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FIELD FORMATIONS

- **Corps:** A Corps is a large HQ responsible for a sector within the jurisdiction of a Command HQ. A Corps HQ can reallocate from one sector to another, or even to another Command HQ depending upon operational requirements. Each Command HQ has two or more Corps under its control. For example, Northern Command (HQ in Udhampur) has three Corps sectors --> one in Nagrota (Jammu), the second in Srinagar (Kashmir Valley) and the third in Leh (Ladakh). A Corps HQ in turn has two or more Army Divisions under its supervision, depending upon the operational requirements of a Corps sector. Those formations which are designed to be mobile and have transportable weapons & equipment are called field formations. The Corps HQ is the highest field formation in the Army.

The Army currently has 3 'Strike' Corps + 10 'Holding' Corps in active service. The principal offensive formations of the Indian Army are the three Strike Corps - 1 Corps, 2 Corps & 21 Corps. These are built around a nucleus of a single armoured division and two infantry divisions - probably with more mechanized brigades than basic infantry formations. It also has an artillery brigade, a CAAD (Corps of Army Air Defence) brigade and an engineer brigade. The Holding Corps, on the other hand, have little support from either the Engineers or the CAAD units, and do not possess armoured formations larger than brigades. Also in the Holding Corps, the armoured regiments are not attached to the infantry regiments. While these formations do have a significant offensive capability, they are largely designed to operate in a defensive role.

- **Division:** An army division is the largest striking force in the field and has balanced components of arms & services to fight a war in a given terrain. In the Himalayas, tanks or mechanised infantry is not required. Here infantry-based mountain divisions operate, while in Punjab or Rajasthan all the three types of divisions are required.

There are three types of army divisions according to operational needs;

- Infantry/Mountain Division
- Armoured Division
- Artillery Division

A division is commanded by a Major General (GOC) who is assisted by two Principal Staff Officers. It has the following main parts;

- Administration
- Command
- Strike Force
- Supporting Arms
- Inter-Communication

An Infantry Division has about 15,500 combat troops, with 8000 support elements (engineers, medical, etc). It consists of 3 to 5 Infantry Brigades, an Armoured Regiment and an Artillery Brigade. In the HQ companies of battalions there are pioneer platoons - for engineering work (demolitions, mine clearing, etc) and signal units. These personnel also serve as infantry men. Engineers are practically combat troops since with their bridging equipment and reconnaissance may well spearhead an advance. Troops from the Corps of Signals are also responsible for Electronic Warfare (EW).

The Army also has four RAPID (Reorganised Army Plains Infantry Division) formations each consisting of two infantry brigades, one mechanised brigade with brigade-sized mechanised assets, one artillery brigade, one recon & support battalion, one engineer regiment, one signals regiment and vastly improved surveillance with target acquisition equipment and dedicated aviation units. There are two kinds of RAPID Divisions - offensive and defensive - and there is a slight variation in composition. RAPID formations are attached to the Holding Corps in Punjab and Rajasthan and provides these essentially defensive formations with an extremely flexible unit that dramatically enhances their ability to withstand offensive operations. Moreover, RAPID formations possesses sufficient armoured/mechanized infantry assets to conduct reasonably significant offensive operations and is easily adaptable to NBC warfare. The RAPID formations are slightly smaller in terms of manpower than infantry divisions and is organized with increased mobility and mechanization for better manoeuvre warfare with armoured forces. More are planned to be raised. Infantry Mountain Divisions have also been reorganized - the term RAMID (Reorganised Army Mountain Infantry Division) is ***not*** used however.

An Armoured Division consists of 3 to 5 Armoured Brigades, one Mechanised Brigade and one Artillery Brigade. It has a strength of 300 to 400 main battle tanks and an equal number of other armoured vehicles. In terms of manpower, an armoured division is much smaller than an infantry division.

- **Brigade:** A Brigade is the smallest fighting formation of the Army. There are four types of army brigades according to operational needs;

- Infantry/Mountain Brigade
- Mechanized Brigade
- Parachute Brigade
- Armoured Brigade
- Artillery Brigade

An Infantry Brigade is commanded by a Brigadier, who is assisted by a Brigade Major and Staff Officers. It consists of three Infantry Battalions and depending on the circumstances, detachments of artillery, signals and sappers are provided. If needed, supply, transport, medical, and other units are also attached. An artillery brigade has 3 to 5 artillery regiments, with 60 to 100 artillery guns. Artillery is being standardized on the 130mm M-46 Field Gun, adding 120mm mortars to mortar platoons and incorporating two 30mm AGS-17 automatic grenade launchers. Under the 2000 Field Artillery Rationalization Plan, the Army expects to procure 4000 self-propelled & towed howitzers of 155mm calibre to equip its 200 artillery regiments. This procurement program is expected to be spread over the next two decades, and filled through a combination of outright purchase and licensed manufacture.

Artillery units have very important R&O (Recce & Observation) units, using helicopters, and vital meteorological and survey teams. These are important, since the accuracy of artillery fire depends on wind speed/direction, the humidity and an accurate survey of the firing position. Thus all Artillery Officers are science graduates - specializing in mathematics and physics. Artillery Units have SATA (Surveillance And Target Acquisition) batteries which have indigenously-manufactured battlefield surveillance radar as well as artillery locating radar. This dramatically enhances the effectiveness of Indian artillery. A number of Israeli-made Remote Piloted Vehicles (RPVs) are being obtained for the targeting of the Prithvi SRBM. A Brigade, when not part of a division and located & designed to function independently, is called an Independent Brigade. It is provided with additional supporting arms (Artillery, Engineer, Signals, etc.) and services (Army Service Corps, Army Ordnance Corps, Electrical & Mechanical Engineers, etc.) units to operate independently for the required task.

- **Battalion:** Commanded by a Colonel, the battalion is self-contained, hence it is the Infantry's main fighting unit. It has a Second-in-Command and four Company Commanders, with four infantry companies (each with three infantry platoons), plus a Support Company with mortars, machine guns, anti-tank guided missiles and surface-to-air missiles. Artillery and armoured formations have battalion equivalents called regiments. These are organized in a similar manner - armoured regiments have three tank squadrons while artillery regiments have between three and four artillery batteries. All of these formations are of a similar size, numbering approximately one thousand personnel.

Infantry Battalion --> [Structure](#)

Armoured Regiment --> [Structure](#)

- **Company:** Commanded by a Commissioned Officer, usually a Major, and has a small headquarters. It consists of three infantry platoons and its total strength is about 120 soldiers.

- **Platoon:** Commanded by a Junior Commissioned Officer (JCO), usually a Subedar and with a 2-in-C, usually a Havildar. It is a composite fighting unit with its own direct support weapons. Consists of three sections of 33 to 36 soldiers.

- **Section:** The basic structure on which the Army is formed, is the Infantry Section or its equivalent in other arms and services. This is the smallest unit and is commanded by a Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO), usually a Lance Havildar or a Havildar. Its strength is normally at 11 Jawans, but under adverse conditions, it may become less.

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