

November 4, 1937.

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Infantry Board.

SUBJECT: Developments in Organization, Tactics and Equipment.

1. We are now facing the necessity for early decisions in matters of equipment, armament, organization and tactics. The conclusion of the 2d Division tests and the developments in Spain have made decisions on certain matters very urgent. We will have to be prepared to submit our recommendations at an early date.

2. No general recruitment of infantry prior to the outbreak of war can be counted on. Our training must be based on using present standard equipment in most major items of armament for a year after the outbreak of war.

3. Organization.

Regimental organization must be based on armament with the 1908 Springfield rifle, the B.A.R., and the Browning heavy calibre .30 machine gun. No change in the organization of the rifle squad, platoon, company and battalion for the handling of these weapons is advisable.

Early decision relative to the 4th Battalion can be expected.

4. Light machine gun.

Present efficiency of the modified B.A.R. does not justify the allocation of a squad per platoon for the handling of this weapon. Further exploration for its improvement is urgent. This matter will be pushed to an early conclusion.

I incline to the view that even with the most satisfactory possible weapon, the light machine gun should remain a rifle squad weapon. The fact that the armies which formerly maintained separate light machine gun squads are now merging them into rifle groups is significant.

I do not think we should waste any time in attempts to develop a light machine gun on tripod for front-line use. Aside from the question of weight, the relief of the gun on tripod mount makes it generally unavailable for front-line use on the offensive. I believe we should adhere to present approximate weight limits for this weapon.

5. Infantry mortar.

Decision will soon have to be reached as to the types of mortars required by the infantry. We have to consider mortars of 81-mm, 60-mm, and 47-mm.

The following questions arise:

(1) Which calibre should be adopted as the battalion weapon? Will the 60-mm mortar be adequate for this purpose? If so, should we abandon the 81-mm mortar to the artillery?

(2) Should the 60-mm mortar be considered as the company weapon in preference to the 47-mm? I incline to the opinion that any weapon that has to be transported in two or more loads is not a company weapon.

The question seems to resolve itself into whether we want the 60-mm as a battalion weapon or not, and whether in the affirmative case we also want to retain the 81-mm. I am inclined to think that if we ask for the 60-mm mortar as a battalion weapon, we weaken our chances for retaining the 81-mm.

I do not favor the assignment of 47-mm as a platoon weapon on account of the loss of manpower involved on the offensive. I think extra mortars might be carried in the combat train and in stabilized situations assigned to platoons.

6. Tanks.

I think we shall have to accept the following solution of the tank dilemma:

a. Improved light tank (7/8" armor in front, 5/8" on sides and rear).

b. Medium tank essentially along the lines of that approved by the Board.

I do not believe that this is the best solution from an abstract point of view, but I believe it is the best that can be obtained in the present situation.

There will be a strong tendency toward transferring the unimproved light tanks to the cavalry. It is indispensable that we retain them for training and maintenance of existing organizations.

7. 195 Voice Radio.

Early action will be taken to secure this equipment for the 1st Infantry.

8. Weapon and ammunition carrier.

Tests and experiments should be pushed as rapidly as possible.

It seems to me we will have to choose one of two alternatives:

a. A tracklaying vehicle capable of movement across country and on roads at tank speed, requiring only modification of commercial vehicles.

b. A truck light enough to be manhandled over ditches and other obstacles by a squad. The vehicle will have to be capable of carrying a maximum load of 1100 lbs. (anti-tank gun).

Major General,
Chief of Infantry.