**Transcript - Lieutenant Gordon Hughes, Rifle Company Officer of 22 Column, 2nd Battalion, the Queen’s Own Royal Regiment, British Army**

**Warning: This transcript contains descriptions of death and warfare**

**All narration and voices are provided by actors.**

**NARRATOR**

The brainchild of Major-General Orde Wingate, Special Force, otherwise known as the Chindits, acted as long-range penetration units, specialising in ambushing and disrupting Japanese activities in Burma.

In early 1944, Lieutenant Gordon Hughes, Rifle Company Officer of the 2nd Battalion, the Queen’s Own Royal Regiment, belonged to 22nd Column and took part in a large-scale incursion behind enemy lines.

**GORDON**

“It was 20 January 1944 when we left Ledo on that impossible march through the Patkai Hills and on to Mahnton. It was the bloodiest march of my war.

It took us three weeks to reach the Chindwin River, averaging a mere two miles a day for much of the time. Valleys where the heat and humidity were unbearable and peaks of 8000 feet with night temperatures just above freezing had us huddled together to keep warm.

Weeks of persistent rain, with the attendant mud; leaches surreptitiously engorging themselves on our limbs already bitten by mosquitoes; mules falling down on steep, slippery slopes and always the thick jungle of hard woods interlaced with tangled and practically impenetrable bamboo undergrowth…

It was about 0300 hours on the third night that we heard the drone of a sizeable convoy approaching from the east. Suddenly, without warning, trucks loaded with troops appeared right in our midst.

Flame from the flame thrower and the staccato rattle of the first medium machine gun enveloping the leading truck opened the action and then, as if not wanting to be outdone, the noise of the other flame thrower and machine gun closed the ambush.

Soon all hell was let loose, as individual platoon members fired into the enemy trying to escape. Dozens of grenades were hurled into the maelstrom and the unintelligible shouts of Japanese Officers trying to rally their men mingled with the piteous cries of the wounded…

It was clear the ambush was a success, with any enemy survivors in complete disarray. Their casualties were heavy, whereas on our part only one officer and two men were killed and a few lightly wounded.”

Source: [Chindit Ambush at Milestone 20, Gordon Hughes – Burma Star Memorial Fund](https://burmastarmemorial.org/archive/stories/1405905-chindit-ambush-at-milestone-20-gordon-hughes?q=Kukri)