

Indian 8th Division: An Outline History



<http://www.bharat-rakshak.com/LAND-FORCES/Army/Badges-Divisional.html>

1914

A Kitchner division. Remained in India during the Great War.

- Lucknow (22nd) Brigade
- Allahabad Brigade
- Presidency Brigade
- Fyzabad Brigade

1939-40

- 17th Infantry Brigade
- 18th Infantry Brigade
- 19th Infantry Brigade

1941

- 18th Infantry Brigade
- 24th Infantry Brigade
- 25th Infantry Brigade

1942

In February the division had its HQ at Mosul.

- 17th Infantry Brigade (Mosul)
- 18th Infantry Brigade (Mosul)
- 19th Infantry Brigade (Bubqaq)

Persia and Iraq Force (PAIFORCE). In September 1942 the

division was headquartered at Kirkuk-Mosul with just one brigade but with a full complement of division troops. The division had its HQ at Kirkuk. It was under Indian 21st Corps, itself a part of British 10th Army.

- 19th Infantry Brigade (Mosul)

1943

The division was slated for transfer to Iran, with 10th Army, to meet the expected German spring offensive through the Caucasus into northern Iran. The Germans aimed to seize the northern Iran oilfields. As is known to history, the great German offensives of 1942 were halted by the Red Army; by the end of 1942 it was clear the Germans were being pushed back and could not mount the spring offensive into Iran.

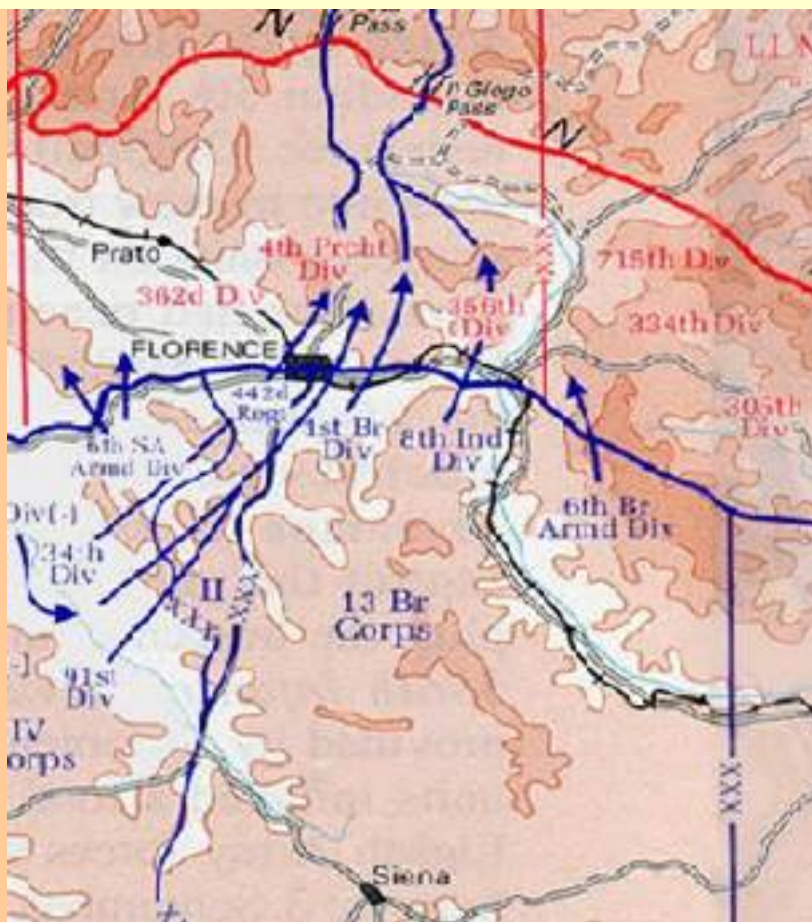
Thus, 10th Army began giving up divisions to Middle Eastern Command, and 8th Division transferred to the Western Desert under British 8th Army.

1944

Cassino offensive starts May 11.

Approach to the Gothic Line: Operation Olive, August 25th.

- 19th Infantry Brigade
- 21st Infantry Brigade
- ? Infantry Brigade



<http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg/brochures/nap/map1.JPG>

13 British Corps holds the right flank of US General Mark Clark's 5th Army. US II and IV Corps are to the left (west). To the east is British 8th Army, with the other two Indian divisions, 4th and 10th.

Indian 8th Division is facing the German 356th Division with the task of breaking through, linking up with British 1st Division, and advancing on the Gigo Pass and the German Gothic Line. The line itself is marked in red. Eventually a US division captures the pass.

German divisions were, by this stage of the war, usually the strength of brigades. 356th Division was a new formation, formed in June 1943 and which saw its first battle in the above operation. Nonetheless, Germany had been at war for 5 years, and its divisions were still formed of hardened veterans led by superb officers and NCOs. The German mountain positions were well-positioned and fortified, and required extraordinary measures to breach. A major reason 8th Division was able to break through was that by this time, Allied airpower was overwhelming, and seriously crippled the German ability to move reserves to where they were most needed. This restricted a capability the Germans excelled at above all armies, and which

was they were so hard to defeat even though the Allies had every advantage of manpower, equipment, supplies, vehicles, armor, and airpower.



AN EXAMPLE OF A BEAUTIFULLY CONSTRUCTED GERMAN CAMOFLAGED BUNKER

<http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg/brochures/nap/72-34.htm>

1945-46

Disbanded

1962

Reraised as 8th Mountain Division, to replace 23rd Infantry Division on CI duty for the Northeast.

1971

In action in Eastern Sector (east of River Megha) during Bangladesh Campaign under HQ IV Corps. GOC Major-General Krishna Rao, latter Chief of Army Staff.

- 59th Mountain Brigade (3 battalions)
- 81st Mountain brigade (3 battalions)
- 1st East Bengal Brigade (two battalions)
- 5 BSF battalions

1972-1990

Northeast Counterinsurgency.

This division has the greatest number of counterinsurgency battalion/years of any army in the world.

In 1972, it controlled 36 battalions – a reinforced corps worth of infantry – for CI operations in the Northeast.

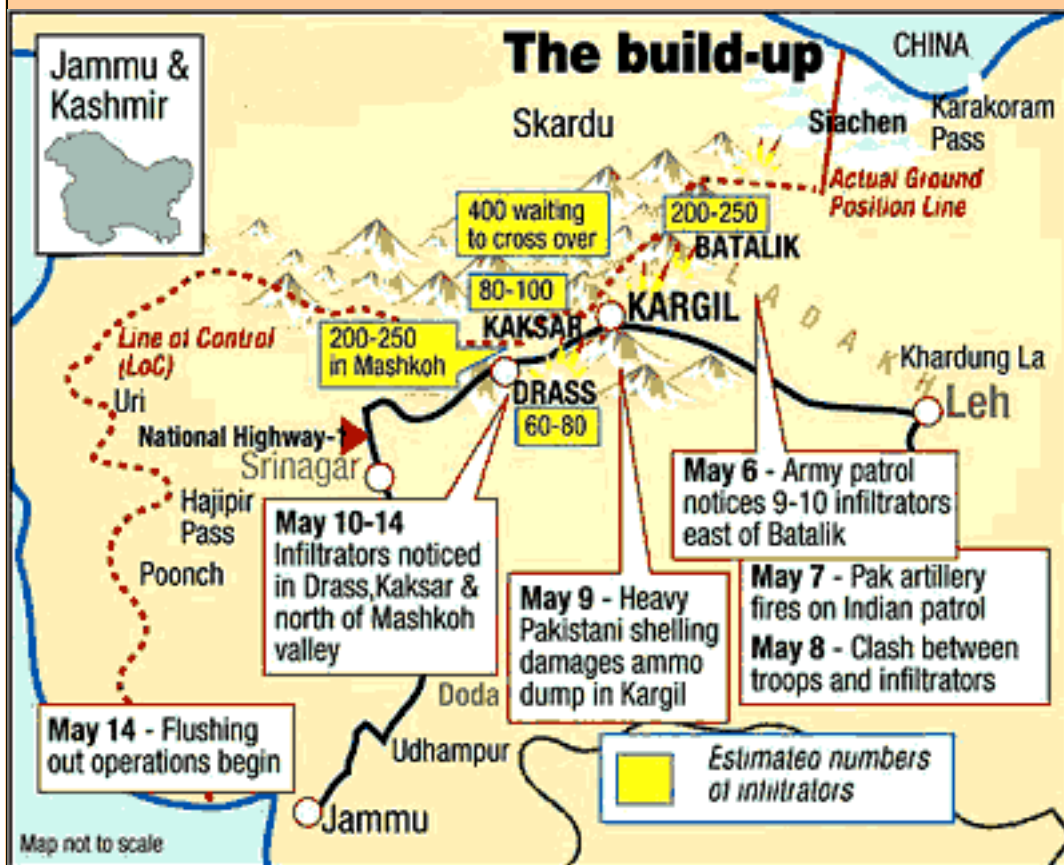
1986

- 56th Mountain Brigade (6 battalions)
- 59th Mountain Brigade
- 81st Mountain Brigade

1991-99

Kashmir Counterinsurgency, HQ Sharifabad.

1999



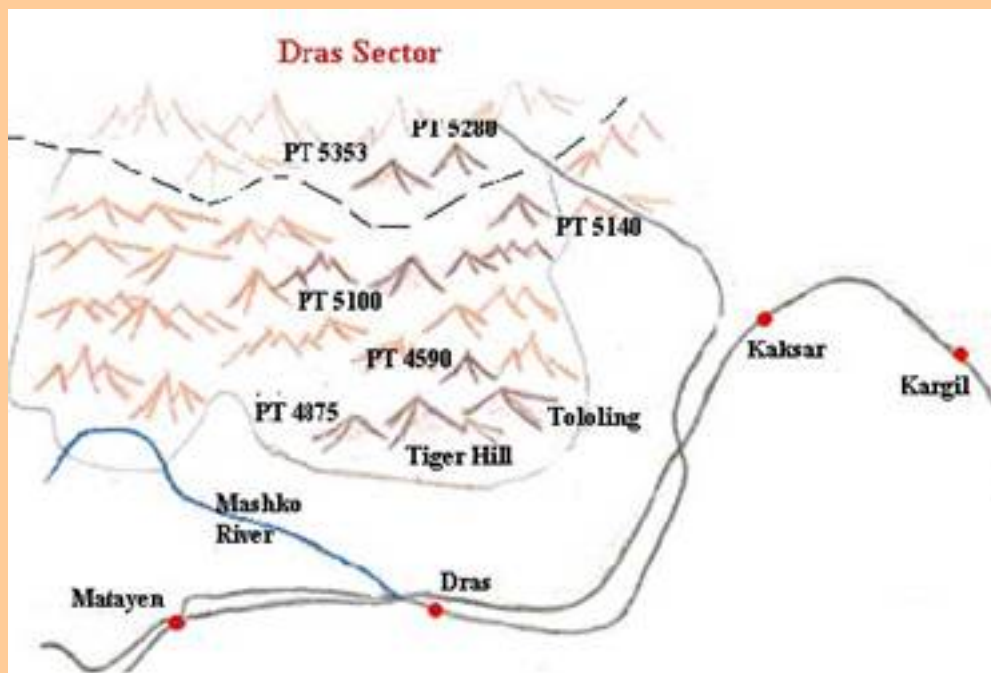
WE SUSPECT THE ORIGINAL SOURCE OF THIS MAP IS AN INDIAN PUBLICATION

<http://www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/research/kargil/krg3.gif>

The division shifts June 1 to Dras for the Kargil War. Brigades we've identified with the division include:

- 50th (independent) Parachute Brigade – Gumri (released

- from AHQ reserve, arrives June 12)
- 56th Mountain Brigade – Matayan (Dras Mushkoh sector), arrives May 16; brigade is normally part of the division)
- 70th Infantry Brigade – Dras (ex-3rd Infantry Division, arrives May 3 from Ganderbal, where it was on temporary assignment for the CI campaign)
- 79th Mountain Brigade – Mushkoh Sector (ex 28th Division, May 24 arrives, frees 56th Brigade for offensive operations)
- 121st Independent Infantry Brigade (ex-3rd Infantry Division). Commanded by Brigadier Surinder Singh.
- 192nd Mountain Brigade – ex 2nd Division, on CI operations in Valley; arrives June 26th.



www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/research/kargil/index.asp

Well over 30 infantry battalions were assigned to the division at one point or another during the Kargil War. The division also had the heaviest concentration of artillery ever given to an Indian Army formation, with over 10 regiments. Total division strength exceeded 30,000.



http://news.bbc.co.uk/olmedia/350000/images/_353729_guns150.jpg

Two firing batteries at Dras. The guns are situated very close together, but level terrain was at a premium, and perhaps they were out of Pakistan counter-battery range or observation.

1999-Present

Assigned to XIV Corps. Area of Responsibility is from Matayan to west of the Siachin.