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GURKHA REDUNDANCY TRANCHE 3 - A MESSAGE FROM COL BG

You will be aware that Tranche 3 of the Army Redundancy Programme was announced today. This is a sad occasion and means all eligible personnel in the Brigade of Gurkhas (BG) will have been notified of the outcome of the redundancy selection boards through their Notifying Officers.

The impact of redundancy on the British Army is considerable; around 5300 Army personnel including Gurkhas are being made redundant in Tranche 3. As I have said in my previous message, the BG's portion of this reduction is very small by comparison and we must place ourselves in the wider context of the British Army as a whole. Putting this further into context, you know that we have consistently been over-manned since the implementation of GTACOS Review in 2007/08. It is this excess Gurkha manpower that is being targeted in the current Redundancy programme to bring the BG back into manning balance. So far 427 Gurkhas have already been made redundant in Tranches 1 and 2. Tranche 3 affects 260 Gurkhas, the majority of whom are Non-Applicants and will have one year's notice to leave. It is expected that Tranche 4 will follow next year and this will finally bring the BG down to its Army 2020 structures.

My aim in this message is to provide those of you selected for Redundancy and your families with sufficient facts and reassurance that this HQ and your chain of command remain fully engaged in managing the redundancy programme effectively and sensitively as you embark on your transition to civilian life. I know it is not easy and there will be life changing implications on you and your families but we will support you throughout.

It is understood that the majority of Gurkha service leavers including those being made redundant will seek to settle in the UK after retirement. We, along with your chain of command, will do all we can to help and advise Gurkha service leavers to gain employment. With this in mind, my staff have set in motion a thorough plan to assist units in supporting each of the redundees as they transition to civilian life. The BG Transition Plan includes:

- **BG Transition Officer.** An SO3 Transition has been established in HQBG to provide the BG focus for the management of redundees. He will be closely involved with the chain of command and other military/non-military support providers in seeking the best possible conditions for transition to civilian life for all our service leavers.
- **Last 6 Months UK (L6MUK).** Gurkha Non-Applicants serving overseas will be able to be relocated to UK, whenever the interests of the Service allow, in sufficient time for them to serve, as a minimum, their last 6 months in the UK. The BG SO3 Transition will coordinate the support to Gurkha families based overseas in their last 6 months in the UK in liaison with the chain of command.

- **Resettlement/Employment.** Whilst there is no additional resettlement provision for Gurkhas retiring either in Nepal¹ or in the UK over and beyond that which their British counterparts will receive, HQBG remains engaged with the Career Transition Partnership (CTP) and trusted civilian companies in the UK who employ Gurkhas in order to assist those selected for redundancy in seeking employment. In particular:
 - **Transition & Employment Fair.** Each Regional Bde will arrange transition fairs and forums to bring together local authorities, housing agencies and employers in one venue. In addition to these events, HQBG will host a bespoke Gurkha Employment Fair on 27 Jun in Aldershot. Another will be held in Shorncliffe post RGR Unit Move to capture 2 RGR T3 redundees and normal service leavers as well as anyone from the rest of the BG that wishes to attend.
 - **Bespoke CTP Workshop (CTW).** HQBG is currently working with CTP/RFEA to organise bespoke workshops in BG unit lines to better inform Gurkha service leavers. These events will be in addition to 3 days CTW and will focus mainly on providing advice on CV writing and job interview techniques in a 'Gurkha-only environment' specifically tailored to Gurkha needs. The dates for the CTWs will be promulgated to the chain of command in due course.
 - **Gurkha Brigade Association (GBA) Website.** The 'Career Transition' page has been designed to provide service leavers and their families with the necessary information and support they need as they prepare for transition to civilian life and it covers all five pillars of transition: Employment, Education, Health, Housing, Welfare (E2H2W) and Immigration. Further details on these important issues can be found by logging on to: www.gurkhabde.com .
- **Immigration/Settlement.** A key step in the transition to civilian life is the process of settlement, securing the necessary visa to remain in the UK and enjoy the full range of welfare and social benefits. HQBG is working closely with Army Sec to ensure that the Home Office is prepared for the spike in Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) applications which will be precipitated by each tranche of redundancy in order that delays in processing applications for ILR do not occur. Points to note:
 - **ILR Special Arrangements.** Gurkhas (incl F&C) personnel being made redundant will be entitled to apply for ILR up to 6 months in advance of their termination date rather than the current 10 weeks for normal service leavers. This is a special arrangement with the Home Office and they have been exceptionally supportive in the past in fast-tracking applications that are submitted centrally through HQBG – please take advantage of this arrangement. It is our experience that those who do not use HQBG to process ILR applications can be disappointed.
 - **Immigration Roadshows.** As in previous Tranches, Army Sec and HQBG, in conjunction with the Home Office, will continue to run bespoke Immigration road-shows for Gurkha service leavers to ensure that the ILR application process and timelines are fully understood. The next round of roadshows will be held at the following locations:
 - 2 Jul 13 – 10 QOGLR Aldershot
 - 11 Jul 13 – 1 RGR Shorncliffe
 - 15 Jul 13 – QG SIGNALS Bramcote

¹ For soldiers who wish to resettle in Nepal, HQ BGN will provide an appropriate resettlement package and there are specific allowances to assist with the move back to Nepal. ILE can be applied for up to 2 years after leaving and is much cheaper than applying in UK.

- **The Reserves.** As the Army seeks to man the Reserves to 30,000 trained soldiers through OP FORTIFY as part of Army 2020, there is most definitely a place for ex-Gurkhas in the Reserve. It will offer the opportunity for some service in the Territorial Army, which has units based around the country, doing a job with the same skill sets and using the experience that Gurkhas have developed over their service. This is a small commitment of a number of training days each year and an annual training camp with similar rates of pay, as well as a bonus for joining from the regulars. It is conducted in addition to the main civilian employment and usually takes place in evenings and some weekends. All Gurkhas should consider further employment in the Reserves on their departure from Regular service and they should speak with their RCMOs to understand the Offer and the commitment. There are already a number of Army Briefing Notes (ABNs) on the Reserves and HQBG will produce a Communication Plan later in the year.

Please remember that you are not alone in this journey to civilian life; your Regimental HQ and HQBG are here to help. The redundancy package being offered is a good one and there are plenty of opportunities for work for ex-Gurkha soldiers. Indeed, those who have left already and decided to stay in the UK have been very successful in establishing themselves and finding employment. An army career is never for life and all of us will have to move to a second career at some stage; it is just unfortunate that some of you now have to take this step earlier than you originally planned. I am confident that we shall be able to seek the best possible conditions of transition to civilian life for you and your families and I shall continue to keep a close watch on the overall management programme as we move closer to Jun 14.

Col BG