

Studying a Campaign: KB MISSION 1942 - Glossary

25-pdr – 25 Pounder artillery piece - the main artillery gun used by Australian and British forces. Each shell was about 8.8cm in width and weighed 25 pounds (around 11.5 kg).

2 i/c – Abbreviation for 'Second in Command'

A/A – Anti Aircraft gun, a weapon designed to shoot at attacking aircraft, though some could be used against tanks and infantry

A/Tk (or A/T) – Anti Tank gun, a weapon designed to penetrate tank armour.

Barrage – a sustained a continuous period of firing or shelling an enemy unit.

Bde – *Brigade*: a fighting unit of 2 to 3 battalions (3000-5000 soldiers)

Bn – *Battalion*: a fighting unit of (usually) up to 800 soldiers.

Bren – a type of Light Machine Gun

C/A – *Counter attack*; i.e. a reserve was often kept aside to counter attack an enemy force when the opportunity presented itself.

Calibre – the width of a bullet, larger calibres had more destructive power

Capt – Short for *Captain*, the army rank for the commander of a Company.

Comd (Comdrs) – Shortened versions of *Commander* and *Commanders*

Coy – *Company*: a fighting unit of 100-120 soldiers (four platoons)

CO – *Commanding Officer*: in the War Diary this would usually be the battalion commander. Sometimes also used as '**OC**' as in 'Officer Commanding'.

Cpl – short for *Corporal*, the rank of a section leader.

Feature – a term used for any particular geographical feature, such as a hill or a building etc.

Flank – the side or rear of a defensive position (to be 'outflanked' is to have an enemy force either beside you or behind you)

Fld (or Flds) – abbreviation for *Field* or *Fields*: often used as 'Field/s of fire', an area cleared of vegetation and cover to enable weapons to fire more effectively at approaching enemy troops.

HE – *High Explosive*, a type of weapon designed for use against enemy infantry or buildings

HMG – *Heavy Machine Gun*, a weapon that shoots large calibre bullets

HQ - *Headquarters*

Inf. - short for '*Infantry*'. Foot soldiers that sometimes (if available) made use of motorised transport but usually fought on foot.

I.O. – *Intelligence Officer*: the officer whose job it was to learn about the opposing forces

Lieut – Short for *Lieutenant*, the rank given to the commander of a platoon.

L/Cpl – *Lance Corporal* (the rank of a section leader or his second-in-command)

MG – *Machine Gun*

M.O. – *Medical Officer*; a military doctor always of officer rank (i.e. usually a Captain or a Major)

Mortar - a type of weapon that sends its shells high into the air to land directly on top of enemy positions.

Muzzle Flash – the brief flash at the end of the barrel of a gun upon being fired

NCO – *Non-Commissioned Officer* (the ranks of Lance Corporal, Corporal and Sergeant) – as opposed to Commissioned Officers, those from the rank of Lieutenant upwards.

O.P. – *Observation Post*, a position from which artillery observers direct and spot artillery fire.

O.R.s – *Other ranks*: usually soldiers who were not officers (privates, corporals and sergeants)

Perimeter – the forward edge of a defensive position (the ‘frontline’)

Platoon – a group of 3/4 *sections* (usually 30 to 40 soldiers)

Pl. – abbreviation for *Platoon*

Posn (or Posns) – Abbreviation for *Position* or *Positions*

Primer – the part of a grenade that sets off the explosive charge within

Pte – Short for *Private*, the lowest rank in the army (an ordinary soldier with no authority)

RAAF – Royal Australian Air Force

RAP – *Regimental Aid Post*; the staff that the MO has to assist him (orderlies, stretcher bearers etc.)

Rifle – the basic weapon used by most Australian infantrymen. Standard issue was the Lee Enfield .303

RSM – *Regimental Sergeant Major*, the highest ranking sergeant in a battalion: would usually serve as an assistant or advisor to the battalion commander.

Recce (or Recced) – (pronounced ‘*recky*’) the reconnaissance of enemy positions, usually through patrols and observations

Section – the basic fighting unit (usually 8 to 12 soldiers). The equivalent US/European term is ‘squad’.

Sgt – Short for *Sergeant*, the rank above Corporal (usually second in command to a Lieutenant in a platoon)

Sqn-Ldr – *Squadron Leader*, an air force rank.

S.T. Grenades – Sticky grenades designed to ‘stick’ to the armour of a tank (from ‘*Type 74 Sticky Type Grenade*’)

Tps – abbreviation for *troops*: soldiers/infantrymen

TSMG – abbreviation for *Thompson Sub-Machine Gun*: This weapon was good for close combat fighting, though of less use at long distances.

Yds – *Yards*, a measurement unit just short of a metre (about 90cm)

Table 1: Basic Australian Army Structure (Note: troop strengths are rarely exact)

Organisation	Strength (usually)	Commanded by (usually)
Army	Two to four Corps	General
Corps	30,000 or more - Two to four divisions	Lieutenant General
Division	10,000 - 20,000	Major General
Brigade	2,500 - 5,000 – 3 (or 4) battalions	Brigadier
Battalion	550 – 1000 - 4 (or 5) companies	Lieutenant Colonel
Company	100 – 225 - 4 (or 5) platoons	Captain (or Major)
Platoon	30 – 40 - 3 sections	Lieutenant
Section	8 - 12	Corporal/Sergeant