

Chinese Expeditionary Force in Burma 1942

Lieutenant General J W Stilwell



Chinese V Army

Lieutenant General Tu Tu-ming

BATTLEGROUP CH-B02
22nd Infantry Division
Major General Liao Yao-shiang

BATTLEGROUP CH-B04
64th Infantry Regiment

BATTLEGROUP CH-B04
65th Infantry Regiment

BATTLEGROUP CH-B04
66th Infantry Regiment

BATTLEGROUP CH-B02
96th Infantry Division
Major General Yu Shao

BATTLEGROUP CH-B04
286th Infantry Regiment

BATTLEGROUP CH-B04
287th Infantry Regiment

BATTLEGROUP CH-B04
288th Infantry Regiment

BATTLEGROUP CH-B03
200th Infantry Division
Major General Tai An Lan

BATTLEGROUP CH-B05
598th Infantry Regiment

BATTLEGROUP CH-B05
599th Infantry Regiment

BATTLEGROUP CH-B05
600th Infantry Regiment

BATTLEGROUP CH-B06
1st Tank Regiment

BATTLEGROUP CH-B07
Cavalry Regiment

MANOEUVRE ELEMENT CH-B08
Engineer Battalion

FIRE SUPPORT ELEMENT CH-B02
Field Artillery Battalion

FIRE SUPPORT ELEMENT CH-B04
Light Artillery Battalion

Anti-Tank Battalion

REINFORCEMENTS APRIL 1942

FIRE SUPPORT ELEMENT CH-B04
Light Artillery Battalion

FIRE SUPPORT ELEMENT CH-B04
Light Artillery Battalion

Chinese VI Army

Lieutenant General Kan Li-chu

BATTLEGROUP CH-B02
49th Infantry Division
Major General Peng Pi-shen

BATTLEGROUP CH-B04
145th Infantry Regiment

BATTLEGROUP CH-B04
146th Infantry Regiment

BATTLEGROUP CH-B04
147th Infantry Regiment

BATTLEGROUP CH-B02
55th Infantry Division (Provisional) (a)
Major General Ch'en Mien-wu

BATTLEGROUP CH-B04
1st Provisional Regiment

BATTLEGROUP CH-B04
2nd Provisional Regiment

BATTLEGROUP CH-B04
3rd Provisional Regiment

BATTLEGROUP CH-B02
93rd Infantry Division
Major General Lu Kuo Chu'an

BATTLEGROUP CH-B04
277th Infantry Regiment

BATTLEGROUP CH-B04
278th Infantry Regiment

BATTLEGROUP CH-B04
279th Infantry Regiment

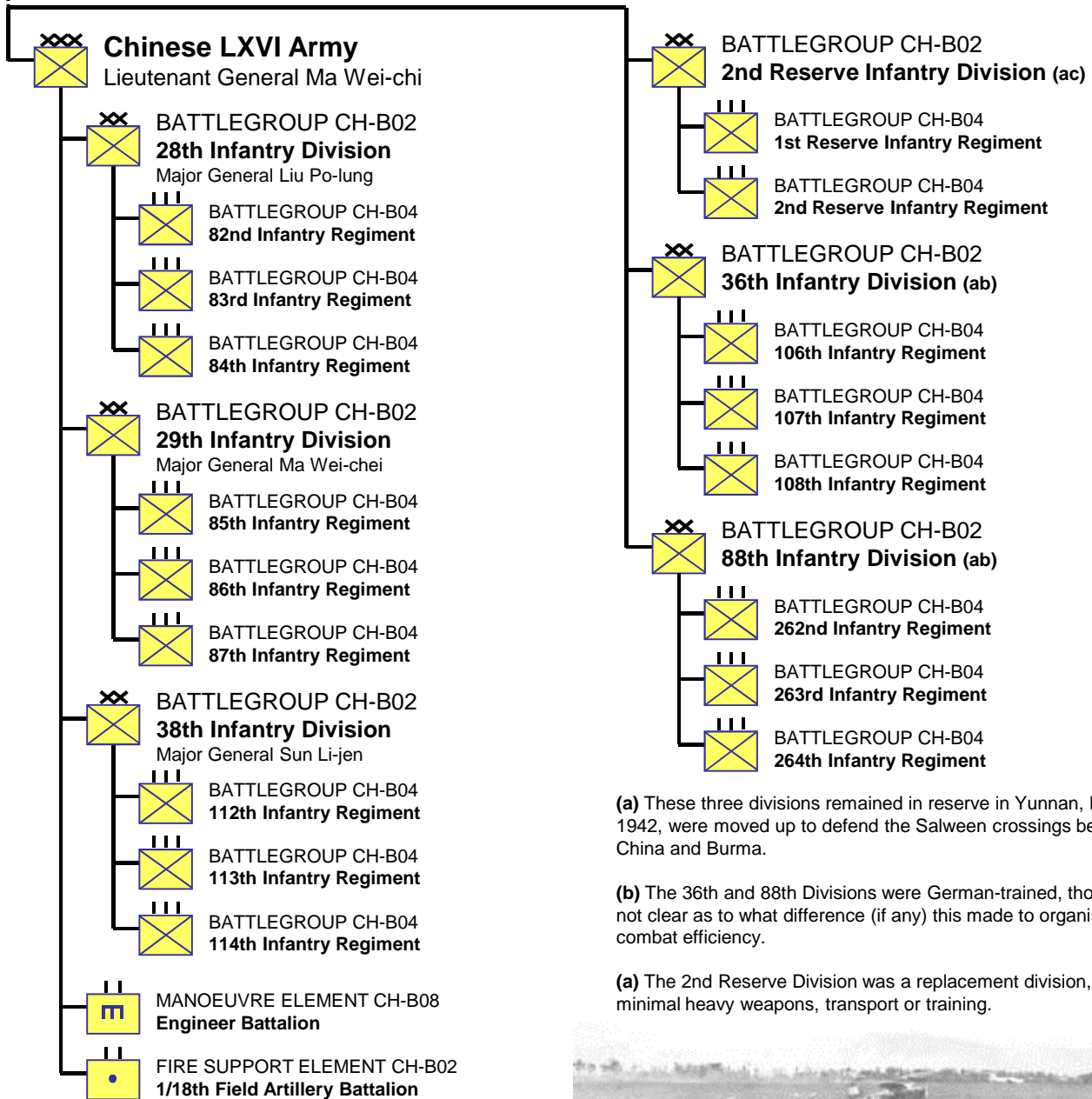
MANOEUVRE ELEMENT CH-B08
Engineer Battalion

FIRE SUPPORT ELEMENT CH-B02
1/13th Field Artillery Battalion

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(a) The 55th Division (Provisional) was a replacement division, with minimal heavy weapons, transport or training.

CHINESE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE 1942, CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

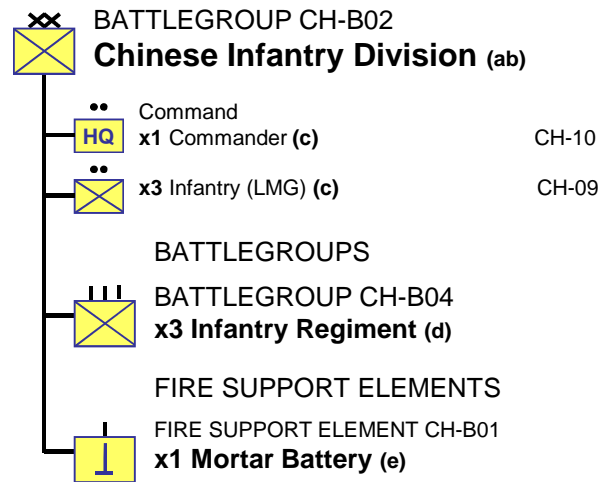
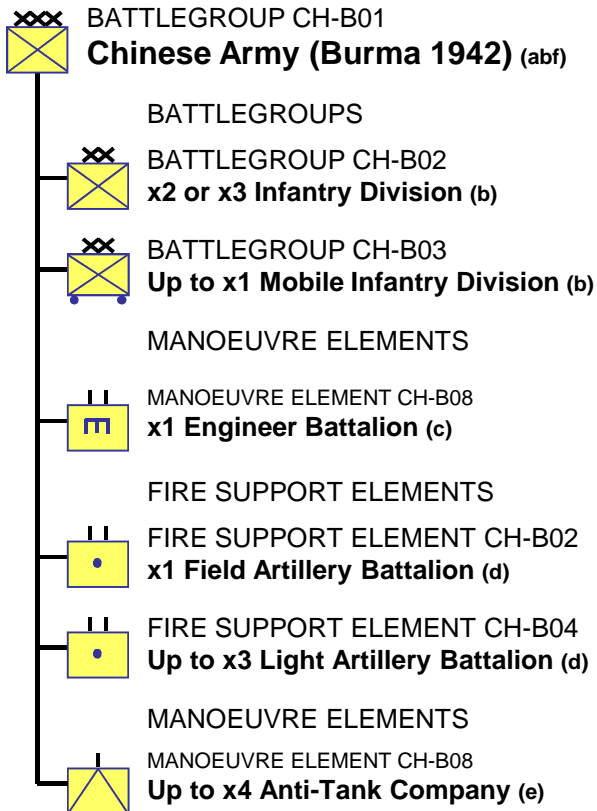


(a) These three divisions remained in reserve in Yunnan, but in May 1942, were moved up to defend the Salween crossings between China and Burma.

(b) The 36th and 88th Divisions were German-trained, though it is not clear as to what difference (if any) this made to organisation and combat efficiency.

(a) The 2nd Reserve Division was a replacement division, with minimal heavy weapons, transport or training.





(a) Most Chinese divisions sent to Burma were very weak in all regards, being regarded as being equivalent in strength to a British/Indian Brigade (though weaker in motor transport, heavy weapons and training). For example, the 22nd & 96th Divisions of V Army each had around 6,000 men when they marched into Burma in 1942, while the 49th, 55th & 93rd Divisions of VI Army each had around 5,700 men. However, these totals also include coolie labour. The exception in 1942 was 200th Division (V Army), which started the campaign with around 8,500 men, was well-equipped with motor transport and even had an armoured component – see BG CH-B03. Note that 55th Division was a training and replacement division, with very poor levels of training.

(b) After the 1942 campaign, all Chinese divisions, including the 200th Division, which after fighting a series of fierce rearguard actions had lost all its transport and heavy weapons, remained very weak and short of equipment. This included the additional divisions sent to reinforce 'Y-Force' (i.e. the Chinese divisions that had retreated to China's Yunan Province, on the Burmese Border). However, 22nd & 38th Divisions, which had retreated with Stilwell into India, were lavishly re-equipped and re-trained by Britain and the USA and were brought almost up to the strength of a British or Indian Division by 1944.

(c) Chinese divisional commanders were often described as riding horses, so may exchange the Commander and his escort Infantry with:

Cavalry	CH-17
Alternatively, they may be motorised with:	
x4 Jeep (no MG)	CH-P10

(d) Chinese Infantry Regiments were generally only the strength of battalions. The three battalions in a Chinese regiment were the strength of companies. They also had severe command and control problems, exacerbated by an almost complete lack of radios or other communications equipment. Chinese Infantry Battalions in these divisions are therefore treated as Manoeuvre Elements rather than Battle Groups.

(e) Chinese Divisions generally had at least a few 82mm mortars at divisional level, in lieu of divisional artillery. Note that there was a complete lack of Forward Observers, so these weapons may only be used over open sights; i.e. at targets or terrain features visible to the mortar crew.

(a) The Chinese Expeditionary Force was sent to Burma in early 1942 in order to protect Chinese supply lines. US Lend-Lease supplies came to China via the 'Burma Road' from the Burmese town of Lashio, which was connected by railway and river to the port of Rangoon. The protection of this main supply route was absolutely critical to Chiang Kai-Shek's war effort. However, the British Empire, already heavily engaged in Malaya and the Mediterranean, could barely scrape up a single division to defend Burma. The American Lieutenant General J W Stilwell was appointed to command the force and his headquarters was established at Lashio on 21st March 1942. Note that the 'Flying Tigers' of China's American Volunteer Group were already providing a squadron to defend Rangoon from air attack.

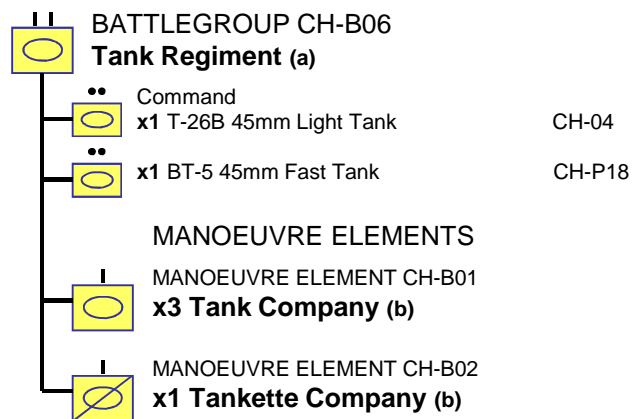
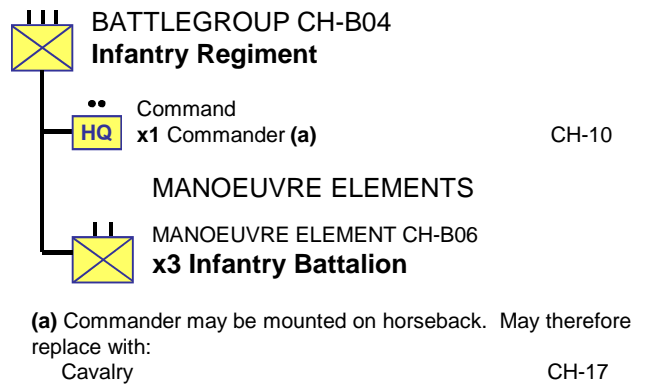
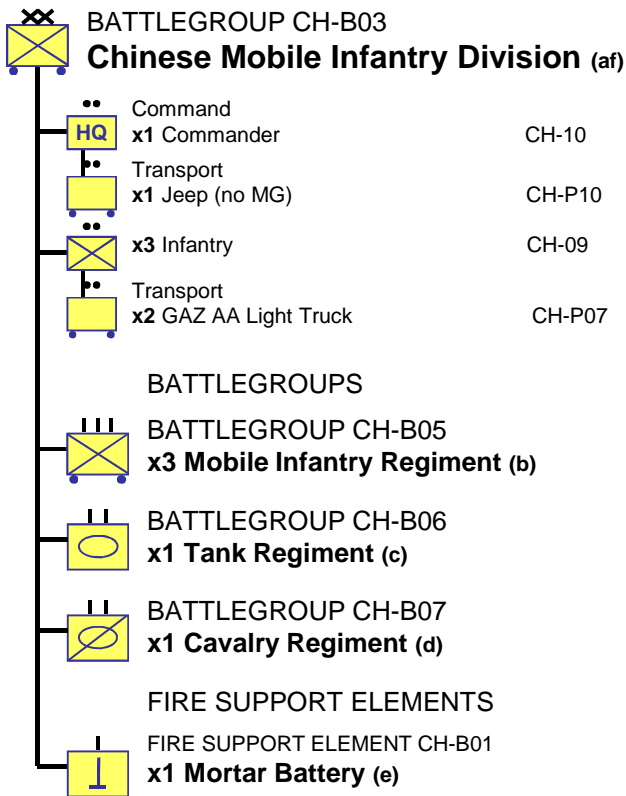
(b) All three Armies had three Infantry Divisions and a handful of support elements such as transport, engineers and artillery. V Army was the best equipped of these armies, having the 200th Division and the bulk of the heavy weaponry.

(c) As with most Chinese Infantry Battalions of the period, Engineer Battalions were very weak and in BF:WWII terms, function as a single Manoeuvre Element or as attachments for other Manoeuvre Elements.

(d) Each Army had a single battalion of motorised field artillery (mainly US 105mm howitzers, but some Russian 122mm howitzers might have still been in evidence – those of V Army were definitely 105mm by 1942). V Army also had a Light Artillery Battalion comprising mixed 75mm guns and US M1 75mm Pack Howitzers. A further two battalions of 75mm Pack Howitzers were delivered in April 1942, both of which seem to have gone to V Army.

(e) The V Army had an anti-tank battalion with x4 Batteries, each of x8 3.7cm PaK 36, towed by GMC 2.5 ton trucks. It is not known if the VI & LXVI Armies had any anti-tank capability.

(f) Although called 'Armies', the Chinese Armies, like those of the Japanese, were actually Corps in terms of organisation. However, in terms of combat strength, they were only equivalent to a British Division.



(a) The 200th Infantry Division was the only such division in the Chinese Expeditionary Force. Regarded as something of an élite, the division had fought hard against the Japanese since 1939. However, the division lost all its AFVs, transport and heavy equipment during the fierce rearguard action at Taunggyi Burma in April 1942 and thereafter was essentially the same as any other Chinese Infantry Division.

(b) It is not clear as to exactly how much motor transport was held by the three Infantry Regiments of 200th Division. It may be the case that only a portion of each regiment (e.g. HQ, logistics, heavy weapons and maybe the odd infantry company or battalion) was motorised, with troop-carrying trucks being shared (as in British/Indian Infantry Brigades).

(c) The Chinese 1st Tank Regiment was originally a large, three-battalion regiment, equipped with T-26B Light Tanks, BT-5 Fast Tanks and CV-33 Tankettes. However, following hard battles in 1940 and a complete lack of replacements or spares following the entry of Italy and the USSR into World War Two, this number was likely to be greatly reduced. It is our guess that the regiment had probably been reduced to a battalion by the time it entered Burma in 1942.

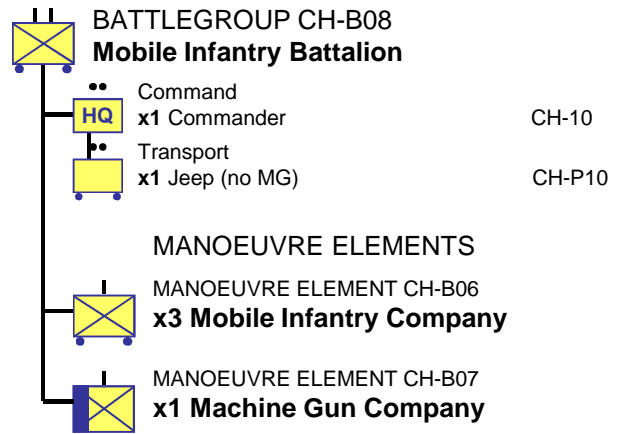
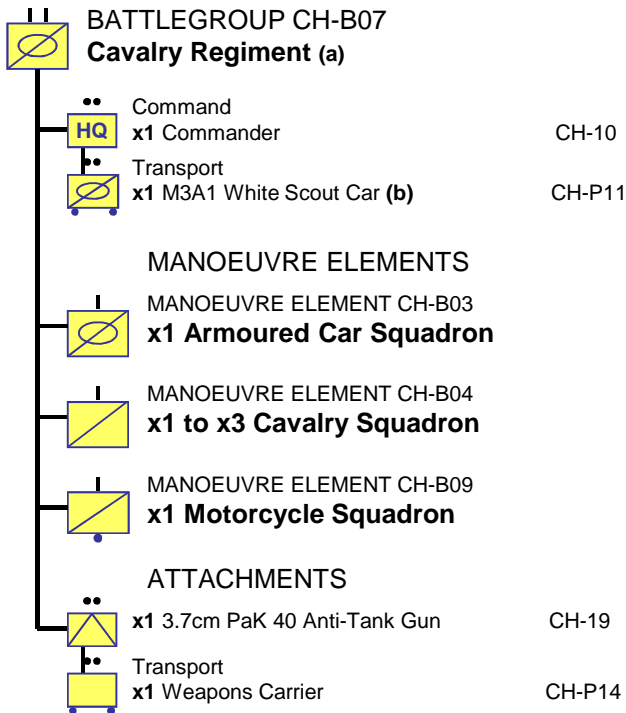
(d) The 200th Division's Cavalry Regiment (originally designated in 1940 as an 'Armoured Car Regiment') is known to have been equipped with BA-6, BA-20 & Sdkfz 221/223 in 1940, but the equipment holdings for 1942 are not known. It seems to have been a single battalion-sized unit. There are references to horsed cavalry and armoured cars in Burma circa 1942, so it seems likely that the regiment replaced some squadrons with horsed cavalry as the supply of armoured cars ran out.

(e) The 200th Division had by 1942, lost the 122mm howitzer battalion it had in 1940. Like the other divisions, it probably had an 82mm mortar battery, though in this case it was probably motorised rather than mule-packed. There are also records of the USA supplying self-propelled 81mm mortars, based on M3 Scout Cars, to the Chinese via Rangoon in 1941 & 1942 (some of which were appropriated by the British), so perhaps these were used by 200th Division?

(f) In 1940 the division also had an AA unit equipped with 45mm AA guns, but there is no mention of this for 1942.

(a) The Chinese 1st Tank Regiment was originally a large, three-battalion regiment, equipped with approximately x24 T-26B Light Tanks, x2 BT-5 Fast Tanks and x11 CV-33 Tankettes (at a ratio of 1:3). However, following hard battles in 1940 and a complete lack of replacements or spares following the entry of Italy and the USSR into World War Two, this number was likely to be greatly reduced. It is our guess that the regiment had probably been reduced to a battalion by the time it entered Burma in 1942. The only source regarding tank types, numbers or organisation circa 1942 is a single Wikipedia mention of x6 CV-33 tankettes. This Battlegroup organisation is therefore completely conjectural.

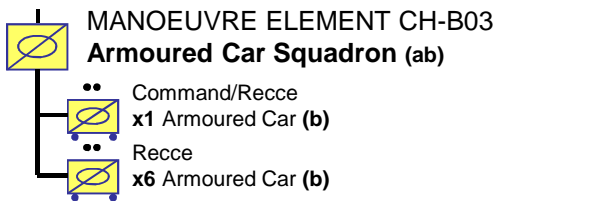
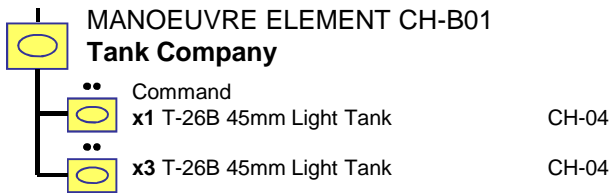
(b) As discussed, this organisation is completely conjectural, so the numbers and types of companies is a complete guess. An alternative might be to remove the Tankette Company and have x3 or x4 equal companies, each including a single Tankette Platoon.



(a) The 200th Division's Cavalry Regiment (originally designated in 1940 as an 'Armoured Car Regiment') is known to have had approximately x15 (at 1:3) Russian BA-6 & BA-20 Armoured Cars and x9 German Sdkfz 221/223 Armoured Cars in 1940 and also acquired an unknown number of American M3A1 White Scout Cars circa 1940-1942. However, it suffered heavy losses to the Japanese in 1940. It seems to have been a single battalion-sized unit in 1940 and there are references to armoured cars, a Motorcycle Squadron and more than one horsed Cavalry Squadron in Burma, 1942, so it seems likely that the regiment replaced some squadrons with horsed cavalry and motorcycles as the supply of armoured cars ran out. There is also a reference to the regiment having an organic anti-tank section, with 3.7cm PaK 36.

(b) Commander may replace transport with:
 Sdkfz 223 Armoured Car CH-05
 Cavalry CH-17
 Jeep (no MG) CH-P10
 BA-20 Armoured Car CH-P13

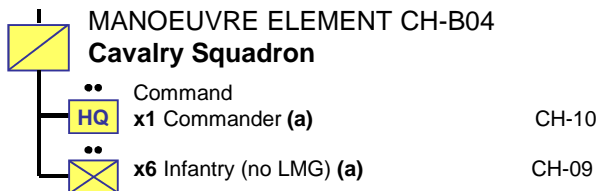




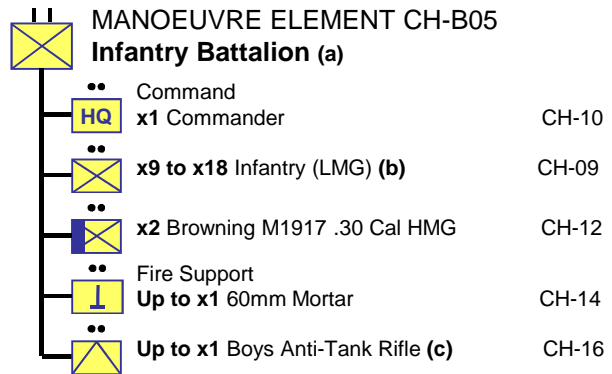
(a) The Armoured Cars may alternatively be split up or swapped for Cavalry in the Cavalry Squadrons.

(b) We have no information on what (or how many) armoured cars may have been present with the Cavalry Regiment in 1942, beyond a single Sdkfz 223, which was photographed at Toungoo. The numbers listed above should only therefore be used as a rough guide and the armoured cars may have been any (or all) of the following types:

Sdkfz 221/223 Armoured Car	CH-05
BA-6 45mm Armoured Car	CH-06
M3A1 White Scout Car	CH-P11
BA-20 Armoured Car	CH-P13



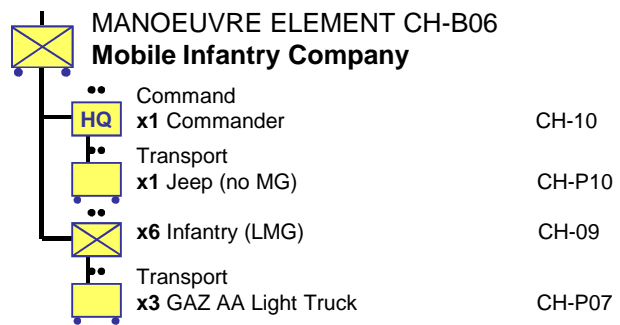
(a) When mounted, replace Commander and Infantry with: Cavalry CH-17

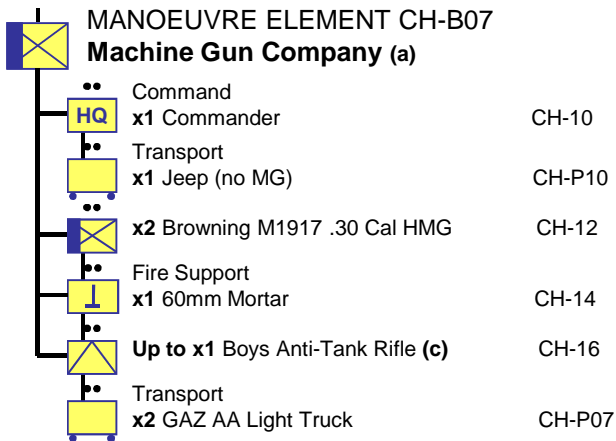


(a) As previously discussed, due to the very weak strength of the battalions, allied to the near-complete lack of communications systems and unimaginative massed tactics, we have designated the Infantry Battalion as a single ME. However, if you disagree, feel free to split the battalion into three equal Infantry Company MEs and add a Commander unit to each company. The MGs and 60mm Mortar may be grouped into a Battalion MG Company ME (again, add a Commander unit), or they may simply be attached directly to the Infantry Companies.

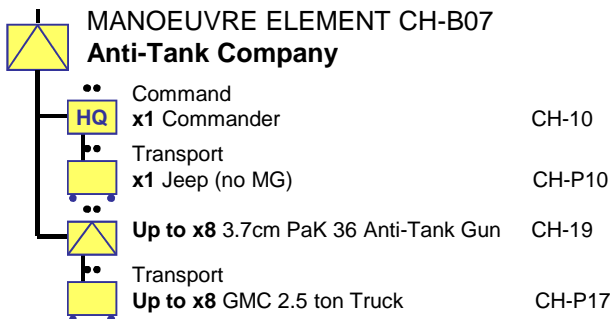
(b) The Chinese Expeditionary Force was very well-supplied with LMGs of various types when it marched into Burma in 1942, so class all Chinese infantry as being armed with LMGs.

(c) We have found no listings for anti-tank weapons of any type in 1942, but it seems likely that there were at least some present. Boys .55" Anti-Tank Rifles had already been supplied to China to replace and supplement the Soviet and Italian types that were already in service and for which ammunition was no longer obtainable. Note that the card CH-16 has Early and Late stats for the different types, with the Late (Boys) stats being slightly worse.

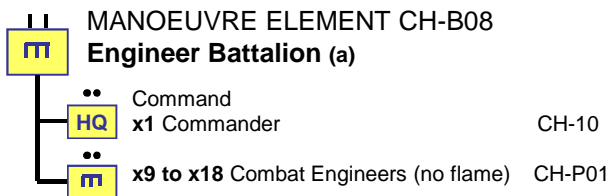




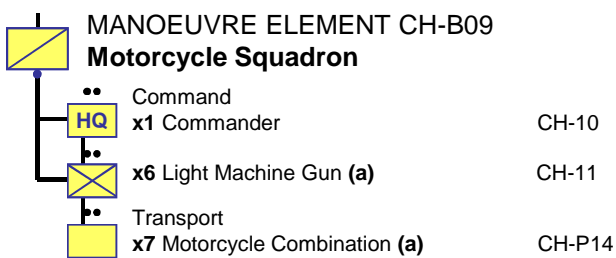
(a) The company may be split up as direct unit attachments to the battalion's other companies.



(a) The company may be split up as direct unit attachments to other MEs or BGs.



(a) As previously discussed, due the very weak strength of the battalions, allied to the near-complete lack of communications systems and unimaginative massed tactics, we have designated the Engineer Battalion as a single ME. However, if you disagree, feel free to split the battalion into three equal Engineer Company MEs and add a Commander unit to each company.



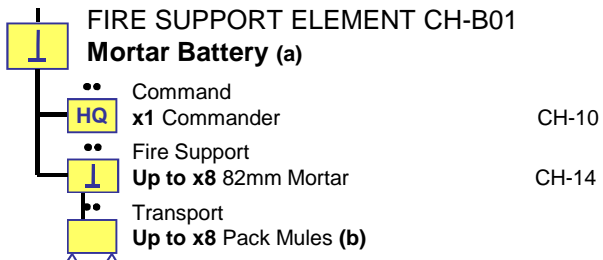
(a) Motorcycles may only move or fire when troops are mounted. The LMGs may also fire while mounted.

Close Air Support

Close air support for the Chinese Expeditionary Force in 1942 was extremely limited. However, the Allied Air Forces did their best with what they had available. RAF and IAF Lysanders did the bulk of the close air support work in the earlier part of the campaign, while the Flying Tigers of China's American Volunteer Group were busy trying to fight off the Japanese Army Air Force.

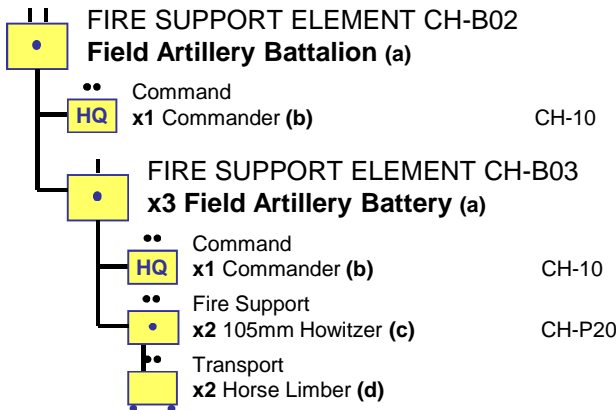
However, with successive defeats through March and April 1942, the AVG was eventually ordered to mount 'shows of strength', to encourage the ground troops. These were generally limited to strafing attacks by P-40B & P-40C Warhawk fighters ('Tomahawk' in British parlance), though fighter-bomber attacks were eventually possible once P-40E Warhawks ('Kittyhawk' to the British), fitted with bomb-racks, started to be delivered to the AVG from the middle of March 1942.





(a) The Mortar Battery may be split up as individual unit attachments to MEs or BGs in the Division. Note that the Chinese lack the fire control techniques and signals capability to perform true Indirect Fire, so the unit lacks FOs and may only engage targets during preparatory barrages or those that are visible to the mortar crew.

(b) Some divisions – particularly the 200th Division – may motorise the battery. Replace mules with:
 x1 Jeep CH-P10
 Up to x4 GAZ AA Light Truck CH-P07

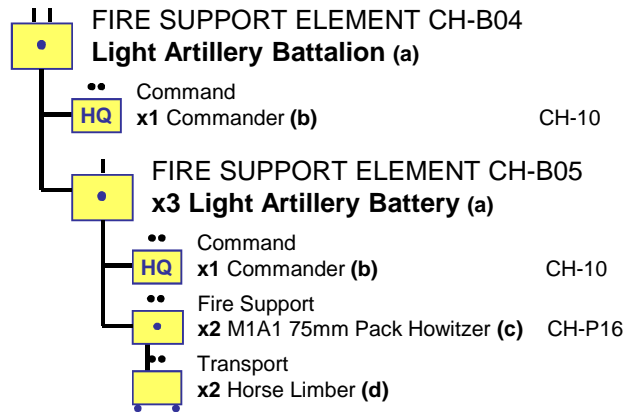


(a) The battalion, or individual batteries, may be split up as individual unit or battery attachments to MEs or BGs within the Division. Note that the Chinese lack the fire control techniques and signals capability to perform true Indirect Fire, so the unit lacks FOs and may only engage targets during preparatory barrages or those that are visible to the gun crew.

(b) Commanders may be mounted on horseback. May therefore replace with:
 Cavalry CH-17
 Alternatively, the unit may be motorised, in which case add:
 Jeep CH-P10

(c) The USA was rapidly equipping the Chinese with modern 105mm howitzers, but some units may have still been equipped with older Russian artillery. May therefore replace the guns in one or more batteries with:
 122mm Howitzer CH-P21

(d) In motorised units, replace limbers with:
 GMC 2.5 ton Truck CH-17



(a) The battalion, or individual batteries, may be split up as individual unit or battery attachments to MEs or BGs within the Division. Note that the Chinese lack the fire control techniques and signals capability to perform true Indirect Fire, so the unit lacks FOs and may only engage targets during preparatory barrages or those that are visible to the gun crew.

(b) Commanders may be mounted on horseback. May therefore replace with:
 Cavalry CH-17
 Alternatively, the unit may be motorised, in which case add:
 Jeep CH-P10

(c) The USA was rapidly equipping the Chinese with modern 75mm pack howitzers, but some units may have still been equipped with older artillery. May therefore replace the guns in one or more batteries with:
 75mm Infantry Gun CH-08
 75mm Field Gun CH-P06

(d) May replace limber for 75mm Pack Howitzers or Infantry Guns (but not 75mm Field Guns) with:
 Pack Mules
 In motorised units, replace limbers with:
 GAZ AA Light Truck CH-P07
 Weapons Carrier CH-P14

