

Battlefront: WWII

Australian Military Forces TO&E v1.0

July 1942 to August 1945

(South West Pacific Theatre of Operations)

By Nigel Perry

These Tables of Organisation & Equipment (TO&Es) are intended to assist the **Battlefront: WWII** player in constructing realistic Australian Military Forces in Papua New Guinea, Bougainville and Borneo during 1942-45. They are written in the same way as the US, Soviet and German TO&Es provided with the **Battlefront: WWII** Rulebook. These TO&E were designed to use the **Battlefront: WWII Far East & Pacific Card Supplement** and use those unit card numbers wherever possible. Australian series cards (AU-) are used when possible, but a number of British 14th army cards (14A-) and others are used when necessary.

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The Australian Army in WWII

It is often said that Australia possessed 2 armies in WWII. Strictly speaking it had 3, the Permanent Forces, the Militia which by 1942 had become known as the Citizen Military Forces or CMF and the Australian Imperial Forces or AIF. The Defence Act Limited the employment of the Permanent Forces and CMF to the defence of Australia while the AIF, recruited from volunteers, could be employed overseas.

By 1942 the CMF and Permanent Forces were indistinguishable and the definition of "Australia" had been extended to allow these forces to serve in most of the South West Pacific Theatre of Operations. Collectively the AIF and the CMF were known as the Australian Military Forces or AMF. The AIF, however, was clearly the "senior" service, with CMF units frequently coming under AIF control and AIF officers posted to command CMF units while the reverse situations being few in number.

In 1942 the AIF was organised according to the standard "British" pattern, while the CMF followed pre war Australian organisation. Neither was found suitable for jungle warfare against the Japanese. Accordingly during 1943 the AMF was reorganised into 3 types of division: armoured divisions, standard (i.e. CMF) infantry divisions, both of which were for home defence only, and jungle divisions. The 3 AIF divisions (6th, 7th, 9th) and 3 CMF divisions (3rd, 5th, 11th) were reorganised on the jungle establishment. Apart from specialist (commando) and corps (artillery and tank) units, these jungle establishment units were the only Australian formations to see combat in the remainder of the Pacific War. They possessed fewer transportation assets as walking was the main means of movement through much of the theatre.

Contents

Battlegroups

BG-01	CMF Infantry Brigade	mid 1942 - early 1943
BG-02	AIF Infantry Brigade	mid 1942 - early 1943
BG-03	AMF Jungle Brigade	mid 1943 -
BG-04	CMF Infantry Battalion	mid 1942 - early 1943
BG-05	AIF Infantry Battalion	mid 1942 - early 1943
BG-06	AMF Jungle Infantry Battalion	late 1942 -
BG-07	Parachute Infantry Battalion	mid 1944 -
BG-08	Commando Squadron	mid 1942 -
BG-09	Cavalry Regiment	late 1942 - early 1943

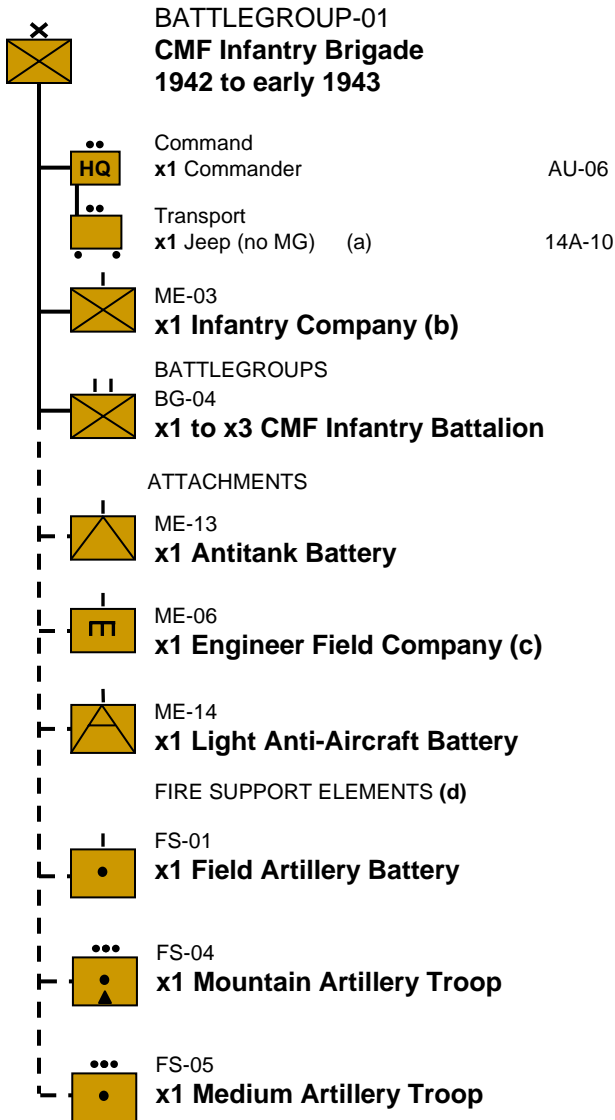
Maneuver Elements

ME-01	Light Tank Squadron	late 1942 - mid 1943
ME-02	Armoured Squadron	late 1943 -
ME-03	CMF Infantry Company	mid 1942 - early 1943
ME-04	AIF Infantry Company	mid 1942 - early 1943
ME-05	Jungle Infantry Company	late 1942 -
ME-06	Engineer Field Company	mid 1942 -
ME-07	Parachute Infantry Company	mid 1944 -
ME-08	Cavalry Squadron	late 1942 - early 1943
ME-09	Carrier Platoon	mid 1942 -
ME-10	Scout Platoon	late 1942 -
ME-11	Commando Troop	mid 1942 -
ME-12	Machine Gun Platoon	mid 1942 -
ME-13	Anti-Tank Gun Battery	mid 1942 -
ME-14	Light Anti-Aircraft Battery	mid 1942 -

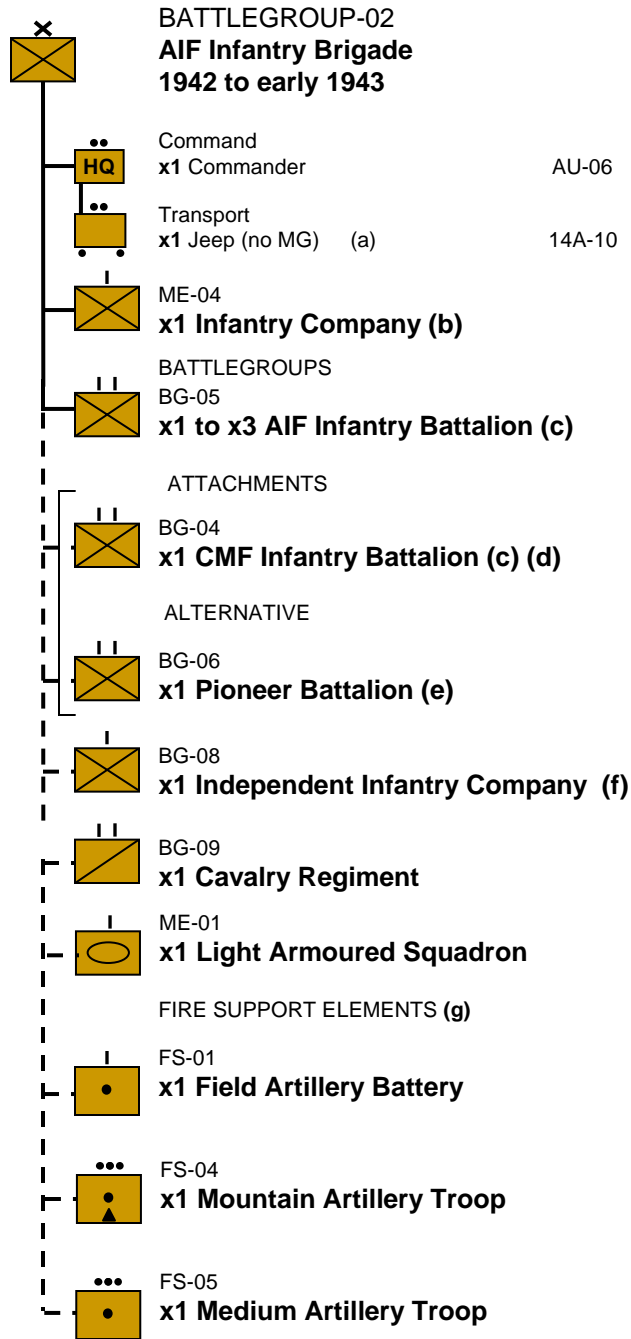
Fire Support Elements

FS-01	Field Artillery Battery	mid 1942 -
FS-02	Field Artillery Troop	mid 1942 -
FS-03	Mountain Artillery Battery	mid 1943 -
FS-04	Mountain Artillery Troop	late 1942 -
FS-05	Medium Artillery Troop	late 1942 -
FS-06	4.2" Mortar Troop	late 1944 -

AMF Battlegroups

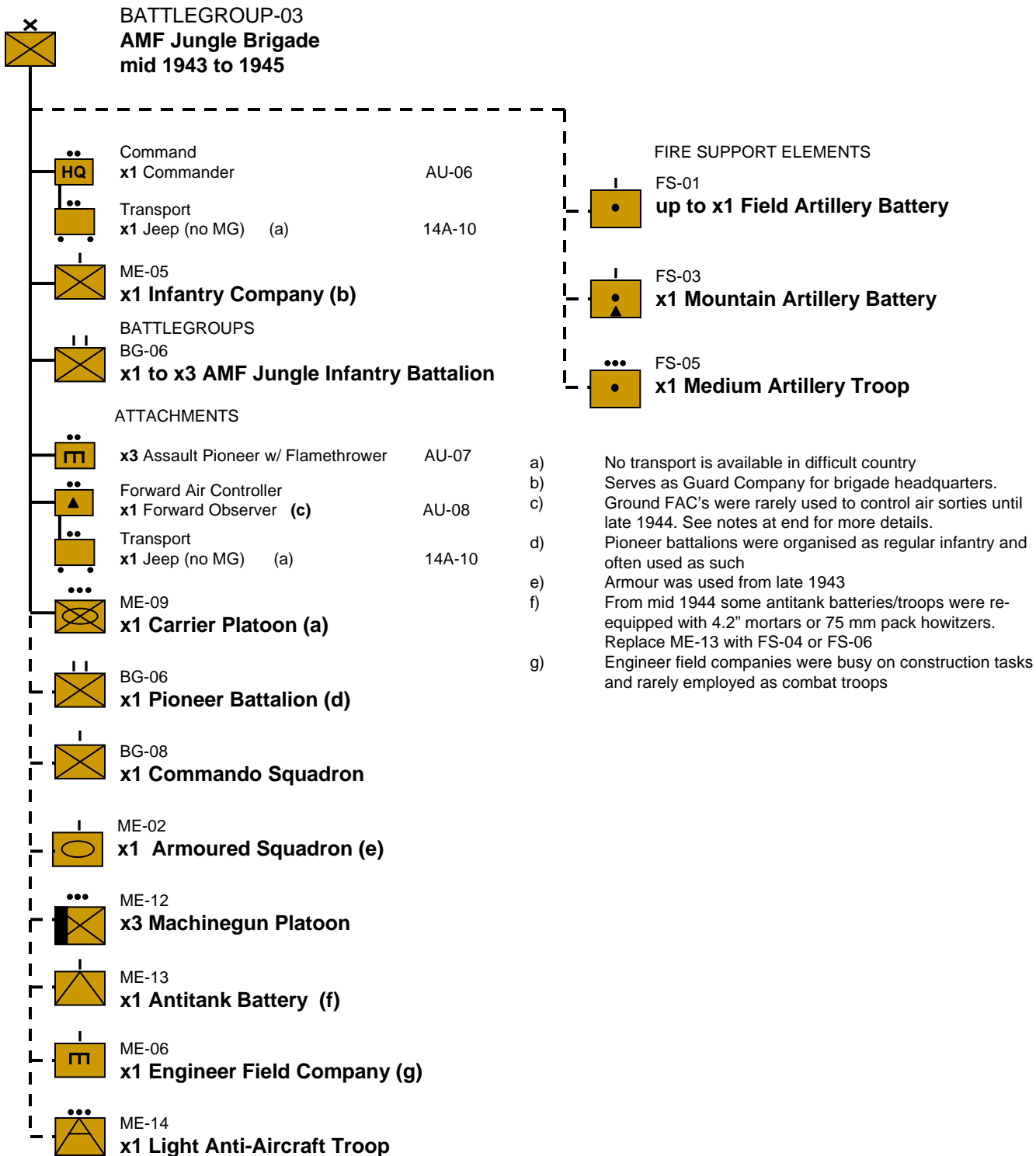


- a) No transport is available in difficult country
- b) Serves as Guard Company for brigade headquarters.
- c) Engineer companies were busy with engineering tasks and rarely employed as combat troops
- d) Support from more than one troop was rare
- e) While air support was available in 1942 its coordination with ground troops was poor

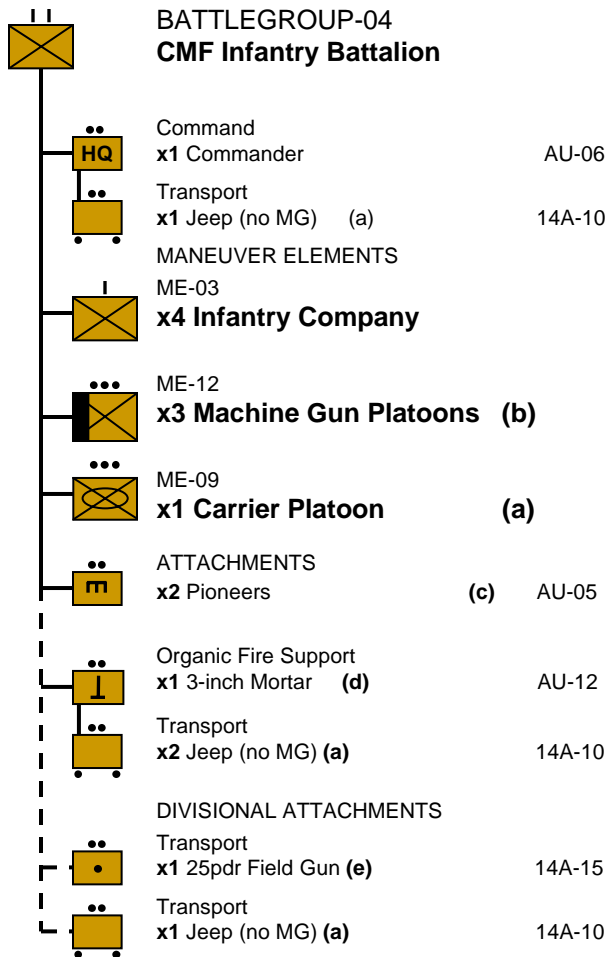


- a) No transport is available in difficult country
- b) Serves as Guard Company for brigade headquarters.
- c) Some infantry battalions used the Jungle establishment prior to its official introduction. Replace with BG-06
- d) AIF brigades often controlled attached CMF battalions
- e) Pioneer battalions were organised as regular infantry during 1942 and often used as such
- f) Used the same organisation as Commando Squadron
- g) Support from more than one battery was rare
- h) While air support was available in 1942 its coordination with ground troops was poor

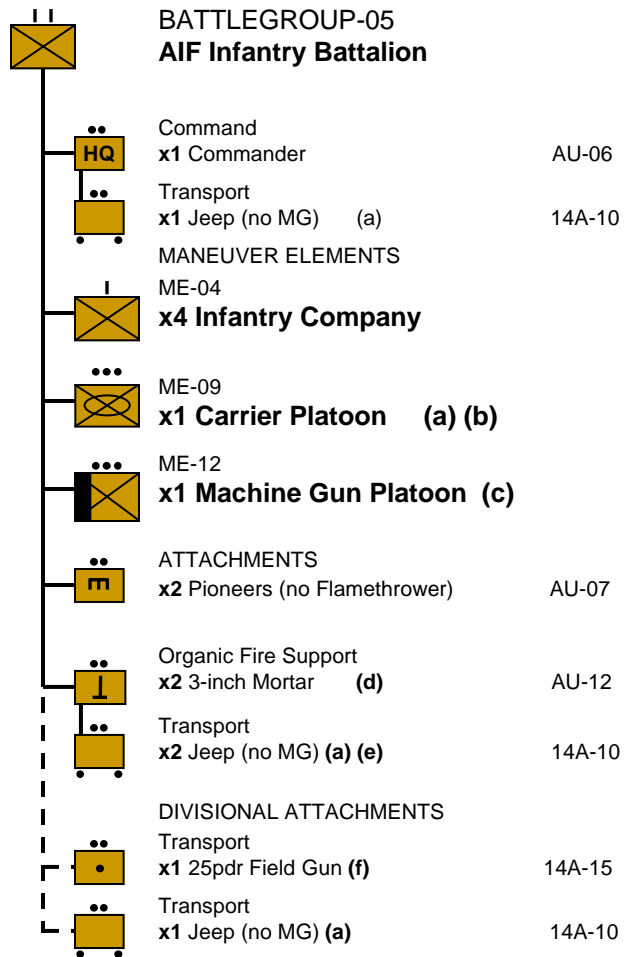
AMF Battlegroups



AMF Battlegroups

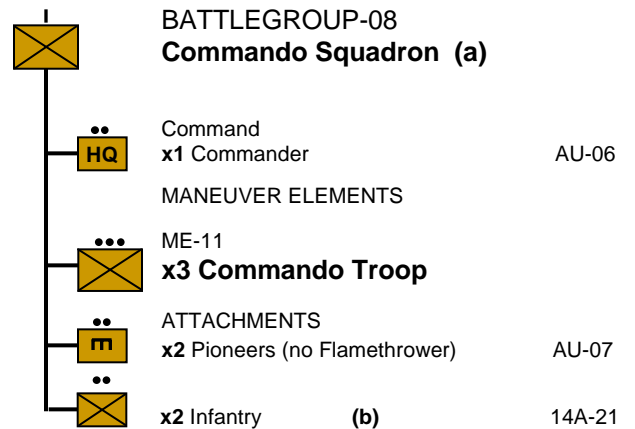
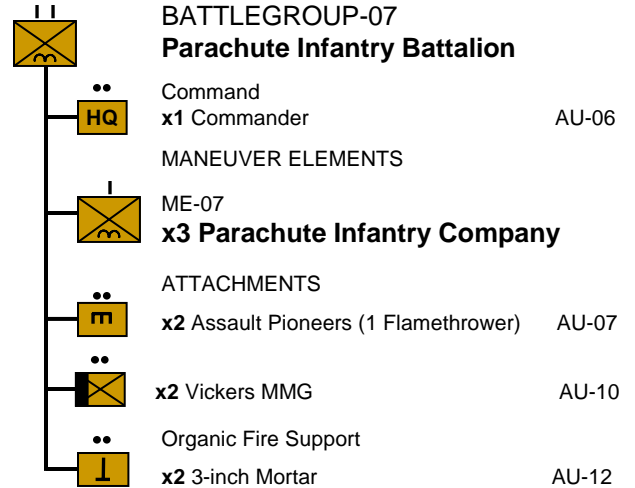
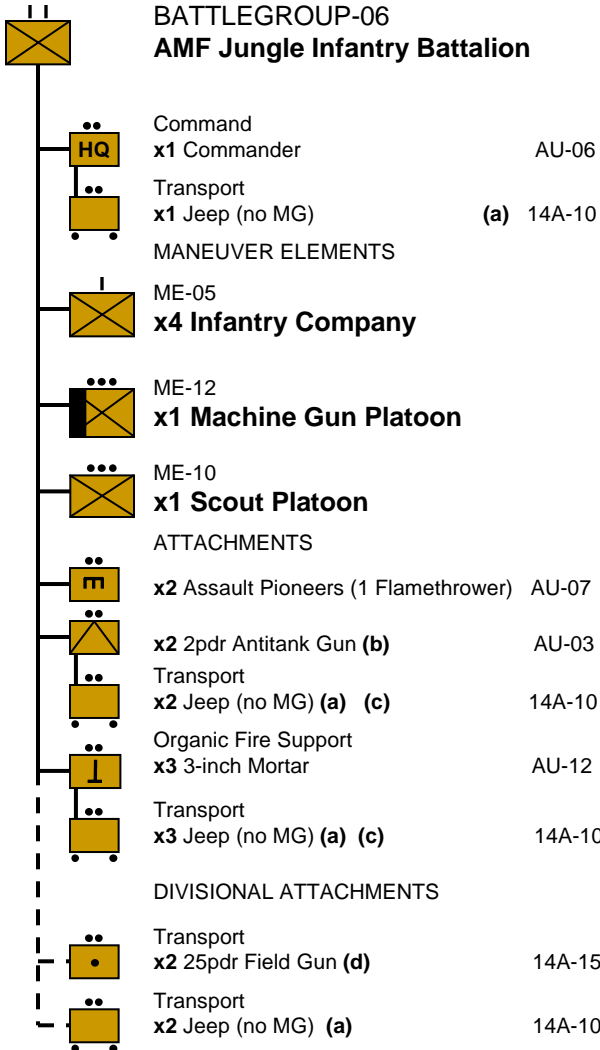


- a) No transport is available in difficult country
- b) For jungle operations the Machine Gun Company was often equipped as ordinary infantry. Replace with Infantry Company ME-03.
- c) CMF Pioneers were equipped as ordinary infantry
- d) Official issue scale was only 1 section, but most battalions fielded more. Battalions in the jungle often left their mortars behind.
- e) From late 1942 25pdr. guns were occasionally attached in a direct fire role. May replace with: 3.7" mountain gun (14A-16).



- a) No transport is available in difficult country
- b) Some battalions had already replaced their Carrier Platoon with a Scout platoon: ME-10
- c) Battalions in the jungle often left their MMGs behind.
- d) Official issue scale was only 2 sections, but most battalions fielded more. Battalions in the jungle often left their mortars behind.
- e) May replace with: Universal Carrier (no MG) 14A-08
- f) From late 1942 25pdr. guns were occasionally attached in a direct fire role. May replace with: 3.7" mountain gun (14A-16).

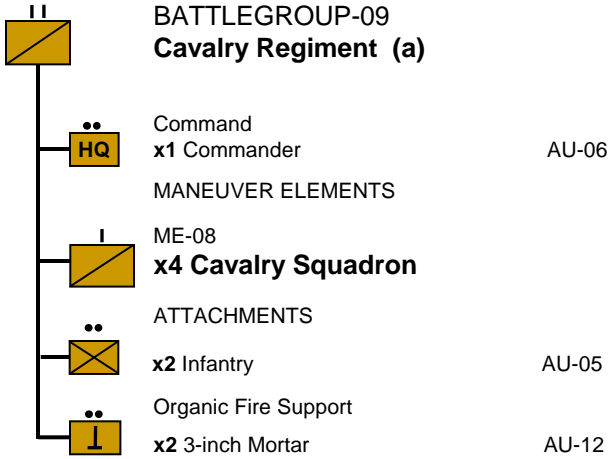
AMF Battlegroups



- a) No transport is available in difficult country
- b) Often left out of organization, especially later in the war.
- c) May replace with: Universal Carrier (no MG) 14A-08
- d) 25pdr. guns were occasionally attached in a direct fire role. Until late 1943 may replace 25 pdr. with: 3.7-inch mountain gun (14A-16). From late 1943 may replace 25 pdr. with 75mm Pack Howitzer (AU-04) or with short 25 pdr. (Use 3.7-inch mountain gun card).

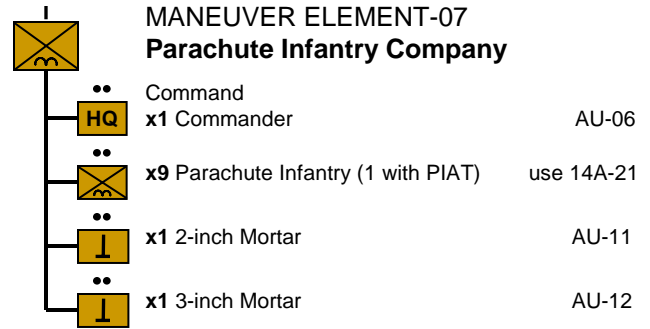
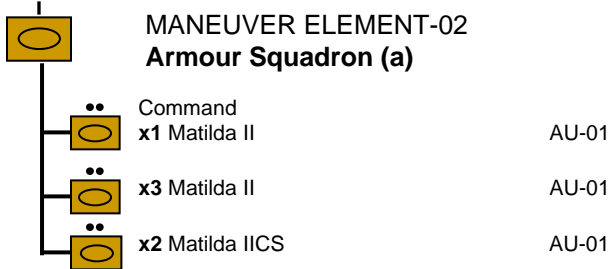
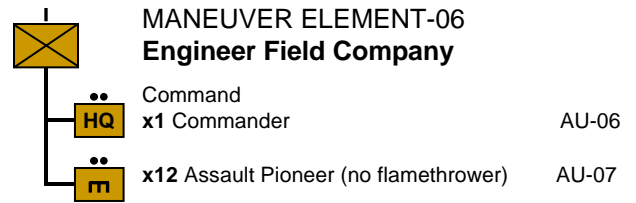
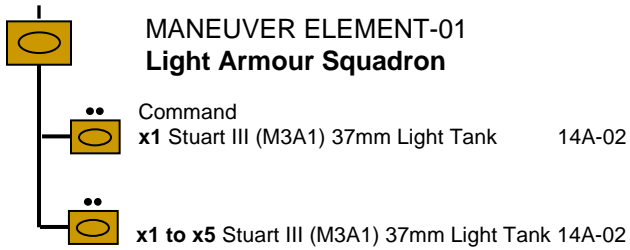
- a) Australian Commando Squadrons were "mini" battalions, experienced in jungle warfare. Their platoons were trained to operate independently of each other. Their elements were about twice the size of regular units, with a proportionately larger amount of officers and integral support troops such as medical, signals and intelligence.
- b) The Chindit card is more appropriate to their training, equipment and role

AMF Battlegroups

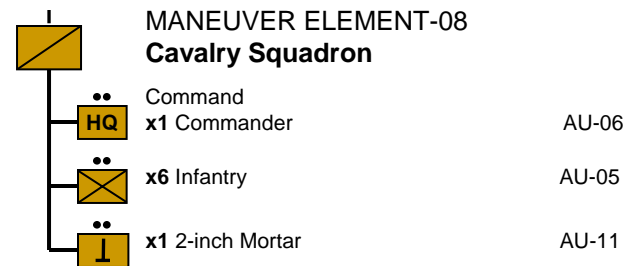
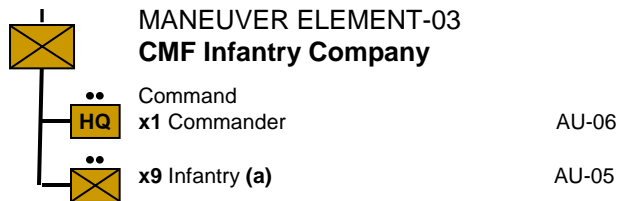


- a) Prior to its training as a Commando Squadron the 7th Division's Cavalry Regiment saw service using an ad-hoc organisation.

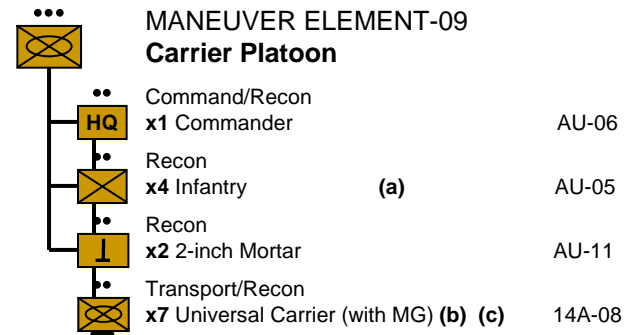
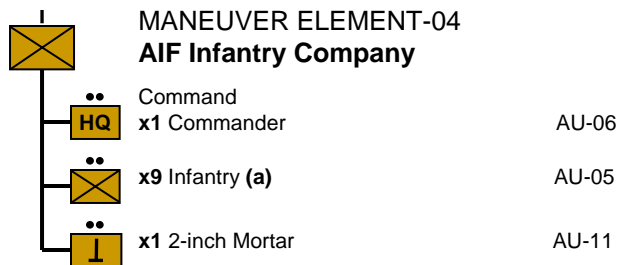
AMF Maneuver Elements



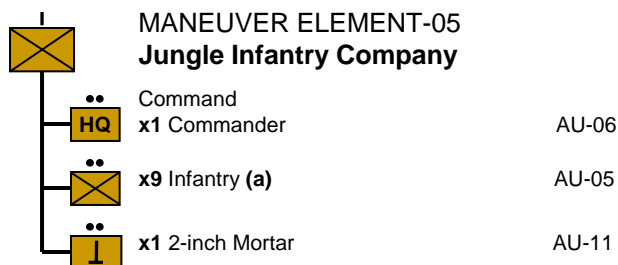
(a) In 1945 add:
x1 Matilda Frog AU-02



(a) up to 1 with Boys ATR.



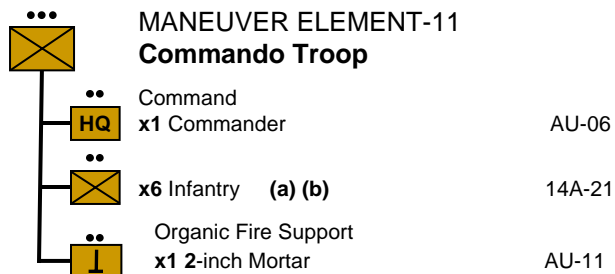
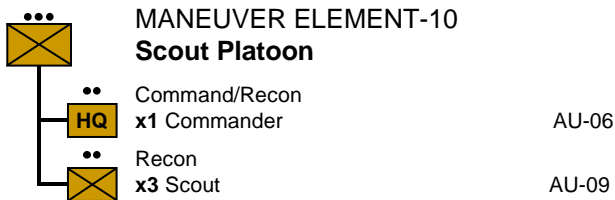
(a) up to 1 with Boys ATR.



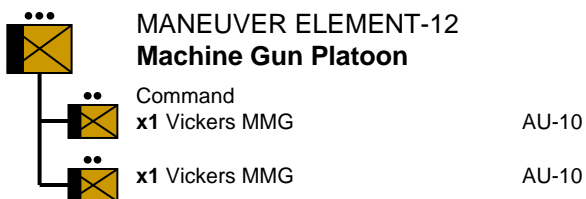
- a) The Carrier Infantry may alternatively dismount as: Bren Light Machine Gun 14A-22
- b) Carriers fire without Machine Gun rating when infantry dismount as Bren LMGs.
- c) May deploy without carriers when in difficult terrain

- a) Up to 1 with PIAT from late 1943. Known as PITA (Projector Infantry Tank Attack) in Australian service.
- b) In the attack, jungle infantry companies frequently grouped their Bren LMGs together for fire support. May replace 1 in 3 infantry with Bren LMG (14A-22).

AMF Maneuver Elements



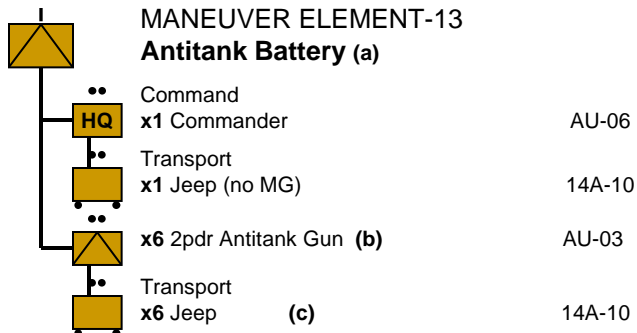
- a) The mixture of long and short range weapons used by the Commandos is better represented with the Chindit card.
- b) In the attack, jungle infantry companies frequently grouped their Bren LMGs together for fire support. May replace 1 in 3 infantry with Bren LMG (14A-22).



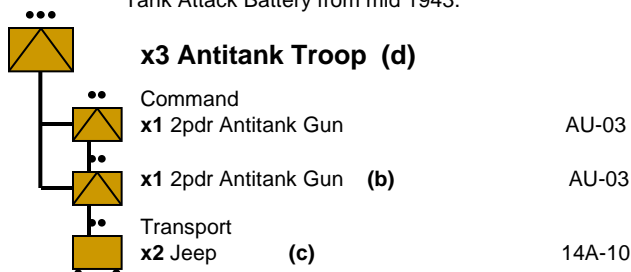
- a) The Light Antiaircraft Battery usually operates as three troop-sized maneuver elements:



- b) Transport frequently not available and guns manhandled into position



- a) The Antitank Battery usually operates as three troop-sized maneuver elements. Single guns may also be attached to an infantry battalion or company. Renamed Tank Attack Battery from mid 1943.

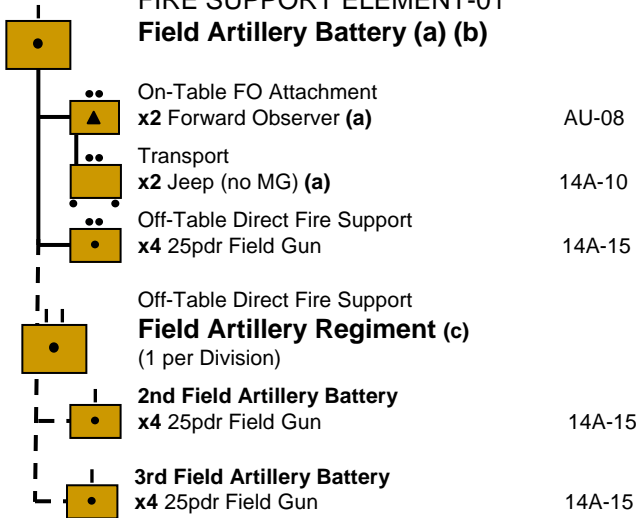


- b) 2 pdr. Guns may be replaced with 6 pdr guns (14A-13) from mid 1944
- c) Until mid 1943 may replace transport with: 2 pdr. Portee (8A-30). Transport often not available in difficult terrain. From mid 1944 troops of Tank Attack Battery may be replaced with a troop of 75mm Pack Howitzer (FS-04) or a troop of 4.2" Mortar (FS-06).
- d)

AMF Fire Support Elements

FIRE SUPPORT ELEMENT-01

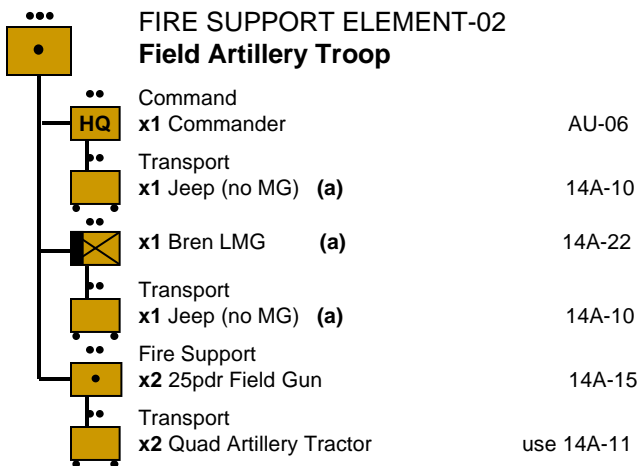
Field Artillery Battery (a) (b)



- a) Each infantry battlegroup has two FOs directly attached to it for each battery. The battery may be called as Direct Fire Support by either FO, or alternatively by Infantry Battalion/Company Commanders. Australian artillery may also fire by Troop (i.e. a half-battery of two guns). Each FO may call for a single Field Artillery Troop as Organic Fire Support.
- b) Can be deployed on table by troops. Deployment by troops was common due to the nature of the terrain
- c) The rest of the Field Regiment is sometimes available from late 1943

FIRE SUPPORT ELEMENT-02

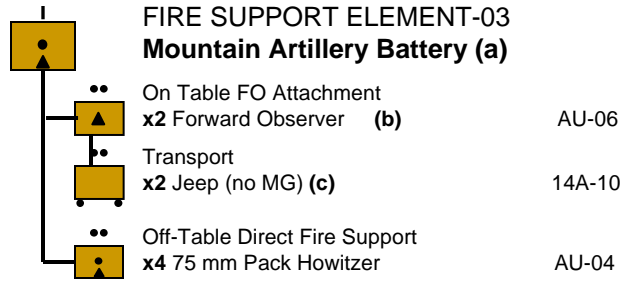
Field Artillery Troop



- a) No transport available in difficult terrain

FIRE SUPPORT ELEMENT-03

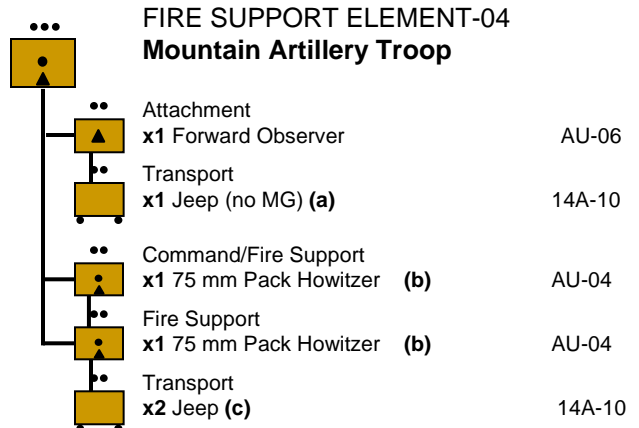
Mountain Artillery Battery (a)



- a) Mountain Artillery Batteries may also be deployed on table as two Mountain Artillery Troops (FS-04)
- b) Each infantry battlegroup has two FOs directly attached to it for each battery. The battery may be called as Direct Fire Support by either FO, or alternatively by Infantry Battalion/Company Commanders. Australian artillery may also fire by Troop (i.e. a half-battery of two guns). Each FO may call for a single Field Artillery Troop as Organic Fire Support.
- c) No transport is available in difficult terrain

FIRE SUPPORT ELEMENT-04

Mountain Artillery Troop



- a) No transport is available in difficult terrain
- b) 75mm Pack howitzers may be replaced with 3.7-inch Mountain Howitzer (14A-16) until late 1943.

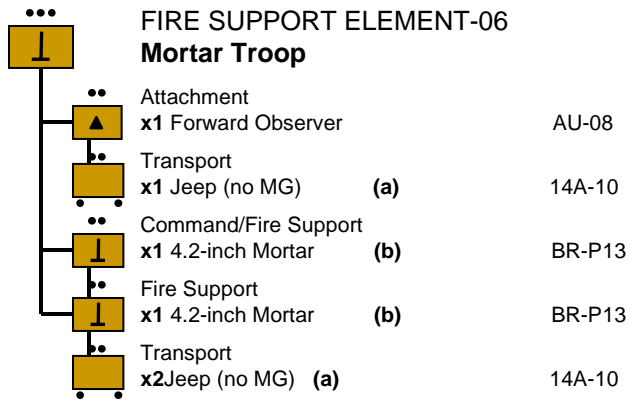
FIRE SUPPORT ELEMENT-05

Medium Artillery Troop



- a) No transport is available in difficult country
- b) Indirect Fire weapon rating: 0 vs. V, +1 vs. T,G,sV: Large Template
- c) x2 4.5 inch guns can be replaced by x1 US 155mm Howitzer. Indirect Fire weapon rating: 0 vs. V, +1 vs. T,G,sV: Large Template

AMF Fire Support Elements



- a) No transport is available in difficult terrain
b) Indirect Fire weapon rating: -1 vs. V, 0 vs. T,G,sV: Large Template

Close Air Support

Close Air Support for the AMF was not as well coordinated or provided on the scale as other Theatres of Operation. This was in part due to the topography of the theatre and Japanese skill at camouflage, with Japanese positions hard to identify from the air. This was also due to the lack of suitable AMF air to ground communications. Airborne FAC control of sorties was preferred. See web-site for prototype airborne FOO/FAC rules.

Until at least 1944, most targeting for Close Air Support was closer to pre-planned fire support than observed fire. As a first approximation, do not use air support except as pre-planned in the first few turns of a scenario.

When air support against opportunity targets is included, consider all targets as obscured to account for the difficulty in identifying targets. Until 1943 ground troops had to resort to the use of smoke to mark targets for air attack. This should be done by calling in a single smoke mission (only one on the table) from a mortar or artillery unit in the usual way, which is then used in the immediately following air sortie phase as the nominated aim point. If more than one smoke template is on the table when the aircraft attack, distribute the aircraft among the templates randomly using a die roll.

AMF units were supported by level bombing, dive bombing and strafing sorties. Unfortunately, the aircraft used to support AMF units are not those included in any Battlefront card series (including Beaufighter, Kittyhawk, Vengeance and Airacobra). To avoid having to create new cards, use the Hurricane II B (14A-26), with only level bombing and strafing allowed.

The only consolation is that the Allies enjoyed air superiority, except at the beginning of this period, and are not subject to Japanese air attack.

Australian Military Forces Bibliography

The excellent work of G Nafziger was not used to compile these TO&Es. This was a deliberate choice from a desire to use primary and secondary sources if possible, and the author's ease of access to the library collections of the ADF and State Library of Victoria.

AMF War Diaries - a number can be viewed online at the Australian war Memorial; <http://www.awm.gov.au/database/>

Orders of Battle - have been summarised at the campaign level and can be viewed online at: <http://www.diggerhistory.info/>

AMF Unit Histories - a listing of published unit histories for infantry and artillery units can be viewed online at: <http://www.diggerhistory.info/>

Additional unit histories consulted for this work included:

Commando White Diamond - D Astill, the 2/8th commando squadron

Commando Double Black - A Pirie, the 2/5th commando squadron

Sanananda Interlude - F Hartley, the 2/7th cavalry regiment

The Pioneers - G Osborne, the 2/1st Pioneers

From snow to jungle - J Bellair, 2/3rd machine gun battalion

Eagles alighting - J Dunn, AMF Parachute Battalion

The vital factor - P Handel, 2/6th armoured regiment

Campaign Histories - the most useful campaign histories for this study included:

Milne Bay 1942 - C Barker and G Knight

Kokoda - P Ham

On Shaggy Ridge - P Bradley

The Silent Seventh - M Johnston, history of the 7th Division

The Magnificent Ninth - M Johnston, history of the 9th Division

My Thanks to ...

All those on the Battlefront forum for freely sharing their ideas and making valuable contributions and suggestions.