

# Chindits

## Chindits

The Chindits were a force created by the mercurial Orde Wingate to fight the Japanese in Burma. They took their name from the mythical Burmese temple guardian beasts. Wingate was, depending on your point of view a genius or a dangerous charlatan. He advocated a strategy of "Long Range Penetration" based on his successful operations in Palestine pre war and Abyssinia. Using selected regular infantry units of the British army would infiltrate deep into the enemy held territory and disrupt supply and rear areas by raiding then fading into the jungle. His first major operation, launched in 1943 was "Operation Longcloth" when he lead 3000 infantry deep into Burma, fought a few actions and then retired - minus almost a third of his force lost mostly to disease. In military terms it was hardly a sparkling performance, but at the time the allies especially the British in the Far East, were still in some turmoil and Wingate and Longcloth were talked up as a victory. Longcloth also served as a proving ground for the problems faced by light infantry operating behind enemy lines.

What made the follow up, "Operation Thursday" a landmark was the intervention of General Arnold USAAF. He provided Wingate and his LRP force with another facet- insertion, support and supply from the air. With this input the Chindits were now able to insert by gliders deep into enemy territory, then revert to their light infantry role, but could call on air support if needed (see later) and could travel very light, receiving regular resupply from the air.

The insertion part of Thursday was an astounding success, but then the follow on operations ran into problems, not least of which was Wingate's death in a flying accident as he was visiting fighting units. Lacking his vision and political influence his successors allowed the original plan to be modified, leaving the formations deployed beyond their initial scope and in roles for which they were badly equipped and prepared.

The basic building block of Chindit formations was the column, in effect a reinforced company with attached support weapons, recce and engineers. Each column was trained to operate independently for "tip and run" operations against enemy supply routes and rear areas, or could be combined with others to form more permanent "strongholds" with airstrips and some artillery from which operations could be mounted. However Chindit columns lacked the heavy weapons required to mount formal or set piece attacks on entrenched positions - the results of Stillwell's insistence of their use in this role amply serves to highlight this point. Although the column was used on raids and penetration missions, the Brigade/Battalion organization was used when the Chindits reformed at their strongholds or when on major operations. Thus the Battalion has two alternate organizations. Rather than give a generic Brigade structure, this order of battle shows Calvert's 77 Brigade which originally operated out of Broadway in the Railway Valley, then moved on to Mogaung and was arguably the most active Chindit formation.

Chindit columns and strongholds relied for survival on support from the air. This was initially provided by a unique unit, Number 1 Air Commando, USAAF. The Air Commando, like the Chindit units it was designed to support, was designed to last only 90 days, at which point both would be withdrawn. Co-ordination between the Chindits and the P51s and B25s of the Air Commando was very close - in effect the Chindits had their own private air force which they used as a replacement for artillery. When the 90 day period was ended it was decided to leave the Chindits in place, but the Air Commando was disbanded. This was a disaster from the Chindit point of view, as they now had to rely on "normal" RAF\USAAF assets that were already very stretched and over which they had no priority. Combined with the loss of their private airforce, loss of their leader and patron saint, the artificial extension of the original 90 day insertion period and the change to more conventional role took a terrible toll on the formations.

The column organization is a full strength unit as inserted at the start of Thursday. Troop quality ranged from good to excellent (veteran or elite in BF terms).

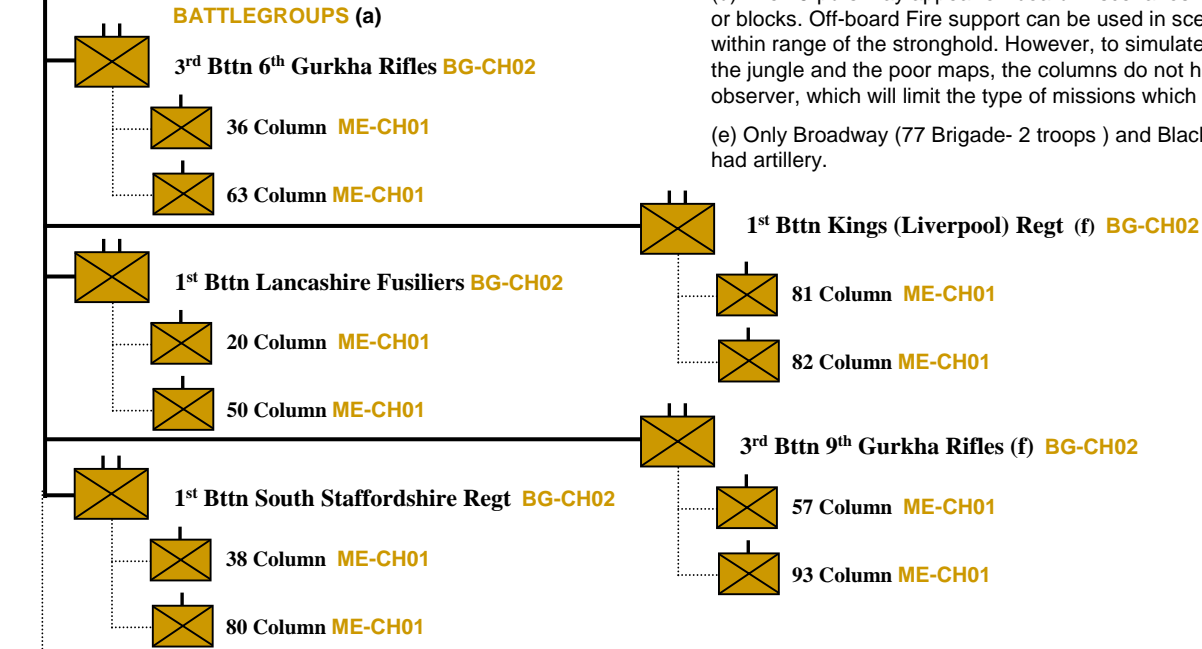
It is important to note that Chindit unit strengths fell dramatically as the campaign went on due to casualties caused by enemy action, crippling marches or disease, and that this should be reflected by scenario designers.

# Chindit 77th (Indian) Brigade

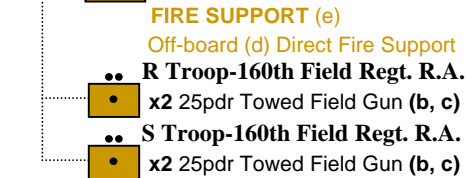
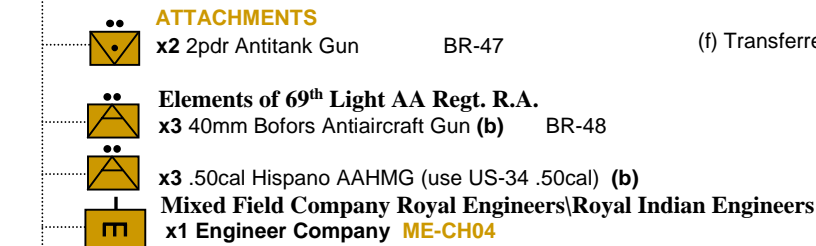
## Operation Thursday 1944



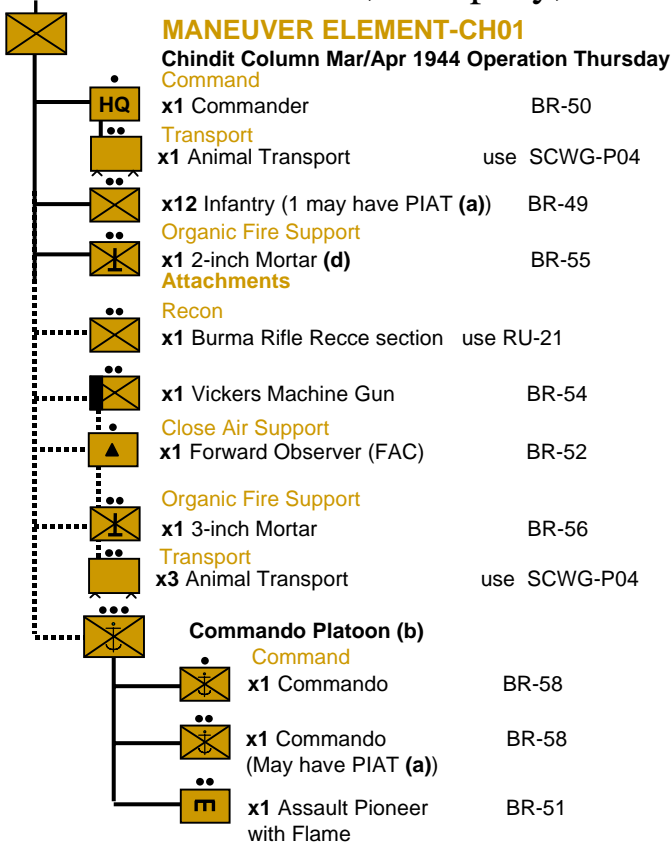
- (a) The Battalions may either operate as independent columns OR as standard companies.
- (b) All Artillery, AA, and AT attachments lack transport.
- (c) Standard 25pdr values-Large template -1V, 0T
- (d) The 25-pdrs may appear on-board in scenarios involving Chindit strongholds or blocks. Off-board Fire support can be used in scenarios where a column is within range of the stronghold. However, to simulate the difficulty of calling fire in the jungle and the poor maps, the columns do not have an artillery forward observer, which will limit the type of missions which can be called.
- (e) Only Broadway (77 Brigade- 2 troops ) and Blackpool (111 Brigade - 1 troop) had artillery.



(f) Transferred to 111 Brigade in May 1944



# Chindit Battalion, Company, and Column Organization (Operation Thursday)

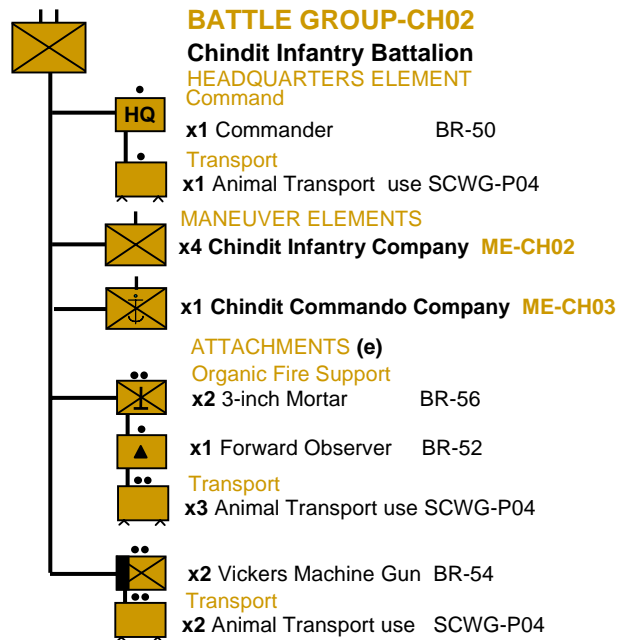


(a) 1 PIAT projector is available to the column. It may be assigned either to an infantry or the commando platoon.

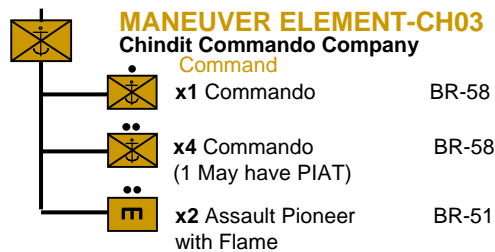
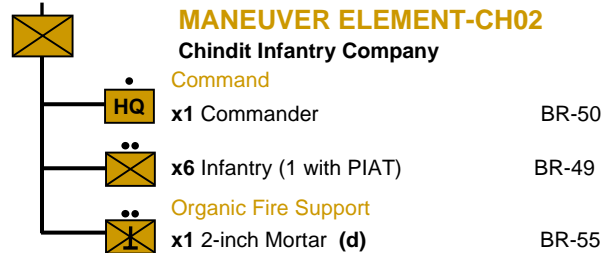
(b) The Commando platoon can operate as an independent element or remain part of the column. If operating independently, it may have attachments assigned. It was formed by selection of the most able and aggressive soldiers in the battalion and trained in demolition duties.

(c) You may add mule transport (SCWG-P04) as needed for the mortars and heavy weapons.

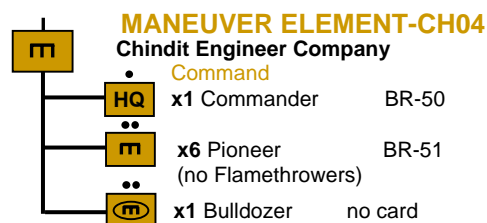
(d) to simulate the widespread use of grenade launchers, you may replace one rifle section with a second 2" mortar.



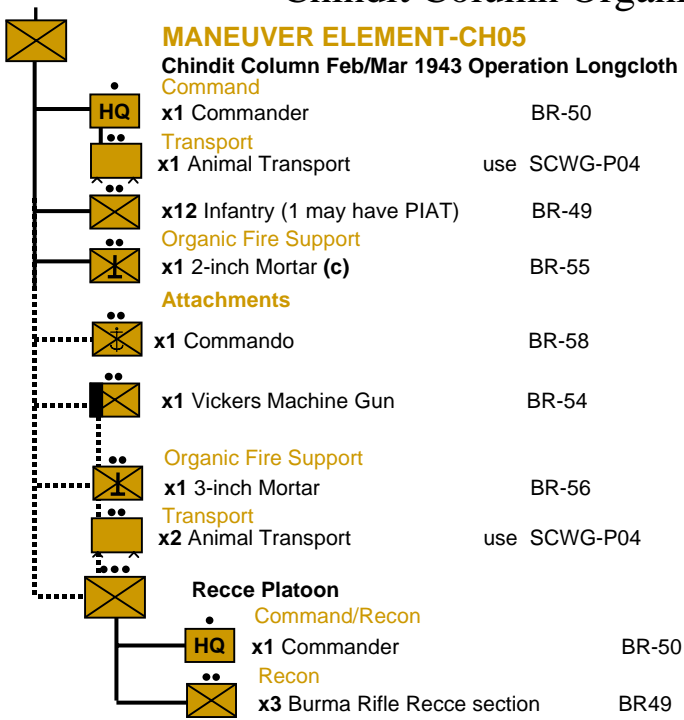
(e) The attachments may operate as an independent weapons company (give them an extra Commander BR-50) or be attached directly to the infantry Companies



The Commando Company is the amalgamation of the Columns Commando Platoons



# Chindit Column Organization (Operation Longcloth)



(a) The recce platoon can operate as an independent element or remain part of the column. If operating independently, it may have attachments assigned.

(b) You may add mule transport (SCWG-P04) as needed for the mortars and heavy weapons.

(c) to simulate the widespread use of grenade launchers, you may replace one rifle section with a second 2" mortar.