Gurkha 200 Special Edition
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www.gurkhabde.com
A word from Col BG
Col James Robinson (Col BG)

2015 is now upon us and this is the year that we celebrate 200 years of Gurkha service to the Crown. We, who are currently serving, have the responsibility to ensure that this celebration is conducted in full Gurkha style and properly recognises the incredible service of those who have gone before. To do this we have created a comprehensive and exciting programme of events which will include all four Gurkha pillars; the serving Brigade, the Gurkha Welfare Trust, the Gurkha Brigade Association and our Gurkha Museum.

It is very fitting that we start in Nepal. The first event was the Attestation Parade for our new intake of 230 recruits which was taken by Maj Gen Ty Urch CBE, COS LF and Col of the Regt QGE. This will be followed by our Gurkha Bhela in Kathmandu being organised by BGN and the RANs which will be a large gathering on the Tundikhel concluding with a musical programme led by the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas with representation from
Nepalese Bands. Regimental associations will have their own regimental gatherings throughout the year including the 2GRRA and 7GRRA Durbars in March.

Our Gurkha 200 programme seeks both to enhance the reputation of the Brigade of Gurkhas and to raise money for the Gurkha Welfare Trust to support their appeal “Our Duty of Care” which aims to raise funds to provide enhanced medical assistance for our ageing welfare pensioners in Nepal.

The major event will be the Gurkha Pageant which will take place on 9 June at the Royal Hospital Chelsea, we hope in front of members of the Royal Family. It will serve as a major fund raising event and we will show off all that is good about our Brigade. It will be supported by much of the serving brigade and will be a fantastic night!

On 30 April in London contingents from all of our cap badges and the Gurkha Band will march to the Gurkha Statue where a short service will take place to recognise formally the unique contribution that Gurkhas have made. In May each of the four major Gurkha units will take turns to conduct Public Duties at Buckingham Place and the Tower of London. Further afield in October, our Gurkhas serving in Brunei will march through the capital, again led by the Gurkha Band.

I hope to see you at the UK Bhela to be held in Aldershot on Saturday 11 July this year. With free entry and parking the day promises to have something for everyone with the chance to see our veterans compete in the Kathmandu Cup as well as the serving inter-brigade Nepal Cup Final. There will be displays by the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas together with the massed Pipes and Drums of the Brigade, food and entertainment stalls, activities to keep children amused, employment stands, a parachute display and more yet to be announced so please, put the date in your diary.

We have two significant expeditions being conducted this year. Our goal is to see a serving Gurkha on the summit of Everest and the Brigade of Gurkhas Everest Team plan their ascent in May. The final team has been selected and they have completed rigorous preparations. Two members of 2GR are also planning to circumnavigate Ellesmere Island; this is a path less travelled and has only been achieved once before. We will follow both expeditions with great interest and we wish them every success.

I do hope that all readers of Parbate will be able to join us at some of these events. You can follow the Gurkha 200 programme on www.gurkhabde.com which, of course, has updated copies of Parbate. I hope you enjoy this Special Edition of Parbate. I look forward to an exciting year when all of us, serving and retired, can be especially proud to be a Gurkha.

Jai Brigade of Gurkhas!
The celebration of 200 years of Gurkha Service to the British Crown (Gurkha 200 or G200) is a significant milestone and one that we can all justifiably be proud of. Our officers and soldiers continue to deliver all that is asked of them on operations, during individual and collective training, sporting events and more; indeed every facet of military life.

The Royal Gurkha Rifles has existed for just over 10% of the proud 200 years of service but has more than lived up to the Gurkha hallmarks: excellence as light infantry troops, discipline, fitness, marksmanship, teamwork and renown as soldiers who will relentlessly pursue their military objectives.

As a Battalion, 1 RGR and the Gurkha Reinforcement Companies that have been provided, has been at the forefront of this delivery. On Operational deployments to all parts of the Balkans, to West Africa and most notably Afghanistan, the same stoic professionalism and relentless pursuit of excellence has been displayed. Reputations have been enhanced and due praise and honour received.

The last decade, in particular, has been characterised by high Operational tempo - and has resulted in a hugely experienced and capable force across the Army. We are battle-hardened, self-confident and alive to the realities of conflict. We intuitively understand security sector reform, offensive action, air-land integration; we have world-leading dismounted close combat equipment and have operated with relative independence and huge capability at company level.

Drawing on all of this 1 RGR is now prepared for high intensity ops, whilst being committed as part of the Adaptable Force to deliver: regional defence engagement tasks, persistent defence engagement with the Royal Brunei Armed Forces, delivery of exercise training support for the MOD, and being “ready” to contribute to regional military ops. 1 RGR is acclimatised, culturally and linguistically aware and ideally suited for Humanitarian Aid Delivery, Non Combatant Evacuation Activity and Peace Support Operations (all recently and robustly tested on Ex TYPHOON KUKRI). We are “Agile, Capable and Deployable”, ready for the next operational challenge, and are doing all this whilst enjoying all that soldiering in the Far East can offer.

British Forces Brunei is unique and 1 RGR are very fortunate to be able to serve as a “band of brothers” with Queen’s Gurkha Signals, Queen’s Gurkha Engineers, Queen’s Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment and members of the Gurkha Staff and Personnel Support Company, as a matter of routine in Brunei.
We look forward to the full raft of celebratory G200 activities and will play our part in the events of National significance in the UK as well as in Australia and New Zealand where we will have opportunity to jointly celebrate the 100th anniversary of the ANZAC landings at Gallipoli with our Regimental affiliates. There will be a week of focussed activity for G200 in Brunei in Oct, where the BG Band will help us and our families celebrate (and complete the full complement of BG cap badges) with our Bruneian counterparts and friends in the Gurkha Reserve Unit.

Jai BG, Jai RGR and 1 RGR
RGR holds a position of great respect and value within the modern Army which we hope to build upon as we look ahead at the opportunities of the future. In our antecedent regiments, 7GR and 10GR, we have been blessed with a heritage that makes us justifiably proud, a heritage that encapsulates the major conflicts of the 20th Century including both world wars, Malaya, Borneo and the Falkland Islands.

In these conflicts our soldiers espoused the ideal of the tough, robust and brave infantry soldier, for which the Gurkha has become synonymous. Many of the commemorations and celebrations that we will enjoy this year will raise money for the soldiers and families of those who have gone before; it is a fitting reminder to us all that their needs still remain, and that we owe it to them to continue that superb support through the GWT. The Brigade is rightly held in high regard and with affection by the British public and this year represents an opportunity for us to prove their support worthy.

Equally this year we mark the achievements of the RGR, and since its formation in 1994 this battalion has deployed soldiers on operations in East Timor, the former Yugoslavia, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan, Iraq and Mali. Our reputation as tough infantry soldiers has been enhanced and I am sure your forefathers would now be justifiably proud of you all.
The Gurkha soldier has also become known in equal measure for his adaptability, compassion, cultural awareness and intelligence, and it is you as the current serving members of the battalion that continue to craft and shape a respected heritage and enviable reputation. I have every confidence that we will continue to do so on operations next year.

So as we look forward, we may do so in the knowledge that the battalion has never been in better shape. We continue to thrive in sport and shooting. Our field craft is of the highest standard as you have demonstrated in numerous patrol competitions and exercises in the last year.

As we operate as part of the Adaptable Force we will start to focus on Defence Engagement activity in South-East Asia, drawing upon all the skills that define you as some of the finest infantrymen in the world.

You now move forward in the knowledge of an outstanding 200 year legacy, and I hope with the knowledge that your contribution to this history is as worthy as that of your predecessors.

Jai Brigade of Gurkhas! Jai RGR! Jai 2RGR!
These immortal words from Maj Gen Perowne during the 1954 capbadging parade for Queen’s Gurkha Signals are our ‘kaida’ and his speech is one from which we take inspiration each year.

From its formation in Malaya, Queen’s Gurkha Signals has played a vital role in
the Brigade of Gurkhas and the wider British Army. The Regiment has excelled on operations around the globe and has morphed from providing analogue radio nets to fully digitised networks at the very forefront of modern communications technology. Its soldiers have benefitted hugely, progressing within some of the most technical trades in the Army, resulting with many holding BScs and some MScs too. They’ve even found time to play football, shoot and complete a Trailwalker or two as well.

On the cusp of G200, looking forward to formation of Seremban Tp at RMAS and celebrating the appointment of one of our own to Lt Col (LE), we are three Sqs strong, with a large training element in Blandford and Catterick, SF elements in Hereford and troops in Nepal and Brunei. We therefore look back to our Malaya and Hong Kong forebears with pride and hope that, as we take the Regiment into 2015, that we can continue to build upon the traditions of excellence they laid down for us.

Jai QG SIGNALS

QGS Laying telephone cable - Malaya 1949/50

QGS soldiers operating wireless, probably early 1970s

The Gurkha Chautara at the National Memorial Arboretum; officially opened by the Princess Royal on 23 Sep 14
When I first had opportunity to serve with The Queen’s Gurkha Engineers during my Gap Year in 1990 based in Perowne Barracks, Hong Kong, I never in my wildest dreams thought I would have the honour to be the 30th Commandant of The Queen’s Gurkha Engineers with the privilege of inputting into the Gurkha 200 Special Edition of Parbate. I feel humbled to have this golden opportunity on the eve of our Bicentenary celebration.

Ever since draw-down from Hong Kong, The QGE has increasingly integrated into the Royal Engineers and its parent unit 36 Engineer Regiment. Since 1994 after moving in to Invicta Park Barracks in Maidstone, The QGE has deployed to almost every operational theatre along-side their British counter parts. Op RESOLUTE (Bosnia & Herzegovina), Op AGRICOLA (Kosovo), Op PALATINE (Sierra Leone), Op FINGLE, Op TELIC 1, 4 & 6, Op HERRICK 7, 9, 12, 16-18 (Afghanistan) to name but a few.

From my own experience, and having deployed on some of these operations with the Gurkha Sappers, I have only admiration for their adaptability, agility, fearlessness and perseverance to achieve the best results, often against impossible odds. Gurkha Sappers have continually...
demonstrated their professionalism built upon a tradition of industriousness and lateral thinking.

Over the coming year, The QGE will play a full part in the commemoration of the 200 years of outstanding service and loyalty the Crown. Not only will The QGE be a significant contributor to all the Brigade of Gurkhas activities, but we are leading a number of ambitious projects of their own.

We are also a significant contributor to the Everest assault - all our activity is focussed firmly on gaining recognition of the unstinting support Gurkhas and Gurkha Sappers have given to the United Kingdom throughout our history.

I am a deeply proud and honoured Commandant

Jai QGE, Jai Gurkha
Queen’s Own Gurkha Logistics Regiment
Lt Col Paul Beaumont QOGLR

Gurkha Transport Regiment driver training during 1960

QOGLR at Camp Bastion prepare to deploy on a six day CLP, provisioning the force by road
Since forming as 28 and 30 Companies Gurkha Army Service Corps in 1958, The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment has come a long way from its early days in Batu Pahat, Malaya. On operations in the Far East, the Gulf, the Balkans, Cyprus, Afghanistan and most recently Sierra Leone, QOGLR soldiers have provided the chefs, drivers, logistic supply specialists and communications specialists so vital to sustain all elements of the Brigade of Gurkhas and wider Defence; they are a force multiplier. Troops have also deployed as force protection teams and dismounted close combat infantry soldiers in Afghanistan, reinforcing their 'soldier first, logistician always' pedigree.

Regimental success on operations, overseas deployments, and in supporting UK contingency commitments endures and achievements on the sports field, at Bisley, and at military skills events remain impressive. ‘Excellence as standard’ is the order of the day, yet these achievements belie the hard work and commitment of our soldiers and officers in ensuring the Regiment’s reputation continues to flourish.

All success is underwritten by professionalism, self-discipline, humility and an irrepressible sense of humour: all characteristics recognisable as true Gurkha traits.

We begin 2015 as we did 1958: supporting operations. ‘Gurkha 200’ provides the perfect opportunity to celebrate our place in the Brigade of Gurkhas and also to reflect with great pride on the hard work and commitment of those who have served before us in the Gurkha Army Service Corps, The Gurkha Transport Regiment, The Queen’s Own Gurkha Transport Regiment and The Queen’s Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment. Their success and achievement give us a strong reputation and enormous confidence as we face the future - whatever it may hold.

Jai QOGLR!
The formation of Gurkha Staff and Personnel Support in 2011 exposed our Gurkha Combat HR Specialists to the wider Army and 2014 saw the fruit of the sow with unprecedented commendations, promotions, commissioning and transfers on VEng Full contract with continuance of colour service.

The past 12 months have been a productive year for the Gurkha Staff and Personnel Support (GSPS) Company as it continues to consolidate its structures within the Army 2020 Order of Battle. To start with it was a year of poignancy as 2014 marked the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War. There have been a series of memorial events to commemorate the sacrifices made by the soldiers in the Great War and the members of the Company have been part of such events wherever they are serving.

The GSPS Company presently numbers 100 Gurkha officers and soldiers, of which 15 are in the wider Army in diverse roles ranging from Regimental Administrative Officers and Finance and Systems Administrators to Phase One Training Instructors for young British recruits.

Their professional excellence continues to attract praise from commanders at every level and they continue to maintain that benchmark;
providing valuable Staff and Personnel support not only to units of the Brigade of Gurkhas but also more widely within the Army. These are but the first steps down the road towards Gurkha Combat HR Specialists achieving a full and satisfying military career whilst retaining their values as a Gurkha Soldier. In 2015 Gurkhas will have served in the British Army for 200 years.

GSPS looks forward into being a part of this significant achievement, characterised by excellence and sacrifice, and one that is worthy of celebration.

Jai GSPS!
The Band of The Brigade of Gurkhas
Maj Paul Norley CAMUS

The Band of The Brigade of Gurkhas holds a unique and distinguished position in the world of Military music. We are ever mindful of our custodial role as the lead for Gurkha Ceremonial corporate public image and always prepared to be judged on our last performance.

Recently uplifted to facilitate a manning of 46 personnel, the Band continues to enhance a reputation as one of the British Army’s premier ceremonial assets. Equally, we are recognised as one of the most entertaining Bands in our field of expertise. 2015 will give us the opportunity to categorically prove these credentials with a series of performances ranging from Public Duties to major international sporting events.

Likewise, we will build on our international reputation, with engagements across the globe. These will include visits to Nepal, India, Brunei, Germany and Jersey. Despite this busy overseas and high profile programme, we will of course continue to support our charity, the Gurkha Welfare Trust, in a series of fund raising concerts and marching engagements across the UK.

The Band is also in constant demand for parades, concerts and social events throughout the MOD. Many other Cap Badges enjoy the support of The Band of The Brigade of Gurkhas and we are always pleased to complement and enhance their ethos and traditions.

Most importantly perhaps is our commitment to our home team - the serving personnel and families of The Brigade of Gurkhas; 2015 will see us at our busiest yet as we endeavour to give the Brigade our maximum attention whilst delivering support that is worthy of our proud heritage and esteem.
The Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas combined concert with 11 GR Band at the Officers’ Auditorium in Lucknow, India in Dec 13

The Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas and Pipes and Drums from 7 GR play together in front of Buckingham Palace.
Incredibly, the Trust’s initial Appeal in 1969 raised over £1 million within six months, a remarkable demonstration of the affection and very high regard in which the Gurkha soldier was held by the British public. This princely sum enabled the immediate relief of hardship and established the Trust as the lead Gurkha charity.

In the succeeding 46 years, the work of the Trust has evolved to meet changing needs. Throughout, our focus has remained Nepal. With an annual income in excess of £12 million, the Trust now provides a monthly Welfare Pension to over 6,600 ex-Gurkhas and their widows to give them the financial security we all need in old age; additional funds are expended in the provision of emergency grants; we provide an annual Winter Fuel Allowance and deliver an unparalleled Medical Programme offering both primary and secondary medical care to all ex-Gurkhas in Nepal and their dependants. In addition, the Trust maintains two Residential Homes providing shelter for those in the most extreme forms of distress. We also recognise the needs of Gurkha communities in the middle hills of Nepal by providing drinking water and sanitation and the construction and maintenance/repair of over 130 schools.

We also provide support to those ex-Gurkhas and their dependants who seek settlement in the UK. Working with the Service charities, in particular ABF The Soldiers’ Charity, and local and national Government we ensure that those who need help are provided with appropriate and timely support. Our work to date has ensured that we are able to respond to the changing circumstances of our ex-Gurkhas. With the help of the serving Brigade which surrenders one day’s pay each year in support of our work, the generosity of our many supporters both in the United Kingdom and elsewhere who respond so generously to our appeals, and the support of Government which provides funds in support of water and sanitation and which abates the costs of delivering welfare, we are truly the lead Gurkha charity, supporting all ex-Gurkhas in need wherever they might live.

In 2015, The Gurkha Welfare Trust is once again calling on the British people and the Brigade for support. Our Welfare Pensioners, once young and brave soldiers, are now in their 80s and 90s. Their fighting days long over, they suffer all the chronic conditions linked to old age - dementia, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, diabetes, cancer, arthritis. Over a third suffers from a significant or life-threatening condition. Many are house-bound, blind or deaf and need support if they are to enjoy independent living.

The Gurkha 200 Bicentenary Appeal Our Duty of Care is being launched to raise £6 million to fund an expansion of our Medical Programme in Nepal. With so many frail and ill pensioners to care for, we can no longer expect them to come to us for support. We urgently need a more mobile medical service that is able to reach out and provide treatment and care in remote homes and villages. Overleaf you will read of the many ways the Trust will be expanding and its medical care over the next two to three years to ensure that all our ex-Gurkhas are able to receive the support they need.

I wish everyone associated with Gurkha 200 a memorable year and hope you will join with me in responding to our Appeal - and in doing so ensure our ex-Gurkhas and their widows are able to live out their lives with dignity.

A Personal Letter from The Director Gurkha Welfare Trust
William Shuttlewood

The Gurkha Welfare Trust was established in 1969 as a response to the increasing number of Gurkha veterans who were living in Nepal in circumstances of abject poverty and distress. These were, in the main, soldiers who had been discharged at the end of the Second World War without any form of pension. Their ranks were being increased by the significant numbers of Gurkhas selected for redundancy in the late ‘60s as a consequence of the drawdown of the Brigade after the Borneo Confrontation. It was essential that something was done to provide relief and to repay the debt of honour the nation owed to “the bravest of the brave”.

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Yours sincerely
William Shuttlewood
Gurkhas are famed for their great courage and resilience. But all must grow old. Our once strong fierce Gurkhas are now old men and women in their 80s and 90s. Their fighting days long over, they now spend their days in their peaceful but isolated villages in Nepal.

They suffer all the chronic conditions linked to old age - dementia, cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, hypertension, arthritis. Over one-third has a significant or life-threatening medical condition and needs regular medical check-ups and treatment and help with independent living.

Having survived the horrors of Borneo, Malaya and the many battles of the Second World War, their bodies and minds are tired.

No longer can they negotiate the steep perilous pathways in their village homes or trek to the Trust’s Welfare Centres to receive medical care or collect their pensions.

The Trust already has a first-class Medical Programme in Nepal, spending over £2 million annually. However, it is static and relies on our pensioners getting to our local Welfare Centres to receive treatment. With so many frail and ill pensioners to care for, we now need a more mobile medical service, able to reach out and provide treatment and care in their isolated hillside homes. We are unable to fund this with our current resources. We are, therefore, launching the Gurkha 200 Bicentenary Appeal Our Duty of Care in 2015, the bicentenary of Gurkha service, to raise £6 million to expand our Medical Programme in Nepal.
Mobile Doctors

We need to increase our number of Mobile Doctors in Nepal from 3 to 12. Our Mobile Doctors play a vital role, trekking from village to village checking on the health and wellbeing of our elderly Gurkha veterans and their dependants. They are constantly in the field and often walk for up to 12 hours a day to reach even the remotest Gurkha home.

With an ageing cadre of veterans, we need to increase the frequency of medical visits to every three months. A further nine Mobile Doctors are therefore required to provide these visits, to provide regular check-ups and oversee their medical treatment.

Palliative Care

With over 3,200 pensioners now aged over 80 years, there is a need for the Trust to increase its palliative and end of life care and support, especially for those veterans living in remote hillside homes.

As our old soldiers approach their final days, our team of doctors and nurses will visit them more frequently to ensure they are as comfortable as possible and that their families have all the necessary support. Finally, we may even need to stay overnight to provide the medical care needed in their final hours.

We are committed to ensuring a dignified and pain-free end of life for those who served our nation so bravely.

District Nurses

12 District Nurses will be recruited to work with the Mobile Doctors, providing simple health checks such as blood pressure, blood sugar levels and respiratory assessments on our ex-servicemen and their families in their homes.

The District Nurses will be able to prescribe basic medicines and will be in permanent contact with a Doctor for more serious medical conditions. They will also support the families caring for their frail Gurkha relatives, providing health care advice on such things as nutrition, hygiene, avoiding bed sores and keeping active.

Home Carers Allowance

Gurkhas place great importance on caring for their elderly relatives. Families readily provide the love and home care so many of our pensioners need. However, this can bring additional costs and, in many cases, providing this care places a huge financial strain on the families already struggling financially in Nepal.

To help these families with the added costs of caring for an elderly relative, the Trust will provide a Home Carers Allowance of 2,000 Nepalese Rupees (around £12) per month. We hope to provide this financial support to around 750 families.

Those who receive the Home Carers Allowance will also receive training from our District Nurses in providing care in the home.

Pathology Laboratories

We will build and equip Pathology Laboratories at our four key Area Welfare Centres of Bagmati, Kaski, Dharan and Chitwan to provide in-house testing and diagnostic facilities.

These four new Laboratories will significantly speed up our ability to diagnose medical conditions such as diabetes, kidney disease, hypertension and anaemia.

It can currently take up to four weeks in Nepal for a condition to be diagnosed. Our Pathology Laboratories will cut this to around 2 days, ensuring that our Gurkha veterans can start vital life-saving treatment earlier.
Medical Equipment
To equip our Mobile Doctors, District Nurses and Pathology Laboratories, we need a wide range of additional medical and health equipment for our staff to use to diagnose and treat our pensioners more quickly - blood analysers, electrolyte analysers, sterilisers, syringes, incubator machine, microscopes, portable ultrasound are just some of the items we need to purchase now.

Mobile Minor Surgical Units
With our veterans increasingly frail and house-bound, there is a growing need for the Trust to provide routine operations in their remote villages.

We need four Mobile Minor Surgical Units that can be carried in the back of a standard 4x4 Land Rover type vehicle and easily deployed in tents or local buildings. Each unit is sterile, has its own power supply and carries a wide range of surgical and medical equipment.

They will be used by our medical team in the field and at our eight Medical Camps. They can also be rapidly deployed to provide emergency medical assistance in the event of a natural disaster.

For 200 years the Gurkhas have served with distinction in the British Army to protect the rights and freedoms we enjoy today. These courageous fighting men of Nepal have fought in every major conflict since 1815, earning 26 Victoria Crosses and thousands of commendations for bravery along the way. The Gurkha Welfare Trust was set up in 1969 to care for those in need in Nepal. Today, in 2015, we are being called upon to do more.

We already spend over £12 million each year in Nepal. We estimate that a further £6 million is needed to fund the expansion of our Medical Programme and ensure that our gallant old soldiers and their widows continue to live with dignity.

Please support Our Duty of Care Appeal today!
The fascinating story of Britain’s Gurkhas is presented at The Gurkha Museum where Gurkhas’ participation in the epic periods of world military history over the last 200 years is portrayed in graphic detail using artefacts, text, dioramas, tableaux and exciting touch screen technology.

A Gurkha Museum first opened in 1974 in Queen Elizabeth Barracks at Church Crookham in Hampshire from items collected from the serving units and other donors. This grew and developed until the Museum moved to a fully refurbished building at the old Rifle Depot at Peninsula Barracks in Winchester during 1990.

Since then the Museum has expanded its collection and archive. This archive contains an unrivalled collection of books, documents, photographs and film, not just recording Gurkha military history but also the country and people of Nepal. Indeed the cultural aspects of service in Britain’s Brigade of Gurkhas form an important part of the displays.

The Museum is the focal point for the Brigade’s corporate memory and heritage and strives to develop a strong sense of connection with its past, present and future. As the Brigade moves on from Operations in Afghanistan, the Museum will continue to record its history and role in the British Army, here in the UK, in Brunei and wherever it is deployed in the world.
**Did You Know?**

1. A Daphne Bholua plant is named “Gurkha.”
2. There have been five Royal Navy vessels named HMS Ghurkha or Gurkha. The first was launched in 1889 and was a Torpedo boat. No. 2 was a destroyer sunk in 1917. The 3rd and 4th were sunk by enemy action in 1940 and 1942 respectively. The last, launched in 1960, was retired in 1984.
3. The Gurkhas, as part of the Indian Army, were not eligible to be awarded the Victoria Cross until 1911. Before then the Indian Army’s premier award for gallantry was the Indian Order of Merit, an award instituted in 1837. The first Gurkha to be awarded the Victoria Cross was Rifleman Kubilir Thapa of 2nd Battalion 3rd QAO Gurka Rifles, for conspicuous bravery on the Western Front in 1915.
4. A Gurkha of the 6th Gurka Rifles was awarded an Olympic Medal at the 1924 Winter Olympics for Aplinism, for his endeavours on the 1922 Expedition to climb Mount Everest. This medal, to Lance Naik (Lance Corporal) Tejbir Bura, can be seen on display at the Gurkha Museum.
5. Hobson Jobson, an Anglo Indian dictionary first published in 1886 has an entry for Kookry as follows: Hind. Kukri (which originally means a twisted skein of thread from kukna, to wind, and then anything curved). The particular weapon of the Gurkhas, a bill admirably designed and poised for hewing a branch or foe.
6. Many will have heard of the well-used term “Blighty” from the First World War used by soldiers referring to home or Britain. This word originally comes from an Arabic word and derived Hindi word bilayti meaning foreign land or, more often, distant Europe. British soldiers corrupted many foreign words and names, Bilayti became Blighty.
7. The striped Kukri snake, which comes from West Malaysia, is so called because the fangs at the back of its mouth resemble a Kukri in shape. The Kukri snake is non venomous and can grow to be up to 68 cm in length. It can bite if provoked!
8. The painter Terence Cuneo would always include a mouse on his canvasses. A painting by this artist of B Company, 1st Battalion 10th Gurkha Rifles’ action against Indonesian parachutists at Labis 23 Sep 1964 is on display in the Gallery of the Gurkha Museum.

**Gurkhas Fact Sheet**

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<tr>
<th>Facts</th>
<th>Figures</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Gurkhas served in World War One</td>
<td>90,780 (directly employed by the Crown)</td>
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<td>Gurkhas died in World War One</td>
<td>6,342 combatants and followers (CWGC figures)</td>
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<td>Gurkhas casualties World War One</td>
<td>“over 20,000” (killed, died, wounded and missing)</td>
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<td>Gurkhas served in World War Two</td>
<td>137,883 (directly employed by the Crown)</td>
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<td>Gurkha died in World War Two</td>
<td>9,056 combatants and followers (CWGC figures)</td>
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<td>Gurkha casualties World War Two</td>
<td>23,655 (killed, died, wounded and missing)</td>
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<td>Victoria Crosses awarded to Gurkha Regiments</td>
<td>26</td>
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<td>VCs awarded to Gurkhas</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>VCs awarded to British Officers</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC holder surviving</td>
<td>1 (Hon Captain Rambahadur Limbu VC MVO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Cross (or equivalent EGM / Albert Medal)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Order of Merit 1st Class (when awarded IOM three times) prior to 1911</td>
<td>1 (Subedar Kishanbir Nagarkoti 5th Gurkha Rifles (FF), NOTE Also awarded Gold Bar for 4th award)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IOMs awarded to Gurkha Regt’s in WW1</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IOMs awarded to Gurkha Regt’s in WW2</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olympic Medals awarded to Gurkhas</td>
<td>1 (Naik Tejbir Bura 6th Gurkha Rifles)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It was probably introduced for Gurkhas (and other local infantry not wearing a pugaree or turban) in the Honourable East India Company’s service in 1844 or 1845. The Kilmarnock had quite a high (and floppy) top. Its direct descendent the Scottish Bonnet, Lowland, still has its floppy top which can be worn pulled down to one side like a beret. In Gurkha regiments it seems to have been worn more or less level, with the soft top upright above the stiff hat band and a pom pom or touree on the top.

Hat Kilmarnock

The Kilmarnock cap appears to have fallen into abeyance after World War 1, but in 2nd Goorkhas it was reintroduced for Drill Order in 1927 and the soft type continued in use as parade wear until 1947. Other Gurkha Regiments adopted a style similar to the pillbox cap for drill and ceremonial duties. In 1948, in Malaya, all Gurkha regiments were obliged to conform to the lower-sided hard pill-box cap with chin-strap which has been worn by the Brigade of Gurkhas since then.

Origin of Gurkha Felt Hats

At the time of the 2nd Boer War in South Africa, the slouch hat, worn by the Dominion Forces of the British Empire, was becoming an increasingly popular form of head dress with British troops in the field. It was during the Waziristan Blockade in 1901, that the 1st Battalion 2nd (Prince of Wales’ Own) Gurkha Rifles tried out a new hat advocated by one of its officers, Lieutenant Becher. It consisted of a several layers of cloth covered on both sides with puttoo or home spun tweed. It was criss-cross machine stitched, giving it a certain amount of stiffness to help maintain its shape.

Sometimes known as the Kashmir hat, it was fitted with a light puggaree, ventilating holes and a chin strap. The whole effect resembled a slouch hat, affording protection both from the sun and the rain.

The Queen’s Truncheon

The regiment which later became the 2nd King Edward VII’s Own Gurkha Rifles (The Sirmoor Rifles) was raised in northern India in 1815 as the Sirmoor Battalion, a local corps until 1861 when it became a regular regiment in the Bengal Army. It fought gallantly in several battles long before the Indian Mutiny of 1857-58, but it was during the Mutiny that it particularly distinguished itself when, for more than three months, it held a key post on the ridge which was the main British position during the Siege of Delhi.

During that Siege and the assault to capture the City it suffered 327 dead and wounded out of 490 all ranks, and formed a strong affiliation with the 60th Rifles, The King’s Royal Rifle Corps, with which it was constantly linked and intermingled throughout the battle.

Its conspicuous service was rewarded in 1858 by the Governor General-in-Council granting the rare distinction of carrying a third, honorary, Colour, to be inscribed “DELHI” in English, Hindi, and Persian. The Commander-in-Chief added to this by authorising a change of title from Sirmoor Battalion to Sirmoor Rifle Regiment, the soldiers to be called Riflemen instead of Sepoys and the privilege of wearing the scarlet facings on their uniforms as worn by the 60th.

Because Rifle Regiments did not carry Colours, the newly titled Sirmoor Rifle Regiment had to stop doing so, which meant that the privilege of carrying a third Colour was lost. To keep the distinction Her Majesty Queen Victoria authorised the replacement of the third Colour by a Truncheon. This Truncheon, made by Messrs Hunt and Roskell of London, was handed over to the Regiment by the Commander-in-Chief on a parade in Lahore in 1863 when it was received with a Royal Salute by the troops of the North-Western Army assembled for the occasion.

The Truncheon, which is about 6 feet high and made of bronze and silver, is carried on parade by the Truncheon Jemadar, whose post was added to the Establishment for the purpose, escorted by two Sergeants and two Corporals. Like a Sovereign’s Colour it is greeted with a Royal salute when it appears or is marched off parade. Since 1953, when it was presented to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II shortly after her Coronation, it has been known as The Queen’s Truncheon.

The Queen’s Truncheon, in the custody and guardianship of the Trustees of The Royal Gurkha Rifles Regimental Trust, is now in service with The Royal Gurkha Rifles into which the 2nd Goorkhas was absorbed in 1994.

Memorials around the Country Commemorating Gurkhas

- Gurkha Statue Whitehall, London
- War Memorial Gates and Chattri, Hyde Park Corner
- Chindit Memorial, London
- Chautara National Memorial Arboretum Alrewas
- Chautara, Hilliers Gardens, Romsey
- Memorial Chapel, St Luke’s Church, Chelsea, London
- CWGC Memorial and Chattri, Patcham Down, Brighton,
- CWGC Memorial Holybrook Cemetery, Southampton
- 4th PWO Gurkha Rifles’ Memorial Chapel and Garden, Stoke Poges.
- 6th QEO and 10th PMO Gurkha Rifles’ Memorials, Winchester Cathedral
- 2nd KEO Gurkha Rifles Memorial Window, Indian Army Memorial Room, RMA Sandhurst.