

2020

www.BritishMilitaryHistory.co.uk

Author: Robert PALMER, M.A.

A CONCISE HISTORY OF:

ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF'S BRANCH, G.H.Q. INDIA (HISTORY & PERSONNEL)

A short history of General Headquarters India Command between 1938 and 1947, and details of the key appointments held in G.H.Q. India during that period.

Copyright ©www.BritishMilitaryHistory.co.uk (2020)]

A Concise History of the Engineer-in-Chief's Branch, G.H.Q. India

Version: 1_1
This edition dated: 1 October 2020
ISBN: Not yet allocated.

All rights reserved. No part of the publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means including; electronic, electrostatic, magnetic tape, mechanical, photocopying, scanning without prior permission in writing from the publishers.

Author: Robert PALMER (copyright held by author)
Assisted by: Stephen HEAL
Published privately by: The Author – Publishing as:
www.BritishMilitaryHistory.co.uk

Headquarters Staff of the Army in India

Headquarters of the Army in India was a pre-war command covering the entire country of British India.

The headquarters consisted of four branches:

- General Staff Branch,
- Adjutant General's Branch,
- Quarter-Master-General's Branch,
- Master-General of the Ordnance Branch,
- Engineer-in-Chief's Branch.

At the beginning of the Second World War, the headquarters was redesignated as the General Headquarters (G.H.Q.), India Command.

Engineer-in-Chief's Branch

This was the fifth branch of the Army Headquarters. The head of the branch was a Major General, who was the most senior Royal Engineer officer in the Headquarters of the Army in India. The Indian Army had three Corps of Sapper and Miners, namely:

- Queen Victoria's Own Madras Sappers and Miners,
- King George V's Own Bengal Sappers and Miners,
- Royal Bombay Sappers and Miners.

The officers for these three corps were British Royal Engineers who were seconded to one of the three Corps in the Indian Engineers. Many officers made their careers in India, although some other officers were posted to India from the United Kingdom and returned after their appointment was completed.

At the outbreak of the Second World War, the Engineer's-in-Chief Branch was by far the smallest part of the A.H.Q. in India. In April 1940, there were only thirteen officers based there. Apart from the Engineer-in-Chief, there were two Deputies, both Colonels. One was responsible for Works Services and the other for Electrical and Mechanical Engineering. Inevitably, with the expansion of the Indian Army, this Branch grew in size during the war. In March and April 1942, three new Directorates were formed within the Branch, namely:

- Directorate of Engineering Staff and Personnel,
- Directorate of Works Services,
- Directorate of Electrical and Mechanical Engineering.

Two other Directorates came into existence during the war:

- Directorate of Engineering Stores;
- Directorate of Air Force Works.

The latter Directorate was responsible for building the large number of airfields required by the Royal Air Force in India and latterly in Burma.

On the 15th October 1943, the new Corps of Indian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers was formed by personnel from the Indian Army Ordnance Corps and the Indian Engineers. This led to the Directorate of Electrical and Mechanical Engineering transferring to the Branch of the Master General of the Ordnance where the new Corps was administered.

The Branch contracted steadily after the end of the Second World War, but not to the pre-war levels, until it was split up with the partition of the British Indian Army on the 15th August 1947.

Some British officers remained in senior positions in both the Indian and Pakistani Armies until well into the 1950's.

Engineer-in-Chief's Branch

Engineer-in-Chief

16th March 1936 – 27th August 1939

Major General Herbert Stuart GASKELL, C.B., D.S.O.*

28th August 1939 – 15th March 1942

Major General (Local) Clarence August BIRD, C.B., D.S.O., *p.s.c.*¹

16th March 1942 – 7th May 1943

Major General Richard Lawrence BOND, C.B.E, D.S.O., M.C., *i.d.c.*, *p.s.c.*

8th May 1943 – 6th January 1946

Major General Horace Eckford ROOME, C.B., O.B.E., M.C.

7th January 1946 – 15th August 1947

Major General (Acting) William Freke HASTED, C.I.E., C.B.E., D.S.O., M.C.²

Deputy Engineer-in-Chief

21st November 1941 – 1942

Major General (Acting) R. M. W. MARSDEN, M.C.

26th May 1943 – 1945

Major General (Acting) Henry Porter Wolseley HUTSON, D.S.O., O.B.E., M.C.

Deputy Engineer-in-Chief (Works)

1st August 1939 – 1941

Colonel E. W. PERT, M.C.

Deputy Chief Engineer (Engineering and Mechanical)

15th April 1937 – 1941

Colonel Robert Marten Weymouth MARSDEN, M.C.

Chief Engineer (Factory Works Section)

9th August 1940 – 1941

Colonel (Acting) F. B. PIGGOTT, R.E.

Deputy Chief Engineer

1941 – 1943

Brigadier Edward Valentine BOWRA,

¹ Promoted to substantive Major General on 1 October 1939 and Acting Lieutenant General on 1 July 1941.

² Awarded the C.B. on 17 January 1946 and promoted substantive Major General on 19 May 1946.

21st November 1941 – 6th January 1946

Major General (Acting) Horace Eckford ROOME, C.B., O.B.E., M.C.

6th April 1942 – 1943

Brigadier (Acting) William Freke HASTED, C.B.E., D.S.O., M.C., R.E.

11th November 1943 – 8th March 1944

Colonel (Acting) Eric Arthur Eugene BOLTON, R.E.

23rd December 1945 – 1946/7

Brigadier C De L GAUSSEN, M.C.

Brigadier Engineering Staff

11th January 1941 – 1942

Brigadier (Acting) H. G. F. GREENWOOD, M.C., R.E.

25th October 1944 –

Brigadier (Temporary) Harold WILLIAMS, R.E.

Brigadier Reconstruction and Demobilisation

13th December 1943 – 1945

Brigadier H. N. OBBARD

April 1945 – 1946

Brigadier (Temporary) Leslie Innes JACQUES, C.B.E., M.C.

Director of Works Services

19th April 1941 – 28th April 1942

Colonel (Acting) Walter Donald Morris CHRISTIE, R.E.¹

Brigadier Engineer Resources

20th June 1943 – 1945

Brigadier L. D. GRAND, C.B.E.

1945 – 1946/7

Brigadier N. E. V. PATTERSON, O.B.E., R.E.

¹ From 29 April 1942, also held post as Brigadier Works Services.

Directorate of Engineer Staff and Personnel

Brigadier Engineering Staff

18th March 1942 – 19th June 1943

Brigadier (Acting) Harold WILLIAMS, R.E.

20th June 1943 – 7th March 1945

Brigadier Edward Francis Egerton ARMSTRONG, O.B.E.

8th March 1945 – 1946/7

Brigadier (Local) C. E. A. BROWNING, M.C., R.E.

Brigadier Personnel

27th October 1941 – March 1944

Colonel E. BRADNEY, D.S.O.

31st March 1944 – 1945/6

Brigadier E. BRADNEY, D.S.O.

Directorate of Works

Brigadier Works Services

29th April 1942 – 12th August 1943

Brigadier (Acting) Walter Donald Morris CHRISTIE, R.E.

13th August 1943 – 5th August 1945

Brigadier (Temporary) C. G. HAWES, C.I.E., M.C.

6th August 1945 – 1946/7

Brigadier Frank Borkman PIGOTT, R.E.

Director of Works Services

14th March 1944 – 7th February 1945

Colonel Serald John ARMSTRONG, O.B.E., M.C.

8th February 1945 – 1946

Brigadier (Acting) Serald John ARMSTRONG, O.B.E., M.C.

Directorate of Electrical and Mechanical Engineering

Director of Electrical and Mechanical Engineering

5th June 1941 – 1943

Colonel R. W. CARDEW, M.C., A.M.I.E.E.

Directorate of Engineering Stores

Director of Engineering Stores

18th December 1941 – 1943

Colonel C. A. CARMICHAEL, Reserve of Officers

Directorate of Air Force Works

Deputy Engineer-in-Chief, Air Force Works

1st May 1943 – July 1944

Brigadier (Temporary) W. F. HASTED, C.I.E., C.B.E., D.S.O., M.C.

27th July 1944 – February 1945

Brigadier Herbert Eric HORSFIELD, C.B.E., M.C.**

11th November 1944 – 1946

Brigadier (Acting) R. H. MUIRHEAD, O.B.E., R.E.

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SOURCES:

Please contact the webmaster, or see: <https://www.librarything.com/catalog/RobPALMER>