x Sappers, general dutymen;
- 2 x Motorcycle Orderlies;
- 11 x Drivers;
- 2 x Driver Mechanics;
- Batman.

Total = 33

Attached Personnel

- Cook A.C.C..

Total = 1

Weapons

- 1 x Pistol .38”;
- 12 x Rifles .303”;
- 19 x Sten guns 9 mm;
- 1 x Bren gun .303”;
- 1 x 20 mm anti-aircraft gun
- 1 x PIAT anti-tank weapon.

NOTE: The anti-aircraft weapon was frequently left behind due to Allied air superiority.

Organisation

- Motorcycle 1;
 - Motorcycle Orderly;
- Motorcycle 2;
 - Motorcycle Orderly;
- Car 5 cwt 4 x 4 (Jeep)
 - Subaltern;
- 15 cwt General Service;
 - Serjeant, Driver I.C.;
 - Carries 12 x reconnaissance boats;
- 3 ton 4 x 4 General Service 1 Bailey load panels;
 - Driver I.C.;
 - Carries 12 x Bailey panels;
- 3 ton 4 x 4 General Service 2 Bailey load panels;
 - Driver I.C.;
 - Carries 12 x Bailey panels;
- 3 ton 4 x 4 General Service 3 Bailey load panels;
 - Driver I.C.;
 - Carries 12 x Bailey panels;
- 3 ton 4 x 4 General Service 4 Bailey load panels;
 - Driver I.C.;
 - Carries 12 x Bailey panels;
- 3 ton 4 x 4 General Service 5 Bailey load panels;
 - Driver I.C.;
 - Carries 12 x Bailey panels;
- 3 ton 4 x 4 General Service 6 Decking load;
 - Driver I.C.;
 - Carries 4 x transoms, 10 x stringer, 26 x chess, 4 x riband and 4 x footwalk;
- 3 ton 4 x 4 General Service 7 Decking load;
 - Driver I.C.;
 - Carries 4 x transoms, 10 x stringer, 26 x chess, 4 x riband and 4 x footwalk;
- 3 ton 4 x 4 General Service 8 Decking load;
 - Driver I.C.;
 - Carries 4 x transoms, 10 x stringer, 26 x chess, 4 x riband and 4 x footwalk;

- 3 ton 4 x 4 General Service 9 Decking load;
 - Driver I.C.;
 - Carries 4 x transoms, 10 x stringer, 26 x chess, 4 x riband and 4 x footwalk;
- 3 ton 4 x 4 General Service 10 Ramp load;
 - Driver I.C.;
 - Carries 2 x 10 foot ramps, plus ramp transoms;
- 3 ton 4 x 4 General Service 11 Ramp load;
 - Driver I.C.;
 - Carries 2 x 10 foot ramps, plus ramp transoms;
- 3 ton 4 x 4 General Service 12 Accessory load;
 - Driver I.C.;
 - Carries end posts, bearings, jacks, rollers and tackles;
- 3 ton 4 x 4 General Service 13 Sommerfield track;
 - Driver I.C.;
 - Carries 4 x roll of Sommerfield track plus timber from grillage.