



## ORBAT & DECORATIONS FOR THE AZAD HIND FAUJ

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### Introduction

Of all the armed responses by the people of India for independence from foreign rule, the *Indian National Army* (INA), also known as *Azad Hind Fauj* (AHF) was the biggest, best organised, and most successful. It was resurrected in June 1943 under the dynamic leadership of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. Earlier, similar efforts by the Axis Powers were carrying out by raising forces of Indian origin, referred to as *Freies Indien Legion* in Germany and *Battaglione Azad Hindoustan* in Italy.

AHF was raised in Japanese occupied Singapore against the backdrop of World War II (WWII) and emerged as a formidable force. It played a crucial role in India's struggle for freedom. It was composed of Indian civilians who volunteered to fight for Indian independence as well as ethnic Indians from various parts of the world, including political refugees, migrants, indentured labourers, and prisoners of war (POWs). The struggle by INA soldiers is a saga of supreme dedication and selfless sacrifice in the cause of India's liberation from alien rule. The Indian government-in-exile, mirroring Charles de Gaulle's Free French Forces, envisioned AHF units as regular armed forces, complete with their own Order of Battle (ORBAT), distinctive identification badges and insignia, reflecting the mosaic of Indian diversity within their ranks.

This research paper looks at the comprehensive recruitment process undertaken to assemble the AHF and its European counterparts. It provides a comprehensive overview of the *Freies Indien Legion*, *Battaglione Azad Hindoustan*, and the *AHF*. The paper explores the meticulous training of recruits, unveils the intricacies of the ORBAT, delves into the design and significance of uniforms, badges, and crests, and, finally, sheds light on the decorations and accolades bestowed upon those valiant soldiers.

### Freies Indien Legion – Germany

- **Recruitment and Training**

The inception of the *Freies Indien Legion* can be traced to April 1941 when British 3rd (Indian) Motorized Brigade soldiers were captured by Rommel's Afrika Korps in Cyrenaica, Libya. A Luftwaffe Major was dispatched on 15<sup>th</sup> May to interview English-speaking prisoners, paving the way for the recruitment of a proposed German Army unit of Indians. Subsequently, 27 officers were flown to Berlin and a special camp for about 10,000 Indian POWs was set up at Annaburg. Here they were visited by Netaji for their enlistment into the proposed unit, referred to as the *Free Indian Legion*, *Azad Hind Legion* or *Tiger Legion*.

The Legion's first volunteers, comprising POWs and Indian civilians in Germany left Berlin's Anhalter railway station on Christmas Day 1941 for a camp at Frankenburg near Chemnitz. Despite the recruitment of only 8 volunteers, in January 1942 the German Propaganda Ministry announced the establishment of the grandly titled 'INA or 'Jai Hind'.<sup>1</sup> Subsequently, 6,000 of the Indian prisoners were transferred to the camp at Frankenburg for military training by German officers and NCOs. Officially it was maintained that the Indians were merely used as a labour unit. Of these 6,000 men at Frankenburg, 300 volunteers were transferred yet again to Königsbrück in Saxony where German Army uniforms were issued.

By mid-1943 the INA had approximately 2,000 members and was also referred to as *Indisches Infanterie Regiment 950*. Men of the *Legion Freies Indien* of the German Army took their oath of allegiance in a ceremony on 26 August 1942.



**Figure 1 & 2: The Colour presentation to the 1st Battalion, September 1942 by Netaji at the completion of the Legion's military training at Königsbrück during the oath-taking ceremony<sup>2</sup>**

The Legion operated as a standard German army infantry regiment of three battalions each of four companies. Initially all the commissioned officers were Germans, but after a brief course some senior Non-Commissioned officers (NCOs) were commissioned in October 1943. The unit was partially motorised and equipped with 81 motor vehicles and 700 horses and later redesignated to *Panzer Grenadier Regiment 950 (Indische)*.

On 08 August 1944 the INA comprised about 2,300 men and like all the national legions, was transferred under the control of the Waffen-SS and was known as the *Indische Freiwilligen Legion der Waffen SS*.<sup>3</sup> The class composition was all mixed having two-thirds Muslims, one-third being Hindus, Sikhs, Jats, Rajputs, Marathas and Garhwalis.<sup>4</sup>

- **ORBAT of the I.R. 950 (ind) / Freies Indien Legion in 1943-44<sup>5</sup>**

The ORBAT was exactly that of the Standard German Regiment with three Battalions of four companies each. Support companies consisted of Anti-Tank, Infantry Gun and Engineers which had three Platoons each. It also consisted of an *Ehrenwachkompanie* (Honour Guard Company) and a Hospital/Convalescent Home. *Ausbildungs und Betreuungsstab* (Training & Maintenance Staff) was formed on 27/4/43 and then renamed on 7<sup>th</sup> July 1943 as *Regiments-Stab (Ind.) Infanterie Regiment 950*. German designations like *Oberstleutnant* (Lieutenant Colonel) etc. were used. Lieutenant Colonel Kurt Krappe was the *Legionskommandeur* (Legion Commander) till 25<sup>th</sup> June 1943.

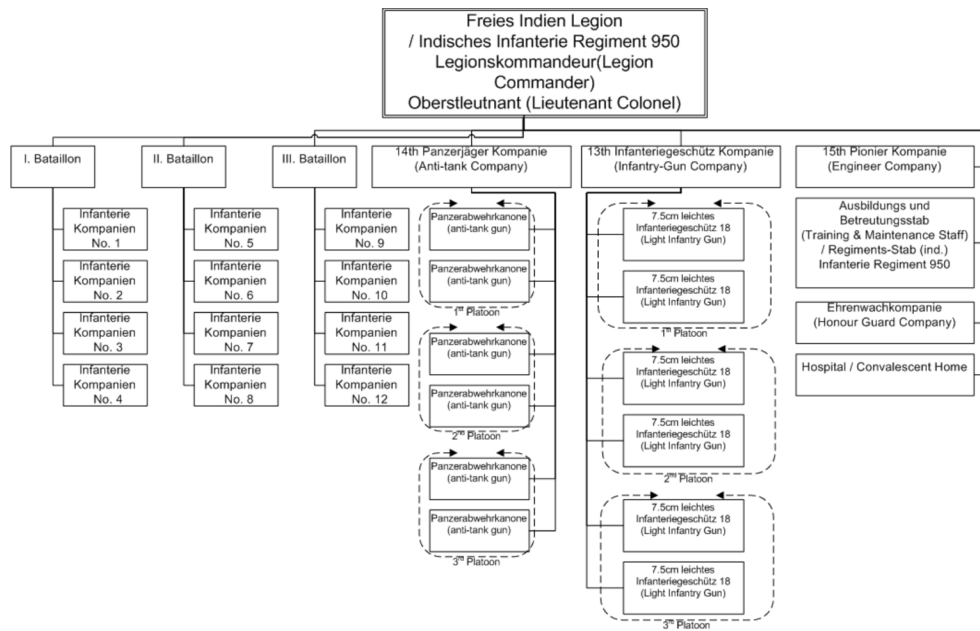


Figure 3: ORBAT of the I.R. 950 (ind) / Freies Indien Legion in 1943-44

In late 1943 Indian Muslims were considered for recruitment into the 13<sup>th</sup> SS-Freiwilligen-b.h. Gebirgs-Division (Kroatien), (13<sup>th</sup> SS Volunteer Bosnian-Herzegovinian Mountain Division (Croatia) later known as the ‘*Handschar*’ Division) which was in the process of formation from Bosnians of Moslem origin. Whilst Himmler was enthusiastic about the formation of a Moslem SS division, *Obergruppenführer* Gottlob Berger (Head of the SS Head Office) pointed out to him in November 1943 that the Indian Moslems ‘perceive themselves primarily as Indians, the Bosnians as Europeans’ and so the idea was dropped. <sup>6</sup>

- **Badges, Crests, Formation Signs, Flags and Uniforms**

Uniforms were army *feldgrau* (field gray) in winter and German or Italian tropical khaki in the summer. The Sikhs in the Legion were permitted to wear a turban to match the colour of the uniform and others wore the peaked field cap (*einheitsfeldmütze*).

An arm badge in the shape of the shield was worn in German Army style on the right upper arm with three horizontal stripes with the legend ‘Freies Indien’ in black characters on an integral white background above the tricolor. Saffron, white, and green transfer was also used on the left side of their German steel helmets. <sup>7</sup> German army ranks were worn. The collar patch was probably a stylised tiger’s head as shown on the S.S map of February 1945 as being the Indian Legion. <sup>8</sup>



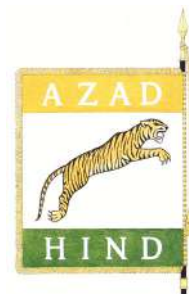
Arm Patch of Free Indian Legion



Shield worn on the side of the steel helmet <sup>9</sup>



Collar Patch of *Indische Freiwilligen Legion der Waffen SS*



Regimental Colour

Figure 4: Arm & Collar Badges

- **Decorations**

'Azad Hind' decorations were instituted by Netaji in 1942 in four grades each of which could be awarded for 'Merit' without swords or "Bravery" with crossed swords. The ribbon was green with white and orange edges. Both Indian and German members of the Legion were eligible to receive the decoration.<sup>10, 11</sup>



Figure 5: Grand Star 'Tiger of India' (*Sher-e-Hind*) neck decoration & 1st Class Star 'Leader in Battle' (*Sardar-e-Jang*) pin-back



Figure 6: 2nd Class Star 'Hero of India' (*Vir-e-Hind*) chest ribbon

Medal 'Martyr of the fatherland', *Shahid-e-Bharat* (India's fight for freedom) on a grid background. It was bestowed on all soldiers of the legion who had fallen in battle and was in bronze, silver or gilt.



Figure 7: Medal 'Martyr of the fatherland' (*Shahid-e-Bharat*), obverse, a lion's head above AZAD HIND and a fleur-de-lys and reverse were the German words '*Indlens Freiheits Kampf*'

The decoration was produced by Rudolf Souval of Vienna and his name plus Wien VII appears on the reverse. The presentation case was light brown with a gold lion's head on the lid.<sup>12</sup>

## Battaglione Azad Hindoustan – Italy

- **Recruitment and Training**

During the campaign in North Africa, several hundred Arab, Indian, and Tunisian prisoners were taken by the Axis forces. Three centres were setup in Italy between Sep 1941 and Jan 1942 to exploit the anti-colonial sentiments of the prisoners. These were *Centro A* (for Arabs), *Centro I* (for Indians) and *Centro*

T (for Tunisians). At *Centro I a Battaglione for Aazad Hindoustan* (Free Indian Battalion) was formed in April–May 1942 with POWs and a handful of political refugees.<sup>13</sup> It was located along the Via Casilina, 6 miles from Rome, it was initially disguised as a POW camp, until given its official designation on 15 July 1942. The volunteers were mostly second-line personnel, seriously undermined any possible development of the Centro Militare ‘I’ and the unit were competing for manpower with the German-raised Legion Freies Indien.<sup>14</sup>



**Figure 8: An Indian Naik addressing fellow prisoners of war at the Avezzano camp, spring 1942**

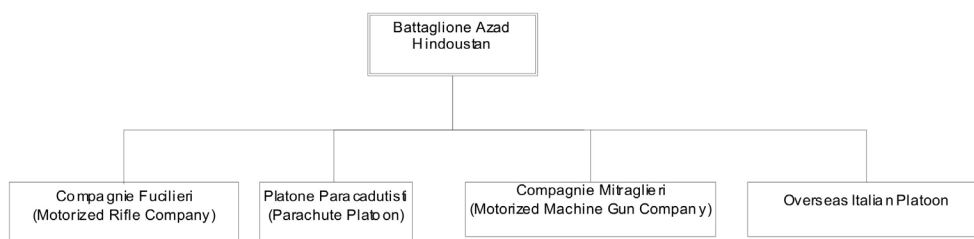
Despite a series of recruitment drives in POW camps in Italy, the strength till 31 August 1942 was just 193. There were four Italian officers and 11 other ranks, in three platoons. The Indian’s received basic infantry training and 44 selected men were sent in mid-September 1942 to the Parachute School at Tarquinia. Some other promising individuals were sent to North Africa, where they co-operated with Italian field intelligence personnel.<sup>15</sup>

According to the ORBAT of the *Italian Raggruppamento Frece Rosse* (Red Arrows Group) in August 1942, a *Battaglione Azad Hindoustan* from Ex-Centro I was under its command. The units were intended to be delivered behind enemy lines by various means including infiltration on the ground, via submarine and by parachute.<sup>16</sup>

At the end of September 1942 there were a total of 266 Indian volunteers, the peak strength of the Centro ‘I’ which formed one para trooper, one machine-gun and four rifle platoons. In October the Centro ‘I’ was transferred for advanced training to Tivoli, reorganized and renamed *Battaglione Azad Hindoustan*. It had 21 officers, 12 NCOs and 34 national soldiers and 5 NCOs and 185 Indian soldiers. Between 21–30 October the battalion took part in field exercises near Tivoli and was visited by Netaji on 7 November 1942.<sup>17</sup>

• **ORBAT of the Battaglione Azad Hindoustan in October 1942<sup>18</sup>**

The Free Indian Battalion was composed of two motorised companies (one each rifle & Machine Gun) and one Paratroop Platoon of Indians. plus one Overseas Italian Platoon composed of Political refugees and Italians who had lived in either India or Persia. This was like an Italian Infantry Battalion which had three rifle companies and a Machine Gun Company comprising of three platoons each.



**Figure 9: ORBAT of the Battaglione Azad Hindoustan in October 1942**

On 10 November 1942 a week after the Axis defeat at El Alamein a passive mutiny took place during the rollcall, when the Indians did not show up. They were immediately disarmed and were then sent to POW camps and *Battaglione Azad Hindoustan* was disbanded.<sup>19</sup>

- **Badges, Crests, Formation Signs and Uniforms**

The soldiers were kitted with Italian Army tropical uniform ‘*sahariana tunics*’ with turbans for Sikhs and khaki cotton field cap for others. Collar patches with three vertical stripes in the saffron (orange), white and green colours, the saffron stripe being closest to the wearer’s neck. Italians serving with the formation were distinguished by stars on their collar patches. The parachute trained wore their collar patches above paratroop pattern patches, as well as the paratroop badge depicting an open yellow parachute embroidered with rayon thread on the left upper arm. The Indian volunteers were not given a dagger and the use of the Beretta M38A was casual, given the lack of any ammunition pouches.<sup>20</sup>



Figure 10: Shoulder & Collar Patches



Figure 11: Crest, Chest Badge & Arm Badges of the Azad Hind Fauj

The collar patches and the left sleeve shield worn before the introduction of the Frece Rosse badge, were the colours of saffron, white, and green. The shoulder belt of the standard bearer was in the colours of saffron, white, and green. The unofficial flag of the Free Indian Battalion is depicted in the picture on the left.<sup>21</sup> It had no decorations authorised as it was disbanded in just over seven months of its raising.

## Indian National Army / Azad Hind Fauj – Japan

- **Recruitment and Training**

In June 1943 Netaji arrived from Germany and took over the Indian Independence League and the resurrected INA as commander in chief. He also became President, Premier, Foreign Secretary, and Defence Minister of the ‘Provisional Government of Free India’. Netaji’s recruiting campaign for the INA

was conducted among 70,000 Indian POWs held by the Japanese and Indian rubber plantation labour in Malaya. In February 1944 Netaji moved INA headquarters to Rangoon and continued recruiting from there.<sup>22</sup>

The official total strength was approximately 40,000. Recruits were drawn both from the Indian POW and from the Indian civilians of the South-East Asia. The Azad Hind Government had aimed to recruit and train 3,00,000 men.

The INA developed a strongly secular political identity inclusive of all religious groups, based on a vision of an undivided independent India. All were treated on the same footing irrespective of religion, caste, creed, or colour. Officers and men ate in common plates from one kitchen and drank from common mugs. They kept the picture of India, their common Motherland always before their eyes and saluted with 'JAI HIND'. Officers and men of the INA were regularly paid in cash by the Government of Azad Hind besides being provided with food, clothing, etc. The rates of pay were fixed as Colonel Rs. 400; Major Rs. 180; Captain Rs. 125; Lieutenants Rs. 80 per mensem.

The AHF had opened four training centres where 7,000 soldiers could be trained at one time. For officers there were training centres at Singapore and Rangoon from where some 1,500 cadets graduated during the war.<sup>23</sup> Interpreters Training Centres were opened at Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and Saletar and new army training camp was opened at Ipoh.<sup>24</sup>

Additionally, Cadet Officers of INA or the 'Tokyo Cadets', were selected for officer training in Japan at the height of WWII. They travelled on the Japanese passenger cum cargo ship, Ural Maru. She departed Singapore for Takao in Taiwan and had called on Kuching and Miri in Japanese occupied Sarawak, where she loaded Japanese wounded soldiers, nurses, other passengers and 10 INA cadets. These cadets were mainly Malayas of Indian parentage, Narayanan, Bishan Singh, Navaratnam, Ghosh, Robert Prosper, Ranjit Das, Gandhi Das, Dutta, Bimol Deb and Ramesh S Benegal (Burmese of Indian parentage). Ural Maru was torpedoed and sunk on 27<sup>th</sup> September 1944 in the South China Sea by the American submarine USS Flasher (SS-249) approximately 150 nautical miles west of Luzon. Bishan Singh died during the attack and late Air Commodore Ramesh S. Benegal, MVC, AVSM went on to become an officer in the Indian Air Force.<sup>25</sup>

A women's Regiment was raised in July 1943 under the command of Captain Mrs. Laxmi Sawaminathan. The members of this Regiment were drawn from the Indian civilian population of the South-East Asia. The Regiment was named after the Rani of Jhansi (RJR) and consisted of 856 women trained for active service. Mrs. Sawaminathan, who was a doctor in Singapore prior to her enlistment as the Captain of the Regiment played a unique part in inspiring and organising the women into Red Cross units, relief squads, ambulance workers and emergency nurses.<sup>26</sup>

Two rallies were held on 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> July 1943. The 6<sup>th</sup> July rally was attended by Prime Minister Tojo of Japan, who promised full cooperation with the independence movement. Netaji had called for every physically fit Indian civilian to enlist in the INA and above all for women to join the RJR. Dr. Sawaminathan took the lead in organising the women's unit, she planned a guard of honour of armed women as a surprise for Netaji in the 12<sup>th</sup> July rally. She quickly managed to locate twenty women to form an honour guard and they were drilled by INA officers for several hours over the next two days, using heavy .303 rifles. There was no time to have uniforms made, so they wore white saris and carried the rifles as they paraded and presented arms to Netaji. Fifteen of the twenty women from the guard of

honour were able to enlist, the others were unable to join as they had small children or dependents. On the evening of 21<sup>st</sup> October 1943, Netaji formally opened the RJR Camp. 150 women had already signed up and soon grew to 300 including 50 nurses. They were assigned 8-hour shifts in the military hospital and given additional military training.<sup>27</sup>

Training began for every member of the camp at 6 a.m. with the hoisting of the Azad Hind Flag followed by forty-five minutes of physical training. Breakfast was served at 7.30 a.m., a mug of tea and some bread, followed by two hours of parade ground drills. Each Rani was responsible for her uniform therefore the next two hours were reserved for bathing, washing and personal affairs. Lunch was served at noon and consisted of chapatti, rice, vegetable, and lentils. Occasionally, each soldier would get an egg. Then they had another hour of leisure time, followed by two hours of classroom work. After class there were two more hours of physical training, and at 6.30 p.m. the Ranis took down the flag. The singing of 'Vande Mataram' signalled the end of the workday. Dinner was served at 7 p.m. and was the same as lunch. Afterwards, the Ranis gathered to chat, sing, or play music until lights out at 9.30 p.m.<sup>28</sup>

Netaji redefined the roles of the three special groups of INA, brought to Burma in their entirety. The Special service group 'Bahadur' would operate behind enemy lines, carrying out sabotage, espionage and winning over Indian troops. The 'Intelligence Groups' worked in the battle area and the 'Reinforcement Group' oversaw recruitment of Indian prisoners for INA.<sup>29</sup>

Plans for Submarine launched Intelligence Operations to progress AHF's military plans were made by Netaji. Sri Lankans, Indians, and other South Asians domiciled in Malaya and Singapore were recruited and trained for spying missions against the Allies at the intelligence school called the Azad School. In March 1943, four well-trained intelligence operatives Bhagwan Lu, Harbans Lal, Kanwal Singh and Kartar Singh, accompanied N G Swami on the blockade runner S.S. Osorno. On 8<sup>th</sup> December 1943, these personnel together with another 4 trained in Penang under the leadership of SN Chopra sailed towards India onboard a Japanese submarine, I-26. It landed twelve INA operatives with weapons, money, and sophisticated wireless equipment on the Kathiawar coast, southeast of Karachi on 21 December 1943, in an operation codenamed 'Operation Yo'. They had been instructed to split into four pairs and head toward Bengal, the Northwest Frontier, the United Provinces, and Bombay. In January 1944, radio contact was successfully established between AHF operatives in Calcutta and Netaji in Burma. After the successful submarine insertion of December 1943, the I-26 landed another 10 revolutionaries of the INA West of Karachi, in March 1944.<sup>30</sup>

- **ORBAT of the Azad Hind Fauj**

The Azad Hind Fauj was very well constituted and fully organised in every sense of the word; Netaji was the Supreme Commander, who was assisted by a War Council consisting of 11 members<sup>31</sup>

The War Council was established to co-ordinate all activities with a view to producing maximum result, to launch the offensive. The following was the composition of the war council on 21<sup>st</sup> October 1943:<sup>32 33</sup>



1. Colonel J. K. Bhonsle – Chief of Staff & Head Department of Defence / Military Bureau
2. Colonel M. Z. Kiani. – Army Commander
3. Lieutenant Colonel Ehsan Qadir – Recruiting
4. Lieutenant Colonel Aziz Ahmad Khan – Commandant Guerrilla Regiment
5. Lieutenant Colonel Habib-ur-Rehman – Comdt. O.T.S.
6. Lieutenant Colonel Gulzara Singh - Commandant Guerrilla Regiment
7. Sri N. Raghavan – Finance <sup>34</sup>
8. Sri S. A. Ayer – Publicity and Propaganda
9. Sri Parmanand – Supplies <sup>35</sup>
10. Colonel A. C. Chatterji - Secretary
11. Sri A. Yellappa - Co-opted Member.

The Defence Department / Military Bureau as of 17<sup>th</sup> April 1943 as mentioned above was under the charge of Col. J. K. Bhonsle and consisted of the following Branches:<sup>36, 37</sup>

The Military Bureau had G.S., Admin., Provost, M.S, Finance, Legal, Reinforcements, Q.M., Supply & Transport, Training, Ordnance (Technical & Non-Technical) branches amongst others. The detailed ORBAT is depicted as under.

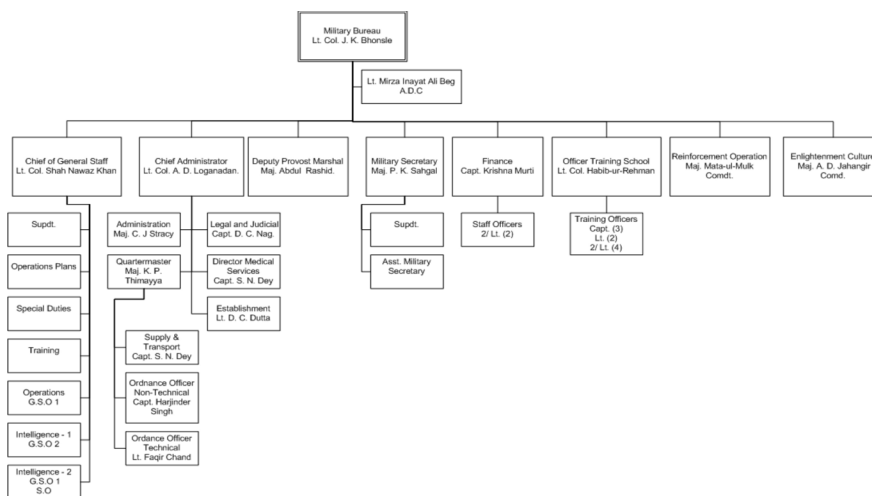


Figure 12: The Defence Department / Military Bureau

The organisation of the Indian National Army as of 17<sup>th</sup> April 1943 was as under: <sup>38</sup>

1. Army Headquarters under the command of Lt. Col. M. Z. Kiani
2. I Hind Field Force Group under the command of Lt. Col. S. M. Hussain
3. Guerrilla Regiments consisting of Brigades:
  - (a) Bose under Lt. Col. Shah Nawaz Khan
  - (b) Gandhi under Lt. Col. I. J. Kiani
  - (c) Azad under Major Gulzara Singh
  - (d) Nehru under Lt. Col. Aziz Ahmad Khan.
4. Intelligence Group under Major S. A. Malik.
5. Bahadur Group under Lt. Col. Burhanud-Din.

The Army also consisted of three Divisions.  
 No. 1 incorporated the Guerrilla Regiments  
 No. 2 composed partly of Indian Military prisoners of war and partly of civilians.  
 No. 3 composed of civilians mostly recruited by the Indian Independence League in Malaya

**Headquarters of Azad Hind Fauz as of 17<sup>th</sup> April 1943**, the Army was under the command of Lieutenant Colonel M. Z. Kiani and consisted of the following branches: <sup>39 40</sup> The Army HQ had three main branches, GS., A&Q and Medical.

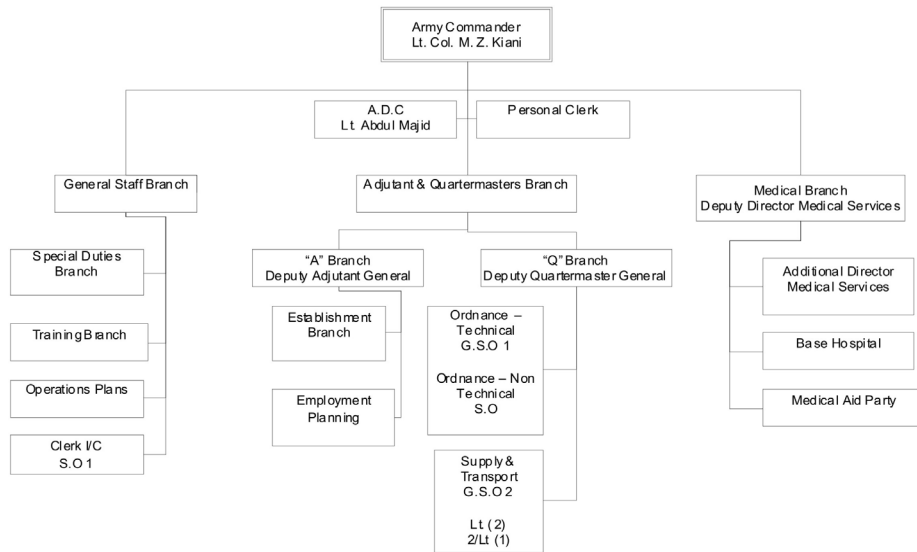


Figure 13: HQ of Azad Hind Fauz

- **ORBAT of the Guerrilla Regiments as of 17th April 1943<sup>41</sup>**

Each Guerrilla Regiment had 3 Battalions akin to the Japanese Army organisation with Intelligence and Special Bahadur Group under direct command of the Guerrilla Regiment Group.

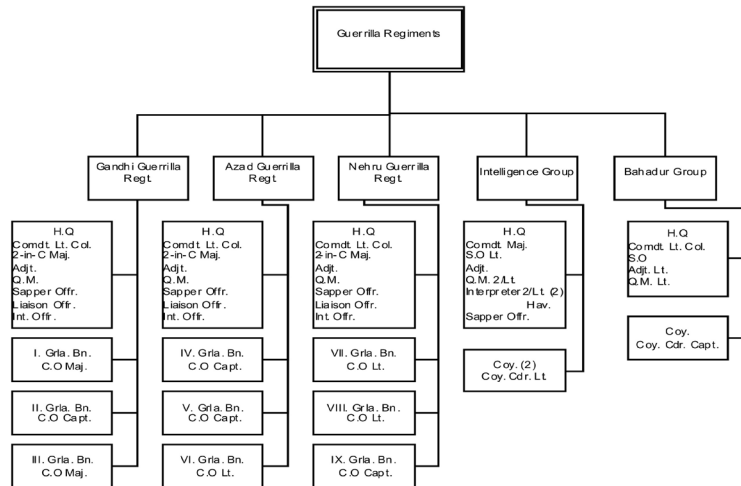


Figure 14: ORBAT of the Guerrilla Regiments

ORBAT of the Azad Hind Fauz as of 4th February 1944 as it went into action.<sup>42</sup> This ORBAT had considerably changed from April 1943 to cater to the changing needs of the Battle.

- Assam Front One Division
- Rangoon One Division
- Malaya One Division

Half the soldiers in these Divisions were Indian POW and the other half were Indian civilians. There was no Japanese soldier or officer in them. Each of these Divisions had four brigades. The 1<sup>st</sup> Division which fought in Imphal and in Arakan (Assam Front) comprised of the following brigades:

1. Subhas : Commander Colonel Shah Nawaz Khan, 3,200 men.
2. Gandhi : Commander Colonel I. Z. Kiani, 2,800 men.
3. Azad : Commander Colonel Gulzara Singh, 2,800 men.
4. Nehru : Commander Colonel G. S. Dhillon, 3,000 men.

INA strength in March 1945 was estimated to have declined to about 35,000. Since February, when at Netaji's request the INA was given a defensive position on the Irrawaddy, its troops, in units varying in strength from 200 to 3000, had surrendered on a large scale.<sup>43</sup>

- **Units and formations of the Azad Hind Fauz operating as of 1<sup>st</sup> March 1945**<sup>44</sup>

- |                                 |                                      |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Advance Div. HQ.             | 14. Main Div. H. Qrs.                |
| 2. HQ No. 1 Infantry Regiment.  | 15. 1/1 Infantry Regiment.           |
| 3. 2/1 Infantry Regiment.       | 16. 1/2 Infantry Regiment.           |
| 4. HQ No. 2 Infantry Regiment.  | 17. 3/1 Infantry Regiment.           |
| 5. 2/2 Infantry Regiment.       | 18. 3/2 Infantry Regiment.           |
| 6. HQ No. 4 Guerrilla Regiment. | 19. 1/4 Guerrilla Regiment.          |
| 7. 2/4 Guerrilla Regiment.      | 20. 3/4 Guerrilla Regiment.          |
| 8. No. 1 Anti-Tank Coy.         | 21. No. 2 Div. Signals.              |
| 9. No. 2 A.B.O.D.               | 22. No.2 Field Park Support Company  |
| 10. No. 2 M.E.S.                | 23. Pt. Amn. Dump.                   |
| 11. No. 2 Workshop.             | 24. No.2 Signal Intelligence Section |
| 12. P.O.L. Section.             | 25. Medical Aid Party.               |
| 13. No. 4 Engineer Coy.         | 26. Dett. M.P.                       |

It is worth noting that some regiments were reorganised to address the changing character of war.

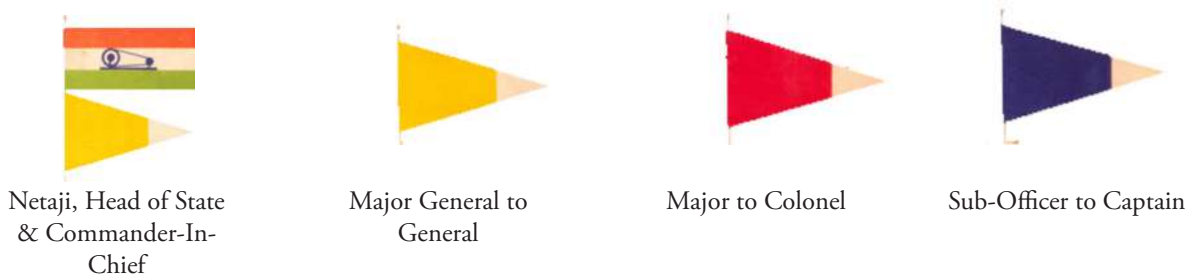
- **Badges, Crests, Formation Signs and Uniforms**

INA troops were dressed in Khaki, officers, and men of the INA wore a badge about 1/2 inches in length and 1 inch in width on the left side of the forage cap. On the top of the badge were inscribed the word 'INA' with a map of India in the centre. At the bottom of the badge were inscribed in Roman script: "*Ittifaq, Etmad and Qurbani*" - Unity, Confidence and Sacrifice. They also used to wear another badge on the right side of their uniform. It was 1 inch by 1 inch in size and was the tricolour of India. A locket-sized badge bearing a miniature of Netaji was worn on the left side of the uniform by all members of the INA.<sup>45</sup>



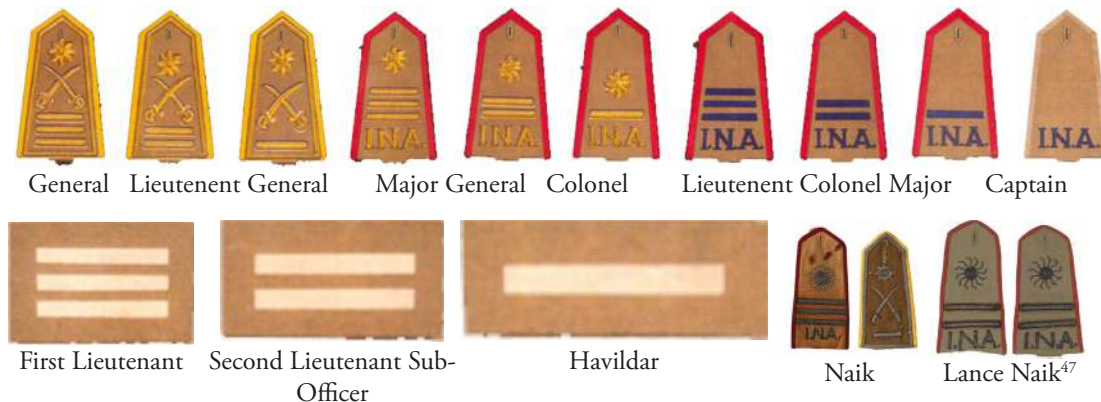
**Figure 15: Crest, Chest Badge & Arm Badges of the Azad Hind Fauj**

The INA car flags were displayed on officer's staff cars. <sup>46</sup>



**Figure 16: The INA Car Flags**

The officers of the INA. had the distinguishing ranks on their shoulder straps. The epaulettes were of different colours and make, to match with the different dress orders. E.g., Olive Green, Khakhi Drill etc.



**Figure 17: Original Cloth Epaulettes**

Officers and men of the various Guerrilla Brigades had arm badges of different colours. Each Brigade was assigned a particular colour for the formation sign in the following order: <sup>48</sup>

1. Bose Brigade - Red and green
2. Gandhi Brigade - Green
3. Nehru Brigade - Brown
4. Azad Brigade - White

Each battalion was assigned the colour identical to that of its Brigade for the purpose of the formation signs, but the men had to wear them according to the under mentioned order of their shapes: <sup>49</sup>

- No. 1 Battalion - Round
- No. 2 Battalion - Triangular
- No. 3 Battalion - Square

There were different Formation Signs for Military HQ, M.T, Workshop, Bodyguard, Military Police, different divisions etc.<sup>50</sup> A few of them have been depicted below:





Figure 18: Formation Signs for Military H.Q.

### • Decorations

The order of precedence for decorations awarded to the members of the AHF by the Provincial Government of Azad Hind were: <sup>51</sup>

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Sabed-e-Bharat</i></li> <li>2. <i>Sher-e-Hind</i></li> <li>3. <i>Sadar-e-Jung</i></li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. <i>Vir-e-Hind</i></li> <li>5. <i>Tamgha-e-Bahaduri</i></li> <li>6. <i>Tamgha-e-Shatru Nash</i></li> </ol> |
|---|---|

There were two classes of the ‘*Sadar-e-Jung*’ Medal according to the standard of individual bravery, devotion to duty and leadership exhibited in the field. The awards of ‘*Sadar-e-Jung*’ medal made up till now will be of Class I of that medal. Members of the AHF, who render meritorious and commendable service in the field, but fall short of qualifying for a decoration, were granted the certificate ‘*Sanad-e-Bahaduri*’, by the Head of the State Provincial Government of Azad Hind.

The award of ‘*Tamgha-e-Shatru Nash*’ was in the following classes: -

Class II: To be awarded to those members of the AHF who kill or capture and British or American Officer or other rank either in single combat or in a group fight where qualities of individual initiative and individual bravery come into play.

Class I: To be awarded to those members of the AHF who exhibit gallantry and devotion to duty in killing or capturing and British or American Officer or other rank either in single combat or in a group fight where qualities of individual initiative and individual bravery come into play.

‘*Tamgha-e-Shatru Nash*’ took precedence after ‘*Tamgha-e-Bahaduri*’. This medal may be awarded to a member of the AHF in addition to any other decoration for which he may have qualified. ‘*Tamgha-e-Shatru Nash*’ was also to be awarded posthumously.

The Provincial Government of Azad Hind had decided that the medal ‘*Tamgha-e-Shatru Nash*’ could be awarded to any person other than a member of the AHF, weather outside India or inside, who, while participating in or helping the war of India’s Liberation, qualifies himself for the decoration by fulfilling the conditions laid down above. This medal may also be awarded to any person outside India or inside who helps the prosecution of India’s War of Liberation by killing or capturing alive any British or American other than Army Personnel, who is clearly an enemy in the path of India’s freedom.

The colours of all ribbons were ‘Orange’, ‘White’ and ‘Green’ in equal proportions. <sup>52</sup>



Figure 19: Ribbons

- **War Memorial**



Figure 20: Netaji laying the foundation stone of the INA Memorial



Figure 17: The completed INA memorial



Figure 18: Demolished INA memorial

Netaji laid the foundation of the INA War memorial on 08 July 1945 at the Esplanade, (Connaught Drive) Singapore to commemorate the 'Unknown Warrior' of the INA. The words inscribed upon the War Memorial were the motto of the INA: Unity (*Etihad*), Faith (*Etmad*) and Sacrifice (*Kurbani*).

After the allied victory, the INA war memorial was demolished at the orders of Lord Mountbatten the then Viceroy of India on 06 September 1945 at 1800 Hrs.

The base of the memorial was rigged with a line tied around it and the Indian Engineers positioned guncotton charges. Major Donald Brunt of the Royal Engineers checked the fuses and the charges exploded. Troops of the 17 Dogra Regiment pushed over the monument (marked 'Itmad' on its larger face) with poles. A Naik of 5th Indian Division, with bayonet fitted Mk 5 Sten gun, stood guard. Then Brigadier Patrick McKerron in a kilt approached and took the salute from a guard of honour of the 17 Dogra Regiment.<sup>53</sup>

The National Heritage Board of Singapore erected a site marker in 1995 to commemorate the site of the old INA War memorial on the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II.

## Conclusion

Thus, the AHF was fully volunteer army having a full cycle of recruitment, training, and deployment, with scope for promotions. There was ample importance placed on pay, welfare, medical treatment etc.

The policy decisions were taken by the Defence Department / Military Bureau which had a Military HQ under it. The Bureau had different sub departments with officers dealing with Technical & Non-Technical Ordnance, giving importance to the appropriate use and utilisation of technology. The Military HQ looked after organisation and reorganisation of the forces under its command to make AHF an agile force to cater to the changing needs of battle. The Army HQ was lean with principal staff officers handling multiple functions.

As with any other organised fighting force of a sovereign nation AHF had its own Uniforms, Ranks, Badges, Crests, Flags, Decorations and Formation Signs to distinguish personnel assigned to different formations.

The force included fighting arms such as Infantry, Armoured and Artillery with supporting arms of Military Police, Mechanical Transport, Medical etc. There was special emphasis on intelligence, deception, and special operations, as in the recent past these have been the mainstay of national security operations.

The War memorial of the AHF was conceived almost as soon as the AHF entered active operations proving the high regard and honour to the fallen comrades, whereas in independent India it took till January 2019 to establish a National War Memorial or *Rashtriya Samar Smarak*.

Clearly Netaji beyond doubt had the foresight to ensure that the AHF was adept in Joint & Combined operations as well as Civil Military fusion (CMF). Thus, AHF was torchbearer for CME, Joint and Combined operations which, is only now efficient and effective in India.

## End Notes

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