

31st Indian Armoured Division ⁽¹⁾

Headquarters, 31st Indian Armoured Division

252nd Indian Armoured Brigade Group ⁽²⁾

Headquarters, 252nd Indian Armoured Brigade Group & Signal Section

14th/20th King's Hussars

Hodson's Horse (4th Duke of Cambridge's Own Lancers)

The Scinde Horse (14th Prince of Wales's Own Cavalry) ⁽³⁾

1st Bn. 4th Bombay Grenadiers

15th Field Regiment, Royal Artillery ⁽⁴⁾

32nd Field Squadron, Queen Victoria's Own Madras Sappers and Miners

2nd Indian Light Field Ambulance, Indian Army Medical Corps

3rd Indian Motor Brigade Group ⁽⁵⁾

Headquarters, 252nd Indian Armoured Brigade Group & Signal Section

The 2nd Royal Lancers, (Gardner's Horse)

Prince Albert Victor's Own Cavalry, (11th Frontier Force)

18th King Edward VII's Own Cavalry

144th (Surrey and Sussex Yeomanry) Field Regiment, Royal Artillery ⁽⁶⁾

31st Field Squadron, King George V's Bengal Sappers and Miners

3rd Indian Light Field Ambulance, Indian Army Medical Corps

Divisional Troops

13th Duke of Connaught's Own Lancers ⁽⁷⁾

79th Anti-Tank Regiment, Royal Artillery ⁽⁸⁾

39th Field Park Squadron, Queen Victoria's Own Madras Sappers and Miners

31st Indian Armoured Divisional Signals, Indian Signal Corps

1st Indian Light Field Hygiene Section, Indian Army Medical Corps

36th General Purpose Transport Company, Royal Indian Army Service Corps

31st Indian Armoured Divisional Ordnance Field Park, I.A.O.C.

31st Indian Armoured Divisional Section Armoured Corps Workshops, I.A.O.C.

NOTES:

1. The division was raised in India as the 1st Armoured Division in July 1940. Major General T. W. CORBETT, M.C., was the first General Officer Commanding. He left the division in January 1942 to transfer to Middle East Command. Initially, it was titled the Mobile Division until late 1940, and comprised the 1st and 2nd Armoured Brigades. Late in 1941 (December?), it was renumbered as the 31st Armoured Division, with the brigades becoming the 251st and 252nd Armoured Brigades. The 252nd Brigade left for Iraq by late 1941, and the divisional headquarters arrived by June 1942. This is the order of battle for the division on 1 September 1942. At this time, the divisional headquarters was located at Mosul, with the rest of the formation stationed at Bisitun. An Australian, Major General (Acting) Robert Harley WORDSWORTH, O.B.E., Indian Army, was the divisional commander through from January 1942 until September 1944.
2. This was one of the two original Indian Army armoured brigades formed in July 1940. It was retitled in late 1941. By late 1941 (probably June 1941), the brigade was stationed in Iraq. In this period, it was an armoured brigade group operating independently of the division. When the brigade arrived in Iraq, its three regiments were as below:

252nd Indian Armoured Brigade Group

14th/20th King's Hussars

Hodson's Horse (4th Duke of Cambridge's Own Lancers)

13th Duke of Connaught's Own Lancers

This was the order of battle for the brigade on 1 February 1942, with the addition of the same support units as listed above.

3. This regiment was not one of the original regiments that left India for Iraq in late 1941. It arrived at some time between February and September 1942 to replace the 13th D.C.O. Lancers, which had left for Egypt.
4. This regiment joined the 252nd Brigade when it was still the 2nd Armoured Brigade in June 1941 from the Rawalpindi District. The brigade had deployed to Iraq in June 1941 and the regiment travelled to Iraq with the brigade. It remained with the brigade until the division assumed command in August 1942.
5. This brigade had been deployed to the western desert where it had arrived in January 1941. As there were insufficient armoured vehicles available, it was organised as a motor brigade instead an armoured one. In April 1941, it was involved in its first action at Mechili where it was badly mauled by the Afrika Corps. The brigade was involved also in the battle of Bir Hacheim in May 1942 where it again suffered heavy losses. The brigade was then withdrawn to Iraq to rest and refit. It returned to India in January 1943 when the 43rd (Lorried) Brigade joined the division.
6. This regiment joined the division in August 1942, transferring from the 10th Army and latterly service with the 17th Indian Brigade during the previous month.

7. In September 1942, this regiment was the armoured reconnaissance regiment for the division, and was equipped with armoured cars. The official reconnaissance regiment attached to the division was:

19th King George V's Own Lancers

It appears, however, that this regiment remained behind in India when the divisional headquarters left for Iraq. The 13th D.C.O. Lancers were sent to Egypt circa May 1942, and were engaged with the 3rd Motor Brigade in the battle of Sollum. The regiment stayed in Egypt until withdrawn with the 3rd Brigade back to Iraq to rejoin the division by September 1942.

8. This regiment joined the division in September 1942, from 8th Army. It had recently reformed in the Middle East.

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Headquarters, 252nd Indian Armoured Brigade & Signal Section

14th/20th King's Hussars ⁽³⁾

Hodson's Horse (4th Duke of Cambridge's Own Lancers)

The Scinde Horse (14th Prince of Wales's Own Cavalry)

1st Bn. 4th Bombay Grenadiers

43rd (Lorried) Infantry Brigade ⁽⁴⁾

Headquarters, 43rd (Lorried) Infantry & Signal Section

2nd Bn. 6th Gurkha Rifles

2nd Bn. 8th Gurkha Rifles

2nd Bn. 10th Gurkha Rifles

Divisional Troops

13th Duke of Connaught's Own Lancers ⁽⁵⁾

15th Field Regiment, Royal Artillery ⁽⁶⁾

144th (Surrey and Sussex Yeomanry) Field Regiment, Royal Artillery ⁽⁷⁾

79th Anti-Tank Regiment, Royal Artillery ⁽⁸⁾

31st Field Squadron, King George V's Bengal Sappers and Miners

32nd Field Squadron, Queen Victoria's Own Madras Sappers and Miners

39th Field Park Squadron, Queen Victoria's Own Madras Sappers and Miners

31st Indian Armoured Divisional Signals, Indian Signal Corps

NOTES:

1. The division remained in Iraq until the end of 1943, moving to Egypt in November 1943. In February 1944, the division moved to Palestine, and then in May 1944, Syria. It was based in Syria when the war ended.
2. Formerly the 2nd Armoured Brigade, it was redesignated in December 1941.
3. The regiment left the division in February 1945 and transferred to Italy under the command of 8th Army.
4. This brigade left the division on 28 July 1944 and was deployed to Italy due to the shortage of infantry formations in the Mediterranean theatre of operations. It was not replaced in the division. It served as an independent brigade, but for periods of time, it was attached to the 1st Armoured Division and the 56th (London) Infantry Division.
5. This regiment was allocated as the armoured car regiment for the division but, went on to join the Allied Forces in Egypt in 1942. The regiment returned to the division in Iraq, prior to the battle of El Alamein in October 1942. It was reequipped with Staghound Armoured cars in anticipation of being transferred to Italy, but they were never sent. Instead, at the end of the war in Europe, the regiment was sent back to India and later served in Java.
6. The regiment left the division in December 1943 to transfer to Middle East Forces in North Africa. It was replaced by:
14th Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery
which served with the division until the end of the war.
7. This regiment remained with the division until the end of the war.
8. This regiment joined the division in September 1942 having recently been reformed in North Africa. It remained with the division until the end of the war.

SOURCES:

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