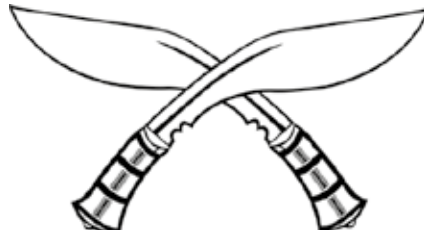


THE JOURNAL OF THE BRIGADE OF GURKHAS



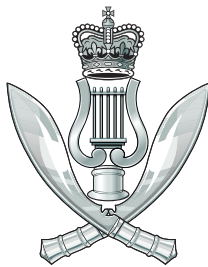
THE KUKRI

2020

Number 71, August 2021

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Headquarters Brigade of Gurkhas
Robertson House
Camberley, Surrey
GU15 4NP



Front Cover: Queen's Gurkha Orderly Officers
Captain Sanjip Rai MVO RGR and Capt Deny Gurung MVO QOGLR

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EDITORIAL



***By Gurkha Brigade Association Secretary
Major Manikumar Rai MBE, DL***

2020 has been a difficult year due to the COVID-19 pandemic and I am sure readers will wish to congratulate the “4 Pillars” in rising to the challenge and identifying innovative ways of continuing to support their clients and staff. The variety of methods used to train, communicate, hold meeting and raise funds; is a testament to our adaptability and outstanding leadership and at all levels.

Whilst the COVID-19 has limited training, the Brigade has played an intrinsic part in delivering “Military Aid to the Civil Authorities” and “Military Aid to the Civil Communities” much of which you will read in articles included in this Kukri Journal. Our resilience, readiness and adaptability has been demonstrated in COVID testing lorry drivers, building Nightingale hospitals, transporting medical supplies to where they were needed and other minor yet important tasks. A huge “shaybash” to all those involved.

The planned Brigade, Regimental and Association events have become COVID-19 “casualties”. Some events did take place, but on a much smaller scale. We were able to mark VJ75 at the Chindit, Slim and Gurkha statues and the Memorial Gates Ceremony at the Commonwealth Memorial Gates, much of which was done virtually. Despite the restrictions, the bonds and camaraderie have remained as strong as ever.

Sadly, COVID-19 has claimed the lives of several of our veterans both here in the UK and in Nepal and our thoughts and prayers go out to the families.

The Gurkha Museum

The Gurkha Museum had to close its doors to the public but continued to remain fully engaged with the other Three Pillars as well as the public in UK and abroad via social media. The Museum's reputation as the centre of excellence for “Gurkha Heritage” continues to grow. Its support to the serving Brigade, Gurkha veterans, the wider Army and the public has been exemplary.

The Museum is well on the way to achieving its long-term aim of being an independent and sustainable Museum of the 20th Century. It needs our support to develop further, safeguarding its future and our Gurkha Heritage.

Sadly, we said farewell to Gavin Edgerley-Harris who has been with the Gurkha Museum in various guises since 1993. In his 27 years at the Gurkha Museum, he has seen and implemented many changes for which we are all extremely grateful. He hands the Gurkha Museum “baton” to Dr Daren Bowyer, who comes imminently qualified and will, I am sure, build on the solid foundation to make a museum fit for the mid-20th Century.

I would encourage you all to use the Gurkha Museum facilities and become Friends of the Gurkha Museum if you are not one already.

The Brigade of Gurkhas (BG)

In 2020, 431 recruits were selected to join the Brigade, the largest intake in recent history. They have completed their training and joined their respective Regiments. Gurkha soldiers continue to make an exemplary

contribution to the British Army which combined with unique skillset has influenced the decision for further growth in the Brigade.

There are to be increases to our existing Brigade units; the Queen's Gurkha Engineers and Queen's Gurkha Signals will both increase by two further Squadrons and the UK led NATO Allied Rapid Reaction Corps Support Battalion will be re-designated a Gurkha unit. The re-establishment of The 3rd Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles is also underway and provides the Army with a specialist infantry capability.

The Covid pandemic demonstrated the key role that the Brigade plays in the British Army ORBAT. The Brigade has been called on to fill a variety of challenging roles in support of the Government. The Brigade has provided Covid testers, lorry drivers, engineers, and communication experts to assist the civil authorities and local communities to weather the disruption caused by the pandemic.

Despite the UK commitments, Brigade units have also deployed to Oman, South Sudan and Zambia on Defence Engagement tasks.

On each task and occasion the Gurkha soldier has risen to the challenge professionally and cheerfully regardless of the operating conditions.

The Gurkha Welfare Trust (GWT)

The year has been a challenge throughout the COVID-19 pandemic for GWT. Despite the cancellation of various fund-raising events the support from donors has been tremendous. The frontline staff have continued to provide medical advice at vulnerable people's homes, prescribing and dispensing healthcare services as well as giving financial assistance.

The GWT team worked with the Government of Nepal to provide Water, Sanitation and Healthcare (WASH) facilities at local hospitals and quarantine centres, as well as raising COVID-19 awareness and best-practice within wider communities.

GWT supporters continue to go above and beyond to support Gurkha veterans and their communities. When lockdown hit, and events were cancelled, many of supporters took on virtual challenges from home to raise vital funds.

The Gurkha Brigade Association (GBA)

The GBA continues to engage with Regimental Associations, HQBG, Gurkha Museum and GWT in addressing the challenges and capitalising on opportunities to enhance the standing of the Brigade. The affiliation of RGR Companies to Regimental Associations has paid dividends with more interaction between company personnel and the RAs.

The GBA has played a key role in ensuring that our veterans, both British and Gurkha were kept informed of the wider Gurkha interests, particularly during the COVID lockdown. The link between UK and Nepal Gurkha veterans remains strong.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all those who contributed articles. It is always difficult to decide what to include when there are so many things going on every week. I extend a particular thanks to Ms Becky Key, Creative Media Design, at the Directorate of Engagement and Communications for her design work. Thank you.

ANNUAL REPORT 2020 TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF NEPAL

By Lieutenant General Richard Wardlaw OBE

Honourable President,

It is my privilege to present to you my first annual report on the Brigade of Gurkhas as Colonel Commandant, after having previously been Colonel of the Queen's Gurkha Engineers between 2016-2020. I am a trustee of the Gurkha Welfare Trust and have served with the Queen's Gurkha Engineers for nearly three decades. My experience began as Troop Commander in Hong Kong and Brunei, and Squadron Second in Command in the UK and Falklands; and more recently in 2007, I was the Commanding Officer of 36 Engineer Regiment. I am very pleased to be able to state that all members have represented the Brigade with great distinction and continue to maintain the great name and reputation of the Gurkha soldier. In doing so, they serve as excellent ambassadors for Nepal, they remain true to their homeland and continue to practise the religions and customs of their forefathers. Such is their quality that the Brigade of Gurkhas is set for further expansion. This will provide opportunities for broader skillsets, employment diversity and extended careers.

It has been a difficult year for all but the adaptability and endurance of the Gurkhas and their families has shone through, with each unit adjusting its working practices to continue to deliver its outputs. Many of our soldiers' spouses are employed in the care sector as key workers, which makes the relationship between Nepal and the UK more valuable than ever

Manning Update

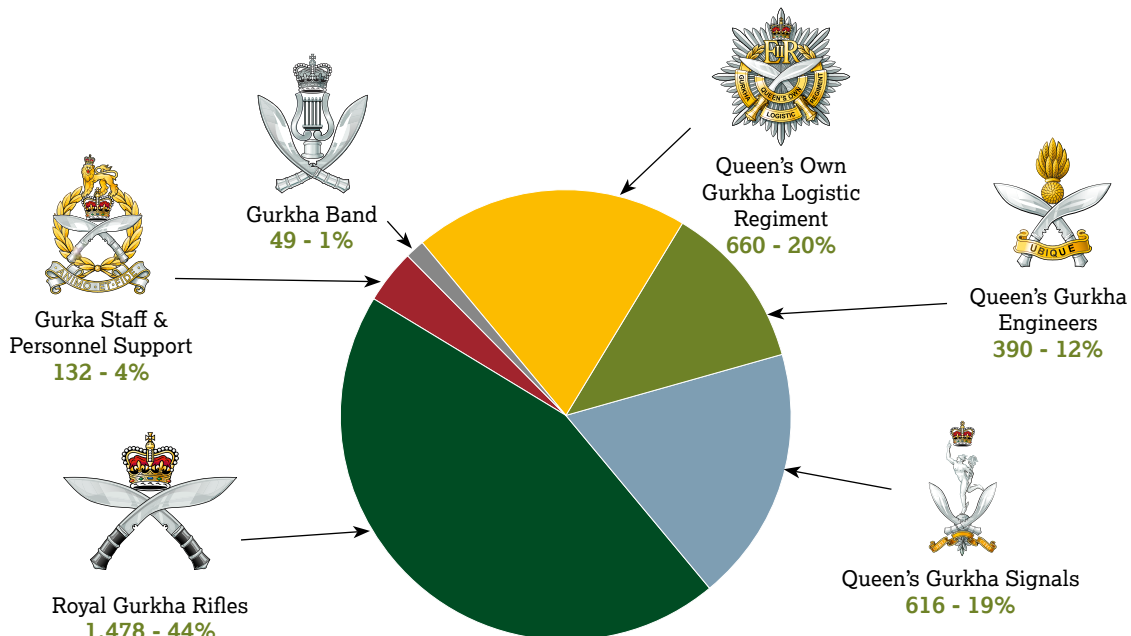
The current size of the Brigade of Gurkhas is 3,325. In 2020 we selected over 430 new recruits to join the Brigade, the largest intake in recent history. They have



Brigade week meeting held discussing to improve operational outputs and efficiency, communicate areas of shared interest and improvement and to deepen the bounds of camaraderie



Junior Leadership Cadre generating the next leaders for the Battalion at the rank of Lance Corporal



now completed their initial training and have joined their selected units. Gurkha soldiers continue to make an exemplary contribution to the British Army, as they have done so now for over 200 years. It is because of this exemplary service and unique skillset that the Gurkhas have been selected to form further growth in the Brigade and the British Army.

We will be increasing the number of Gurkha soldiers in our existing Gurkha units; the Queen’s Gurkha Signals will increase by two further Squadrons; the Queen’s Gurkha Engineers will also grow an additional two Squadrons and the UK led NATO Allied Rapid Reaction Corps Support Battalion will be re-designated a Gurkha

unit. The re-establishment of The 3rd Battalion. The Royal Gurkha Rifles is also well underway and provides the Army with a specialist infantry capability.

All of this will see Gurkha employment in the British Army rise to over 4,000 personnel in the next 5 years. In 2021 we will aim to bring in 340 new recruits. This growth in the size of the Brigade will offer more career and promotion opportunities for Gurkha soldiers and increased chances to serve a full 24-year Army career within the Brigade. Once the initial growth has been met, it is anticipated that recruiting numbers will reduce to around 230 annually.

Operational Activity

Covid-dominated year has presented the Brigade of Gurkhas with some unique challenges. The vast majority of UK based troops were focused on the military’s assistance to the government to deal with the pandemic. Prominent tasks were the building of bespoke hospitals in London and Birmingham, transport of medical supplies and provision of experts and planning staff working as part of the multi-agency Local Resilience Forums around the country. After the initial surge, UK-based troops remained “on notice” and were consolidated back to their barrack locations in a dispersed posture.



The Second Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles raised the British flag in a ceremony at Hook Bridge Camp, Zambia signifying the start of Operation CORDED 5



QGE Personnel deployed to South Sudan as part of Op TRENTON 8



Members of QOGLR deployed to Oman as a Short Term Training Team



QGE - providing a helping hand in building NHS NIGHTINGALE London



Members from 10QOGLR deployed on Op CABRIT 4'B' to provide logistic elements to KRH



248 Gurkha Signal Squadron assisted the build of an emergency Covid hospital in the city of Birmingham

Military and Sporting Activities



Vivek during an alpine skiing expedition to Austria



The Second Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles organised the Adventurous Training Scuba diving in Brunei



Soldiers for the QGE enjoying rock climbing on the outskirts of Keswick



QGE - On Exercise SAPPER FIT press up challenge



Rfn Navaraj Sinthan won a Gold medal in light weight sparring and a Silver medal in poomsae competitions at the Army Martial Arts Association Open Championships



2 RGR mountain-biking amidst the stunning nature backdrops of Bali



2RGR - travel to Singapore to play friendly badminton matches with Gurkha Contingent Singapore Police Force

Recruiting

This year recruiting proved more complex than usual as we invited over 430 young men to join the British Army - an increase from the previous few years designed to assist with the planned growth of the Brigade. In addition and to comply with UK Employment Law, we introduced a range of new tests, whilst maintaining the traditional ones such as the Doko Race.



Potential Recruits on repeated lift and carry of 20 kg at Regional Selection



Potential Recruits on the Doko Race during Regional Selection



Potential Recruit undertaking overarm heaves at Central Selection



Recruit Intake 20 issued their Military kit Pokhara, Nepal



Attestation Parade of Recruit Intake 20 in Pokhara



The Chief of the General Staff, British Army talking with the Recruit Intake 20 families after the Attestation Parade

Recruit Training

On arrival in the UK in February, the new recruits attend the 39 week Combat Infantryman's Course in Catterick in the North of England, allowing them to learn basic soldiering and make the transition to be Gurkha soldiers. Additional English Language teaching and cultural training are included to assist the young Nepalese men assimilate into the British Army as easily as possible. The close bonds formed during these weeks will stay with the soldiers throughout their entire lives. This recruiting year we had a 4% acceptance rate; recruiting 431 young men from around 12,000 applications.



RI 20 arriving for the first time in the UK



Recruit Intake 20 being given a lesson in basic field craft



Recruit Intake 20 issued with the array of personal military equipment



Gurkha Company Pass Off the Square



Recruit Intake 20 unit cap badging ceremony, Catterick



Recruit Intake 20 deployed on their first military field exercise on to the training area in Catterick

Gurkha Company, Infantry Training Centre Catterick, has had a busy year training the new soldiers in this intake. The team has led the way for many other organisations with their innovation and safe training practices, ensuring a COVID-secure environment for training and ensuring that the newest intake are ready and fully trained to the highest standards of the Brigade. This largest intake for over 30 years conducted their Pass Out Parade in November.



RI20 training to operate in urban terrain techniques, defending a house, clearing buildings and rooms



RI20 Annual Combat Marksmanship Test



RI20 on Sentry position in a Harbour Location



Recruit Intake 20 deployed to the training area in Otterburn with the aim of learning about defending the areas or positions against the enemy



RI20 performing Taekwondo skills during the cap badging ceremony

UNIT ACTIVITIES

1st Battalion Royal Gurkha Rifles (1RGR)

1st Battalion took on the role of Air Manoeuvre Battle Group, the unit at the highest readiness for worldwide deployment. 1 RGR completed a full training cycle in order to be ready. 1 RGR's clear focus was delivering an airborne assault capability. This was demonstrated excellently during a demanding Air Assault exercise conducted with support and attack helicopters around the UK.



The First Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles on Exercise AQUILAS STRIKE



A (Delhi) Company team after being announced as the Champion Company of 1 RGR in 2019

2nd Battalion Royal Gurkha Rifles (2RGR)

The 2nd Battalion based in Brunei, has delivered high quality training and experimentation in the jungles and swamps, while increasing its Defence engagement outputs in the South East Asia region. The impact of COVID19 was smaller in Brunei, albeit with almost all out of country movements stopped as a result continuation training after the unit move was delayed. Most recently, 2 RGR deployed a small team to Zambia on operations to deliver the British Army's contribution to countering the illegal wildlife trade in Africa.



2 RGR - Celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the Regiment with 7 Flight, Army Air Corps, providing an air display using their Bell 212 helicopter



2RGR - Sp Coy practicing their abseiling in line with their role as trackers

3rd Battalion Royal Gurkha Rifles (2RGR)

The 3rd Battalion is well on the way to being re-raised. It has hit the ground running, deploying to Kenya for focussed partnering and tactical infantry training. 3 RGR continue to make their presence felt in the Specialised Infantry Group, conducting excellent training and passing the specialised infantry cadre and planning serials with flying colours.



3 RGR - ON Exercise ASKARI SPEAR 2020 in Kenya



3 RGR Formation Parade

The Queen's Gurkha Engineers (QGE)

In March, 69 Gurkha Field Squadron deployed to South Sudan on a UN peacekeeping operation. During the tour, soldiers were involved in constructing accommodation, a military hospital, an observation post, and an upgrade to 24km of roads - all of which was achieved in just 4 months. This was an excellent opportunity for the soldiers to concentrate on core combat engineering skills, while gaining invaluable operational experience in a UN environment. Gurkha soldiers from 70 Squadron were integral in establishing the emergency Covid hospital in London. The soldiers had an opportunity to use their trades in a moment of national crisis, with electricians, joiners, plumbers and air conditioning engineers involved in the operation, all receiving much coverage in the national media.



69 Gurkha Field Squadron deployed to South Sudan on UN Peacekeeping operations



QGE providing a helping hand in building the emergency Covid hospital in London

The Queen's Gurkha Signals (QGS)

In March, soldiers from 248 Gurkha Signal Squadron were deployed to assist in the construction of an emergency Covid hospital in Birmingham. The fantastic group effort helped the hospital become fully built and functional within 10 days. The QGS also celebrated its 71st birthday this year, and were honoured to host their Colonel in Chief, Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal. Regrettably, Trailwalker, the 100km team race for charity, had to be cancelled this year, but that did not stop QGS setting up a virtual event supported by HRH Prince Harry to continue their fundraising work for Oxfam and the Gurkha Welfare Trust.



248 Gurkha Signal Squadron deployed to assist in the construction of the emergency Covid hospital in Birmingham



HRH The Princess Royal at the cake cutting ceremony during the 71st Queen's Gurkha Signals Birthday celebration

Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment (QOGLR)

QOGLR soldiers have been integral to the UK Government's COVID19 response, using drivers and logistic planning experts in the supply and distribution of personal protective equipment and medical supplies across the country. They have also been involved in the establishment of mobile testing units, training and operating alongside NHS partners to combat COVID19. Most recently, 28 Squadron QOGLR deployed on an Exercise with forces from Georgia and the USA. They had the opportunity to exercise as a dismounted infantry company, drawing on the skills that all Gurkhas hold from their basic training. The whole exercise was trained for and delivered within UK COVID19 restrictions, further adding to the complexity and testing the adaptability of the soldiers.



248 Gurkha Signal Squadron deployed to assist in the construction of the emergency Covid hospital in Birmingham



HRH The Princess Royal at the cake cutting ceremony during the 71st Queen's Gurkha Signals Birthday celebration

Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas (Band BG)

The Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas has continued to deliver the ceremonial outputs of the serving Brigade with due style and panache. COVID19 restrictions have had a particularly large effect on the Band, who are rehearsing in large groups indoors, and have had to adapt their marching to include two metre spacings for all. As ever, the adaptability of the Gurkha musicians prevailed, and with online lessons and rehearsals, the work has continued “as normal”. Commemorations of VJ75, to mark 75 years since the end of the second world war, gave the Band the opportunity to excel on a national stage, with their performance broadcast on the BBC. A demanding and unseen month of rehearsals, practice and filming led to this event which was delivered with great aplomb.



HRH The Princess Royal inspecting The Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas during the 71st Queen's Gurkha Signals Birthday



The Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas rehearsing online during COVID-19

Honours & Awards

We are proud to announce that Warrant Officer Class 2 Bishnu Thapa (RGR) received the Meritorious Service Medal as part of the Queen's birthday Honours this year.

Major Prakash Gurung (RGR) and Major Chakrabhadur Khatri (QOGLR) also received commendations from the British Army's Chief of General Staff. Maj Prakash Gurung was commended for playing a pivotal role in the aftermath of the 2015 earthquake in Nepal, and Maj Chakrabhadur Khatri was commended for his outstanding work in planning and executing the strategic programme required to grow the QOGLR.

Additionally, Rifleman Suman KC (RGR) received a commendation from Commander Home Command for his delivery role in Gurkha Company Support Weapons School; Corporal Bibek Gurung (QGS) received a commendation from Commander Field Army for his performance in support of multiple operations, exercises and contingencies; and Captain Jagatram Rai (QGS) received a commendation from Commander Standing Joint Command for his contribution to the build of the emergency Covid hospital in Birmingham.

Lastly, Major (Retired) Manikumar Rai MBE, (Brigade of Gurkhas Secretary at Headquarters the Brigade of Gurkhas), was appointed by Her Majesty The Queen to the role of Deputy Lord-Lieutenant of Hampshire.



Warrant Officer Class 2 Bishnu Thapa (RGR) received the Meritorious Service Medal



Major Prakash Gurung (RGR) received a commendation from the Chief of General Staff British Army for playing a pivotal role in the aftermath of the 2015 earthquake in Nepal



Maj Chakrabhadur Khatri was commended for his outstanding work in planning and executing the strategic programme required to grow the QOGLR



Rifeman Suman KC (RGR) received a commendation from Commander Home Command for his role in Gurkha Company Support Weapons School



Cpl Bibek Gurung (QGS) received a commendation from Commander Field Army for his performance in support of multiple operations, exercises and contingencies



Capt Jagatram Rai (QGS) received a commendation from Commander Standing Joint Command for his contribution to the build of the emergency Covid hospital in Birmingham



Major (Retired) Manikumar Rai MBE, (Secretary Gurkha Brigade Association at Headquarters Brigade of Gurkhas), was appointed by Her Majesty The Queen to the role of Deputy Lord-Lieutenant of Hampshire

Other Activities



2 RGR had the pleasure of hosting His Royal Highness, Prince Mateen of Brunei, during exercise



British Defence Staff (South East Asia) British High Commission, Singapore, commemoration of VJ 75 Day, paying respects with some of his staff at the Singapore Memorial



No.7 Flight Army Air Corps who are based in Brunei along with The Second Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles have renamed their Bell 212 helicopters after the Battalion Company names



Members of the Gurkha Brigade Association gathered in London to pay their respect in VJ75 Day



1 RGR organised a community engagement project to support the Kalalu Primary School in Kenya



Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment a training exercise in Wales

The Gurkha Welfare Trust (GWT)

The second half of the year was a challenge, as it has been for everyone throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, however we are proud, both of our response in Nepal, and the incredible support our donors have shown us in the UK. Throughout the pandemic our frontline staff have been able to provide medical advice at vulnerable people's homes, prescribing and dispensing healthcare services as well as giving financial assistance.

Our Rural Water and Sanitation team worked alongside the Government of Nepal, providing Water, Sanitation and Healthcare (WASH) facilities at local hospitals and quarantine centres. The teams also tackled the issue of COVID-19 awareness and best-practice within wider communities by supporting Gaunpalika and Municipalities.

In the UK, our supporters continue to go above and beyond to support Gurkha veterans and their communities. When lockdown hit, and our events were cancelled, many of our supporters took on virtual challenges from home to raise vital funds. The response to our appeal for funds to build earthquake-resilient homes in February was our most successful to-date.

This year **110 new earthquake - resilient homes for vulnerable pensioners** were completed.

We built three major schools this year, worked on six building extensions, **32 refurbishments and two community centres**.

The team treated **84,000 medical cases** and conducted just under **10,000 home visits**.

Our two Residential Homes housed **45 vulnerable Gurkha veterans and widows**.

Over **4,100 Gurkha veterans and widows**, with an average age of 80 years-old, received a **pension worth 11,500 Nepali Rupees per month**.

All Gurkha veterans and widows also received a Winter Allowance of a **warm winter blanket**.



HEADQUARTERS BRIGADE OF GURKHAS

HQBG Staff

Staff List as at 31 December 2019

Colonel Brigade of Gurkhas	Colonel J Davies MBE
Chief of Staff	Major A Blackmore RGR
Deputy Chief of Staff	Major Jit Hamal GSPS
SO2 Personnel/Policy	Major Dammarbahadur Shahi RGR
OC BCLT	Major Purnasingsh Tamang QGE
Brigade Secretary	Major (Retd) Manikumar Rai MBE, DL
RGR Regimental Secretary	Major (Retd) B McKay MBE
Executive Staff	Mr G Trafford Smith
Brigade Welfare Officer	Captain (Retd) Mahendra Limbu MBE
Communications Officer	Mr M Latter
QGOO/SO3 Plans	Captain Krishna Loksam RGR
QGOO	Capt Suren Limbu GSPS
BG Adjutant	Captain W Carter RGR
RCMO 3 RGR	Captain Ganeshkumar Rai RGR
SO3 Implementation	Captain Belbahadur Gurung RGR
Finance Officer	Ms A Lopez
Asst Brigade Welfare Officer	Hon Lieutenant (Retd) Tulbahadur Gurung
Superintendent Clerk	WO1 Priyachandra Rai GSPS
Manning Clerk Staff	Sergeant Anandbir Gurung GSPS
Administration Clerk	Corporal Vivek Gharti GSPS
Communications Clerk	Corporal Shekar Gurung QGS
Welfare NCO	Lance Corporal Jeevan Thapa QOGLR
GWAC Welfare Clerk	Mr Bhanu Jabegu

Honours & Awards 2020

Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (as Members (MBE))

Staff Sergeant Saroj GURUNG QOGLR

Meritorious Service Medal (MSM)

Captain Madan Kumar JIMI	2 RGR
WO1 Bhojendra Bahadur GURUNG	Band BG
WO2 Bishnu THAPA	1 RGR
WO2 Prem JABEGU	QGE
WO2 Birendra KAMBANG	QGE

Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service (QCVS)

Corporal Nabin ROKA 1 RGR

Chief of the General Staff's Commendation

Captain Dirgha KC	QGE
Corporal Nishan THAKALI	QGE

Commander Strategic Command Commendation

Major Amrit GURUNG QG Signals

Commander Standing Joint Command's Commendation

Captain Jagat RAI QQ Signals

Commander Allied Rapid Reaction Corps' Commendation

Corporal Dipesh THAPA QG Signals

Commander Task Force Kabul Commendation

Lance Corporal Bishal GURUNG QOGLR

Commander Home Command Endeavour Award

Corporal Paribartan RAI 2 RGR

General Officer Commanding 1 Division Commendation

Corporal Bishal GURUNG QGE

General Officer Commanding 3 Division Commendation

Sgt Chitraraj LIMBU 1 RGR

Sergeant Biju GURUNG QOGLR

Lance Corporal Jaya GURUNG QG Signals

Lance Corporal Suresh PARIYAR QG Signals

General Officer Commanding 6 Division Commendation

WO2 Bishnu GURUNG QG Signals

Sergeant Bipendra GURUNG QG Signals

Commander Army Recruiting and Initial Training Command Commendation

Corporal Lucky GURUNG QG Signals

Corporal Arjun LIMBU QG Signals

Sergeant Sanjib SHERCHAN 1 RGR

Sergeant Ratanraj RAI 1 RGR

Commandant Royal Military Academy Sandhurst's Commendation

WO2 Prakash GAUCHAN 1 RGR

Commander 101 Logistic Brigade Commendation

Lance Corporal Ghanendra RAI QOGLR

Lance Corporal Bigyan WAIBA QOGLR

Commander 8 Engineer Brigade Commendation

Captain Prithibahadaur CHHANTYAL QGE

Coproral Prithibikram LIMBU QGE

Corporal Angtshiring SHERPA QGE

Corporal Degnath POKHREL QGE

Sapper Nissan LAMA QGE

Fishmongers' Gold Medal

Staff Sergeant Kishan ALE QG Signals

Worshipful Company of Masons Award

Staff Sergeant Akash TAMANG QGE

2020 HQBG REVIEW OF THE YEAR

2020 has been a challenging year for the Headquarters. The Covid restrictions limited our ability to get out and about to meet the Brigade units, but it did not however impact on our ability to continue to support and influence the ongoing work. Restrictions on the numbers allowed into the building resulted in some staff having to work from home with meeting and discussions being held via Zoom and MS Teams,

Personnel

This year saw more changes in the staff at HQBG. We said farewell to, Major Bijayanta Sherchan GSPS (OC BCLT), Captain Louw, and Staff Sergeant Ishwor Sunwar GSPS (on promotion to WO2). The summer leave period also saw us say goodbye to Captains Sanjip Rai RGR and Deny Gurung QOGLR who completed their year tour as Queen's Gurkha Orderly Officers.

We welcomed Captain Krishna Loksam RGR and Captain Suren Limbu GSPS as the two new Queen's Gurkha Orderly Officers and Captains Ganeshkumar Rai RGR and Belbahadur Gurung RGR as RCMO and SO3 Implementation 3 RGR respectively.

Visits

Visits were limited to essential chain of command visits which were conducted with reduced attendance. The need to remain compliant with the Government Covid rules meant that our normal hospitality of Bhat and socialising post-meetings were curtailed.

Events

Brigade Week 2020, the key period of staff effort in the calendar, took place between the 5th and 9th July. Brigade Week normally involves numerous Gurkha personnel and administrative staff support for many meetings, a briefing day, cocktail party and dinner night. This year unfortunately due to the Covid restrictions, all meetings were conducted virtually and the social events were cancelled.

In 2020 the Brigade selected over 430 new recruits to join the Brigade, the largest intake in recent history. They have now completed their initial training and have joined their selected units. Gurkha soldiers continue to make an exemplary within the British Army.

There is to be an increase in the number of Gurkha soldiers in our existing Gurkha units; the Queen's Gurkha Signals will increase by two further Squadrons; the Queen's Gurkha Engineers will also grow an additional two Squadrons and the UK led NATO Allied Rapid Reaction Corps Support Battalion will be re-designated a Gurkha unit. The re-establishment of The 3rd Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles is also well underway and provides the Army with a specialist infantry capability.

All of this this will see Gurkha employment in the British Army rise to over 4,000 personnel in the next 5 years. In 2021 we will aim to bring in 340 new recruits. This growth in the size of the Brigade will offer more career and promotion opportunities for Gurkha soldiers and increased chances to serve a full 24-year Army career within the Brigade. Once the initial growth has been met, it is anticipated that recruiting numbers will reduce to around 230 annually.

Covid-dominated year has presented the Brigade of Gurkhas with some unique challenges. The vast majority of UK based troops were focused on the military's assistance to the government to deal with the pandemic. Prominent tasks were the building of bespoke hospitals in London and Birmingham, transport of medical supplies and provision of experts and planning staff working as part of the multi-agency Local Resilience Forums around the country. After the initial surge, UK-based troops remained "on notice" and were consolidated back to their barrack locations in a dispersed posture.

Conclusion

HQBG has risen to the demands of expansion and remains a proactive and robust organisation poised to meet the challenges of the future. Our strong links and support both in MoD London and Army HQ in Andover continue to serve us well. Brigade units have risen to the challenges and come through with hard work, team effort and high spirits.

Jai Brigade of Gurkhas

Commemoration Ceremony at Memorial Gates Constitution Hill

9th March 2020 marked Commonwealth Day and the annual commemoration ceremony took place at the Memorial Gate, Constitution Hill, London. This year marks 75 years since VJ Day. The day on which Imperial Japan surrendered in World War II and the contribution made by Commonwealth Forces in the Far East and that of the Gurkhas.



Memorial Gates London

The Memorial is dedicated to the people of the Indian Subcontinent, Africa, the Caribbean and Nepal, and those that served in the Armed Forces during the two World Wars from those parts of the world. The memorial was erected as a lasting memory to honour the five million men and women who volunteered to serve with the Armed Forces during this period from these areas of the world.



Lord Bilimoria talking to Colonel BG and the QGOO at the Ceremony

The event was opened by Lord Karan Bilimoria CBE DL, FCA, who thanked all those attending and the work by the committee in making the event come to life. He stated the importance of the Memorial and the gathering to remember those who lost their lives. He then invited Mr Johnny Mercer MP (Minister for the Defence People and Veterans) to say a few words. He again thanked all those attending and reinforced the importance played by the Commonwealth countries during the wars but also since World War II and what they bring to the world economy.

The prayers were led by the Right Reverend Right Honourable Dame Sarah Mullally DBE, The Bishop of London. This was followed by the last post, performed by a musician from the Band of the Irish Guards and a lament from a piper from the Brigade of Gurkhas.

For the Gurkhas attending the event were; the two Queen's Gurkha Orderly Officers, who stood either side of the Memorial throughout the event, Colonel Brigade of Gurkhas and various members of the Brigade Association. Also, in attendance was Field Marshall Sir John Chapple GCB CB DL who represented Her Majesty The Queen and laid the first wreath. This was followed by wreath laying by representatives of the member states and various organisations related to the Commonwealth present at the event.

Update from the Brigade Language and Culture team

The Brigade Culture and Language Team has been in Nepal to deliver the Survival Nepali Language Course (SNLC) - 19/2. This commenced on 24th February 2020 with a total of 14 students, from across all of the Gurkha cap-badges. As part of the SNLC package, all the students take part in the iconic Doko Run and complete a two-week long mandatory Directed Duty Trek in Nepal.



BCLT Student preparing for the Doko Run

The ten weeklong SNLC runs twice a year in Pokhara and is the flagship course run by the Brigade Culture and Language Team (BCLT). The course is programmed and delivered by the BCLT and is assessed externally by Defence Requirements Authority for Culture and Language (DRACL) based at Shrivenham to Standard Language Profile Level 1.

The delivery of Nepali language and culture to prepare young British officers and soldiers to serve with Gurkhas goes to the heart of the Brigade. The Survival Nepali Language Course offers a rare opportunity to Young Officers joining the Brigade to learn, first-hand, about the people, culture and the rich tradition of the Gurkha soldier in a unique environment.



BCLT students visiting the Gurkha Memorial Museum in Pokhara

The team have now returned to the UK early, and will continue to deliver the course by remote means. Then a short residential course will follow at a later date to secure their course qualification.

The Royal Gurkha Rifles 26th Birthday celebrations by video

On the 1st July 2020 members of The Royal Gurkha Rifles celebrated their 26th Birthday via a multiuser video call from around the world. This included the Colonel, The Royal Gurkha Rifles, Major General Gez M Strickland, DSO, MBE from America, the second Battalion located in Brunei, Nepal, Catterick and Shorncliffe and all the smaller units with The Royal Gurkha Rifles personnel serving around the UK.

In the period of COVID-19 it is important to maintain these celebrations in some way and modern technology assisted in connecting people worldwide to acknowledge this event.

The video call was commenced by the General and then went around the units to say a few words and thanks. A cake was then cut at Headquarters Brigade of Gurkhas on video to mark the occasion by the Colonel Brigade of Gurkhas, Colonel Jody Davies MBE using a Khukuri.



Colonel BG, Chairman RGR Association and Captain Sanjip Rai (QG00) preparing to cut the birthday cake



Major General Strickland dialling to the RGR Celebration from America



RGR personnel dialling in from Nepal

VJ75 Day London - Gurkha Commemorations

Whilst VE Day marked the end of the war in Europe in May 1945, thousands of military personnel were still involved in fighting in the Far East until 15th August the same year. On the 15th August 2020 members of the Gurkha Brigade Association gathered in low numbers at several key memorials in London to pay their respects. In attendance with the Gurkhas was The Honourable Hugo Slim - Grandson of Field Marshal Slim. Wreaths were laid at The Memorial Gates at Hyde Park Corner, The Chindit Memorial, The Statue of Field Marshal William Slim, 1st Viscount Slim, and the Gurkha Statue in Whitehall. A short service of remembrance also took place at the Gurkha Statue supported by a Bugler from The Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas and a Piper also from The Royal Gurkha Rifles.

In the evening, The Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas and Pipers from The First Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles featured alongside musicians from the Corps of Army Music, RAF, and Royal Marines in a musical spectacular show on BBC1 to mark VJ75 Day.



Wreath layers at the Chindit Memorial



Wreath layers at the Gurkha statue, London



The Honourable Hugo Slim (Grandson of Field Marshal Slim) laying a wreath at Field Marshal Slim's statue



Major Manikumar Rai MBE, DL (Brigade Secretary) laying a wreath at the Memorial Gates in London

THE ROYAL GURKHA RIFLES



Regimental Battle Honours

History

Amboor, Carnatic, Mysore, Assaye, Ava, Bhurtpure, Aliwal, Sobroan. Delhi 1857, Kandahar 1880, Afghanistan 1878-80, Burma 1885-87, Tirah, Pundjab Frontier.

The Great War - La Bassee 1914, Festubert 1914 -15, Givenchy 1914, Neuve Chapelle, Aubers, Loos, France and Flanders 1914-15, Helles, Krithia, Suvia, Sari Bair, Gallipoli 1915, Suez Canal, Megiddo, Egypt 1915-16, Sharon, Palestine 1918, Shaiba, Kut al Amara 1915, 1917, Ctesiphon, Defence of Kut al Amara, Tigris 1916, Baghdad, Khan Baghdadi, Sharqat, Mesopotamia 1915-18, Persia 1918, North West Frontier 1915, Baluchistan 1918.

Afghanistan 1919

The Second World War - Iraq 1941, Deir ez Zor, Syria 1941, Tobruk 1942, El Alamein, Mareth, Akarit, Djebel el Meida, Enfidaville, Tunis, North Africa 1942-43, Cassino 1, Monastery Hill, Pian di Maggio, Campriano, Poggio Del Grillo, Gothic Line, Tavoleto, Coriano, Poggio San Giovanni, Montebello-Scorticata Ridge, Santarcangelo, Monte Reggiano, Monte Chicco, Lamone Crossing, Senio Floodbank, Bologna, Sillaro Crossing, Medicina, Galana Crossing, Italy 1944-45, Greece 1944-45, North Malaya, Jitra, Central Malaya, Kampar, Slim River, Johore, Singapore Island, Malaya 1941-42, Sittang 1942, 1945, Pegu 1942, 1945, Kyauksa 1942, 1945, Monywa 1942, Shwegyin, North Arakan, Imphal, Tuitum, Tamu Road, Shenam Pass, Litan, Bishenpur, Tengnoupal, Shwebo, Kyaukmyaung Bridgehead, Mandalay, Myinmu Bridgehead, Fort dufferin, Maymo, Meiktila, Capture of Meiktila, Defence of Meiktila, Irrawaddy, Magwe, Rangoon Road, Pyabwe, Toungoo Point 1433, Arakan Beaches, Myebon, Tamandu, Chindits 1943, 1945, Burma 1942-45

Falkland Islands 1982

Regimental Marches

Quick March - Bravest of the Brave
Slow March (Band) - God Bless the Prince of Wales

Double March - The Keel Row
Slow March (Pipes) - The Garb of Old Gaul

Affiliated Regiments

The King's Royal Hussars
 The Royal Regiment of Scotland
 The RIFLES

Colonel in Chief HRH The Prince of Wales KG KT GCB OM AK QSO NPC ADC
Regimental Colonel Brigadier GM Strickland DSO MBE
Regimental Secretary Major (Retd) B McKay MBE

Serving Officers RGR - Nominal Roll as at 31 Dec 20

Serving Officers

Maj Gen G M Strickland DSO MBE BA(Hons) psc(j)

A/Brig M H Reedman BEng MA psc(j)

Col J N B Birch MA MDA psc(j)

Col D J Robinson MA psc(j)

Col J P Davies MBE MA (Cantab) psc(j)

Col D M Rex BA(Hons) MVO

Col J C Murray BLE (Hons) hcsc(j)

A/Col D T Pack MBE psc(j)

Colonel The Royal Gurkha Rifles
Deputy Commanding General, III (US) Armd Corps
Head of the National Security
Council Secretariat, Cabinet Office
FMC Capability Strategy AHd, (Mil), MOD
AD Trg Ops, HQ Army
Recruiting and Initial Training Command
Dep Col RGR and Col BG
CEO, The Queen's Green Canopy - on secondment
Chief of Staff, ACGS Defence, Engagement Asia
Pacific, British Defence Staff, BHC, Singapore
AHd Personnel Strategy,
Personnel Directorate, Army HQ

Officers of RGR

Lt Col C R Boryer MBE BA(Hons) psc(j)

Lt Col S W M Chandler BA (Hons) psc(j)

Lt Col C P L Conroy BSc(Hons) psc(j)

Lt Col N J Aucott MA

Lt Col G Chaganis BSc(Hons) psc(j)

Lt Col A P Todd BSc(Hons) MBE MBA

Lt Col H P S Stanford-Tuck

Lt Col M A Shields

Lt Col E P Oldfield psc(j)

Lt Col A M S Hellier BA(Hons)

Lt Col N L Moran MRes psc(j)

A/Lt Col S S Burton

A/Lt Col J M L Cartwright BA(Hons)

A/Lt Col J A E E Jeffcoat BA(Hons)

CO, Sandhurst Support Unit
DS, ACSC, Shrivenham
SO1 Comd Plans, LWC, Warminster
Chief Planner, NRDC, Turkey
CO, Southampton UOTC
CO, 2 RGR
SO1 Org Plans, Strategy Directorate, Army HQ
British Military Mission, Kuwait
CO, 1 RGR
CJTF HQ, Kuwait
MA to COMARRC HQ ARRC
Student, ACSC, Shrivenham
Student, ACSC, Shrivenham
MA to Deputy Commander Operation
RESOLUTE SUPPORT

Maj A Blackmore BSc, MEd

Maj M J James BSc(Hons)

Maj B G Birkbeck

Maj Rambahadur Pun

Maj Chinbahadur Thapa MVO

Maj N R Lloyd BSc

Maj D P O'Connor

Maj Chandrabadahur Pun

Maj R T Anderson BA(Hons)

Maj Prembahadur Gurung MBE

Maj Rajeshkumar Gurung

Maj P A Houlton-Hart BEng(Hons)

Maj Hemkumar Tamang

Maj C P A E Bairsto BSc

Maj Prakash Gurung MVO

Maj R E Morford MEng (Hons)

Maj A S Brown BA(Hons)

Maj Muktiprasad Gurung MVO

Maj S T Meadows BA(Hons)

Maj Rajkumar Rai

Maj Shureshkumar Thapa MVO

Maj Gyanbahadur Dhenga

Maj Lalitbahadur Gurung MVO

Maj B E Norfield

Maj Ramkumar Rai

Maj C E F Russell BA(Hons)

Maj Jiwan Pun

COS, HQBG
SO2 PARA/RGR DE Offrs, APC Glasgow
SO2 Assurance, The Sandhurst Group
Snr Trg Major, New College, RMAS
QM, MTMC
Cranfield University
Bn 2IC, 2 RGR
OC Gurkha Coy (Tavoletto) Warminster
COS, HQ 16 Air Assault Bde
OC, TSD, IBS Brecon
OC, Gurkha Coy, ITC Catterick
Bn 2IC, 1 RGR
COS, AEG, HC
A Block, MOD
Snr Instr Combat, RE Warfare Wing, Minley
COS, HQ South West, Tidworth
A Block, MOD
GM, BGN
OC, A Coy, 3 RGR
SO2 Resources, FTU, Westdown Camp
OC, Gurkha Coy (Sittang), RMAS
OC, Trg Sp (Babaji) Coy, ITC Sp Bn, Catterick
GM, 1 RGR
OC, B Coy, 2 RGR
GM, 2 RGR
OC, C Coy, 1 RGR
DCOS, British Forces Somalia, Op TANGHAM

Maj J Devall	JCTTAT, Shorncliffe
Maj A E Genillard	SO2, D Cap HOC Trg Plans, Army HQ
Maj Dilipkumar Gurung	Resettlement
Maj Rajankumar Badgami	OC, JWD, IBS, Brunei
Maj Dillikumar Rai MVO	SO2, WFA, Spec Inf Group, Aldershot
Maj A C Connolly	Resettlement
Maj J England	ICSC, Shrivenham
Maj T E B Latham	SO2, Force Dev, 77 Bde
Maj S R Nightingale LLB MA	ICSC, Shrivenham
Maj J K Armstrong	ICSC, Shrivenham
Maj Sanjipkumar Rai	OC, HQ Coy, 2 RGR
Maj H Gardner-Clarke	ICSC, Shrivenham
Maj C J Schroeder MA	ICSC, Shrivenham
Maj Mukunda Gurung	HQBG
Maj Milanchandra Rai	SO2 G4 Log, LWC, Warminster
A/Maj C F D Diamond	OC, Sp Coy, 2 RGR
A/Maj J P Christy	OC B Coy, 1 RGR
A/Maj J A Millar	OC, BGP
A/Maj W J D Patrick	OC, Sp Coy, 1 RGR
Capt Mahendra Phagami	Pl Comd Gurkha Coy, Sittang
Capt Bikulman Rai	QM (M), Army Training Regiment, Winchester
Capt Ganeshkumar Rai	RCMO, 3 RGR
Capt Dipakraj Ghale	2IC, GCS, RMAS
Capt B C Burrows	A Block, MOD
Capt Kiran Pun MVO	2IC Gurkha Coy, ITC Catterick
Capt Babindra Gurung	OC, HQ Coy, 1 RGR
Capt Ganeshkumar Gurung	QGOO, HQBG
Capt Raju Dura	RCMO, 1 RGR
Capt Premkaji Gurung	UWO, 1 RGR
Capt Binodkumar Kerung	2IC, BGP
Capt Bhupalsingh Rai	UWO, 2 RGR
Capt P O V Lambert	11X SO3, UK Ops, 11 Bde
Capt Krishnaprasad Loksam	QM (T), 2 RGR
Capt C L J Collins	RGR Regt'l Adj, RGR RHQ, HQBG
Capt GG Davies	Ops Offr, 2 RGR
Capt Buddhibahadur Gurung	2IC, Trg Sp Div, IBS Brecon
Capt Lalitbahadur Gurung (9323)	QM(T), 1 RGR
Capt Chhatraman Limbu Lingthep	2IC, B Coy, 2 RGR
Capt C R Jones	Adj, 1 RGR
Capt Giri Prasad Gurung	SO3 Plans/Imp for 3 RGR, HQBG
Capt Som Thulung	RCMO, 3 RGR
Capt Nawalkiran Yakha	DCMO, APC Glasgow
Capt C R Boote	MOD, A Block
Capt W A Louw	Resettlement
Capt R A Cassini	MOD, A Block
Capt Belbahadur Gurung	Wing Comd, Gurkha Coy, ITC Catterick
Capt Genendra Rai	2IC, A Coy, 2 RGR
Capt Vijayprakash Subba Limbu	MTO, 2 RGR
Capt Subas Gurung	SO3 MST, HQ 1 (UK) Div, York
Capt Bahadur Budha Magar	2IC, A Coy, 1 RGR
Capt Shreeman Limbu	2IC, CSS Coy, 2 RGR
Capt Bhaktaprasad Sherchan	2IC, B Coy, 1 RGR
Capt M F Barney BA(Hons)	Ops Offr, 1 RGR
Capt T W C Hunter BA(Hons)	Adj, The London Regiment
Capt W P Reeve BSc(Hons)	SO3 Trg, 4 Inf Bde and HQ NE Catterick
Capt S J Marshall	Trg Offr, 2 RGR
Capt Jiwanprasad Gurung	2IC, A Coy, 3 RGR
Capt Suresh Sambahamphe	2IC, C Coy, 2 RGR
Capt Sangam Rai	2IC, Sp Coy, 2 RGR
Capt Prem Shreesh	2IC, C Coy, 1 RGR

Capt J G Adamson	Adj, 2 RGR
Capt J R Dick BSc(Hons)	RSO, 1 RGR
Capt O C H Goldfinger	MOD, A Block
Capt Kailash Khebang Limbu	A Wing Commander, Gurkha Company, ITC Catterick
Capt Padambahadur Gurung	2IC, Sp Coy, 1 RGR
Capt D R Carter BSc(Hons)	Bde Adj, HQBG
Capt T P Gardner BSc(Hons)	Pl Comd, RMAS
Capt Bikash Gurung	Pl Comd, Gurkha Coy, ITC Catterick
Capt Tarjan Gurung	Pl Comd, Gurkha Coy Sittang
Capt Imbahadur Ghale	MTO, 1 RGR
Capt S L Sears BA(Hons)	MOD, A Block
Capt S G Bird BA(Hons)	OC, Mortar Pl, 2 RGR
Capt C F Cavell	IO, 2 RGR
Capt A P B McWilliam BA(Hons)	MOD, A Block
Capt Shivakumar Rai	Pl Comd, B Coy, 2 RGR
Capt Lakhbahadur Gurung	Pl Comd, A Coy, 2 RGR
Capt Madankumar Jimi	Pl Comd, Mandalay Coy, IBS Brecon
Capt Basanta Rai	Tp Comd Close Sp Tp14 Sqn ARRC Sp Bn
Capt Santoshkumar Rai	Pl Comd, Gurkha Coy, IT Catterick
Capt A J M Aitkin BA(Hons)	IO, 2 RGR
Capt T J Eddings BSc(Hons)	Adj, Inf Battle School, Brecon
Capt C J R Hornby BA(Hons)	OC BTT, Shorncliffe
Capt N J Halliday	RSO, 2 RGR
Capt Nawaraj Jimee	Team Leader, A Coy, 3 RGR
Capt E D Hicks BA(Hons)	OC MG Pl, Sp Coy, 2 RGR
Capt Deepak Kumar Gurung	Pl Comd, A Coy, 1 RGR
Capt Narbir Galami	Pl Comd, Gurkha Coy, ITC Catterick
Capt Arunhang Nembang	Pl Comd, C Coy, 2 RGR
Capt Bhupendra Gaha	Pl Comd, B Coy, 1 RGR
Capt Santosh Rai	Pl Comd, Gurkha Coy, ITC Catterick
Capt Basantakumar Rai	Pl Comd, Gurkha Coy, ITC Catterick
Capt Ramkumar Serpuja Pun	Pl Comd, C Coy, 1 RGR
Capt D W-I Dewick BA(Hons)	Team Leader, A Coy, 3 RGR
Capt W C Rushworth BA(Hons)	Team Leader, A Coy, 3 RGR
Capt R K Weale BA(Hons)	OC, Mortar Pl, 1 RGR
Lt J J Hogg BA(Hons)	Team Leader, A Coy, 3 RGR
Lt N F Pollinger	OC Anti-Tank, Sp Coy, 2 RGR
Lt B A S Atkinson BA(Hons)	OC Reece Pl, Sp Coy, 2 RGR
Lt T G Washington Smith BSc	Pl Comd, Gurkha Coy, ITC Catterick
Lt R Cannon BA(Hons)	Pl Comd, B Coy, 2 RGR
Lt H L Parker BA(Hons)	OC, Recce Pl, Sp Coy, 1 RGR
Lt T H J Parsons BSc(Hons)	OC MMG Pl, Sp Coy, 1 RGR
Lt L J Griffin BSc(Hons)	Pl Comd, B Coy, 2 RGR
Lt A GJ Baker BA(Hons)	Pl Comd, A Coy, 2 RGR
Lt P D F Foster BSc(Hons)	Pl Comd, C Coy, 1 RGR
Lt C Fraser BA(Hons)	Pl Comd, A Coy, 1 RGR
Lt T B L Wood BSc(Hons)	Pl Comd, C Coy, 2 RGR
2Lt A W Fall BSc(Hons)	Pl Comd, A Coy, 1 RGR
2Lt L M Whyatt	Pl Comd, C Coy, 2 RGR
2Lt D Hamill BA(Hons)	Pl Comd, B Coy, 1 RGR
2Lt J M Howlett BA(Hons)	Pl Comd, A Coy, 2 RGR
2Lt A P Cousins BA(Hons)	Pl Comd, B Coy, 1 RGR
2Lt F N Kingdon BA(Hons)	Pl Comd, B Coy, 2 RGR
2Lt T J Moore BA(Hons)	C Coy, Pl Comd, 1 RGR
2Lt M T Bennett BSc(Hons)	PCBC, IBS Brecon
2Lt M A Emmott BA(Hons)	PCBC, IBS Brecon
2Lt R C St C Logan	PCBC, IBS Brecon
2Lt M H A Pilkington	PCBC, IBS Brecon

Attached and Seconded Officers

1 RGR

Maj O Pope R WELSH
 Maj D Sharp RIFLES
 Maj EMJ Pretsell RAMC
 Maj BS Green AGC (SPS)
 Capt S Teuber KRH
 Mr Shankarmani Nepal Civilian

OC A Coy
 QM
 RMO
 RAO
 IO
 Religious Teacher

2 RGR

Maj T Lindsay SCOTS
 Maj C Trow RAMC
 Maj M Sexton AGC(SPS)
 Capt Surendrakumar Limbu Lingden GSPS
 Mr Bhismaraj Niraula Civilian

QM
 RMO
 RAO
 AGC Det Comd
 Religious Teacher

1 RGR - Battalion Update

Maintaining a light infantry battalion at very high readiness in 16 Air Assault Brigade is an exciting challenge; 2020 has proved no different for the First Battalion. The first quarter saw engagement in routine training, the second and third a shift towards innovative training delivery and the fourth a return to a 'new normal' in the build up to a major joint exercise scheduled for Spring 2021. Throughout the year, one lesson has proved abundantly clear: maintaining readiness as the Air Manoeuvre Battle Group set the foundational resilience required to thrive through uncertain circumstances.

The year started with the induction of new Riflemen from ITC Catterick. Under the guardianship of C Coy the new Rfn were put through their paces in the wet and cold hills of Cinque Ports Training Area (CPTA). As well as the staple recce patrols, ambushes and attacks, the exercise also sought to build resilience through Public Order Training; teaching the soldiers the importance of controlled and measured aggression.

Concurrently, a team of novice cross-country skiers led by Sgt Deepnursing deployed to Sweden and France for Ex NORDIC KUKRI. The only team across the whole Army led by a SNCO, the 1 RGR toli undertook extensive training before competing in individual cross-country, skate and patrol serials at the Infantry and Divisional Championships. Having never skied before, the soldiers enjoyed the transferability of skills in land navigation, fitness and marksmanship through snowy, sub-zero conditions. In a similar vein a team led by Lt Parsons departed on Ex FROSTED BLADE, the annual Army Infantry Ski Championships held in Val d'Isere. With the Team comprised of two experienced and six novice skiers the Bn Team adjusted well to the demands of downhill racing. The 1 RGR team competed in both the A and B hill with novices and juniors winning medals in both. The Bn's winter sports capability is ever increasing with the potential of a Bobsleigh team being added to the 21/22 season.



The 1 RGR Nordic Ski team led by Sgt Deepnursing - Ex NORDIC KUKRI

G4 echelon activity within an air assault context provides its own unique challenges. Back on CPTA, the A1 Ech contingent under the BGLO and MTO practised hasty mustering to serve B (Sari Bair) Coy's air manoeuvre exercise, Ex AGILE KUKRI. Resupplying essential stores of fuel, water and rations, the logistic contingent practised both pre-determined RV resupply and dead drops by night. Meanwhile, the troops of B (Sari Bair) Company enjoyed a bitterly cold week of offensive action and air landing operations training with CH47s in conjunction with the RAF.



Elements of B (SARI BAIR) Coy and C (MOGAUNG) Coy landing on a 'hot' LZ during Ex AQUILA STRIKE - Thetford Training Area

Despite a recce party deploying to The Falkland Islands in preparation for a summer (but southern hemisphere winter) deployment to the South Atlantic, the arrival of COVID-19 marked a significant disruption to forecasted training. The planned Unit Move to Brunei and re-role to jungle warfare across summer leave was delayed 12 months. Battlefield studies, dine-outs, overseas training exercises and much more was cancelled as the Battalion, like everyone else, conducted its estimate on how to approach the changing situation. Easter leave was cancelled, the living in members of Battalion, whose home is Sir John Moore Barracks had to continue to work from 'home' within the constraints of rapidly planned and constantly changing Force Health Protection measures.

The result was overwhelmingly positive and the new 'modus-operandi' was lauded Army-wide. PT sessions were conducted over Zoom, the drill pamphlet adjusted to account for social distancing and rank-slides were handed over on 6ft-long spatulas on promotion parades. With the Brigade Band and Pipes and Drums on patrol around Sir John Moore Barracks maintaining community spirit during the dispersed activity. The show needed to go on and go on it did.

Our soldiers, in contrast to their counterparts in the wider Army, could not return home to Nepal during summer leave, the quieter isolation period nonetheless allowed respite from a steady drumbeat of training whilst persevering the force by adhering to COVID restrictions.



Companies adapting to a new way of working during the first National Lockdown

Emphasis was placed on continued conceptual development. Building on Ex OLIVE GROVE in Jordan, 1 RGR sought to understand and engage with the complexities of Air Assault and apply the principles through Ex AQUILA STRIKE and various BRAVO demonstrations whilst employed as part of the AMBG. B Coy also deployed to Kenya to fulfil the Force Protection requirement for BATUK; due to the ongoing pandemic the initial 6-week deployment transformed into a three-month stint much to the satisfaction of all who deployed. The task proved pivotal for all those attending JLC in 2021 with the three-month deployment being viewed as an opportunity for training in a challenging environment. Apart from training and duties whilst in BATUK all deployed SPs summited Mt Kenya as well as partaking in numerous AT activities and expeditions. The perks of a deployment didn't stop there, SP visited to Regati Conservancy donated by Ex 6GR Officer, Nick Rowe. All returned to the UK enriched from the experience.



A charity run around SJMB during COVID-19



1 RGR Soldiers honing their Air Manoeuvre skills and building relationships with other 16X units



The sight of a 6ft-long spatula is the new norm as awards are handed over on parades

Returning to work in August, the Battalion welcomed Lt Col Edd Oldfield as their new Commanding Officer and refocused on exciting opportunities ahead. Battalion Headquarters practised planning cycles and Companies were building up marksmanship ready for live fire tactical training. Across all departments, tabbing and

battle PT returned and the football pitches are alive once more with the shout of squaddled commands.



A presentation to Lt Col Chris Conroy during his farewell parade in SJMB



The Bn 2IC, GM and RSM formally welcoming Lt Col Edd Oldfield and his family to 1 RGR on the assumption of command

In early November, elements of 1 RGR deployed on Exercise WESSEX STORM (WS) as OPFOR for 2 PARA. Preparations for the role included the inaugural Task Force Hannibal (TFH) cadre. Delivered by FTU and the LWC Project HANNIBAL team, the cadre served as an introduction to the role of TFH as OPFOR. Whilst not yet perfect, it has, first and foremost, instilled a very clear sense of the new mentality 1 RGR must adopt. On completion of the cadre, the 1 RGR OPFOR ran a series of TEWTs and walkthroughs in Imber village to cement understanding of the actions, and preparations, culminating with a force-on-force exercise at section level, during which the soldiers refined low-level TTPs. The response from the Companies was typically impressive; the teams genuinely enjoying the opportunity to think and operate differently. Corsham Tunnels provided a unique environment to train in, presenting difficulties with C2 and communications. The underground space provides commanders the opportunity to explore different and often more rudimentary methods of C2. Learning how an adversary will plan and execute is pivotal to success; and this has put 1 RGR in a fortunate position for future challenges.



JLC Candidates mid-way through an attack being carefully watched by their staff

After another demanding year within 16X, with numerous deployments, exercises and courses the Bn was looking forward to a well-earned Christmas Leave. Shortly after standing down for the Christmas period the Bn were recalled and within 24 hours deployed as part of Op ROSE, a MACA task supporting the ongoing COVID 19 Pandemic. Initially this comprised of taking over sites from 36 RE (including 70 Fd Sqn QGE) along the M20, the Port of Dover and at Manston Airport. This quickly grew to include 22 sites across the UK as part of the Upstream Testing capability aiming to reduce the footfall at sites closer to the terminals. These were staffed by a composite 'D Company' formed up from across the Bn and a Sqn of our close friends in the KRH. After almost three weeks of testing the Bn handed over to the KRH BG and a civilian company before returning to work for another busy year.

JLC is currently underway and the 'new normal' is beginning to sink in as the Battalion resumes staple RGR training in a COVID compliant manner. Amidst uncertainty over the development of the pandemic, three truths remain steadfast: the cheerful Gurkha spirit through adversity, a will to win, and a bias for action.

Jai 1 RGR!



1 RGR COVID testing Hauliers on the side of the M20 as part of the Haulier Testing Resilience Unit - Op ROSE

2 RGR - Battalion Update

Summary

2020 has been a busy year for 2 RGR in these strange times. We have deployed B and C Coys to Ulu Tutong (now christened Dingoland) on Exercise KUKRI DEFENDER, run JLC for Intake 17 and deployed A Coy on Op CORDED. Sp Coy soldiers have also trained alongside the Royal Brunei Armed Forces, including training with the RPK. In addition to this we have continued to uphold the excellent reputation of the RGR in Brunei, hosting successful events for HRH Prince Mateen on several occasions, and have had success across the wider Army on career courses and during events throughout the year.

A (Amboor) Coy

A Coy, like the rest of the world, found its plans severely disrupted by COVID. As such, much of 2020 was characterised by a slower tempo than past years, caveated with a surge of activity towards the end of the year. Following the COVID-19 related hiatus, A Coy has ended this year on a high. The Coy's main effort was on Op CORDED in Zambia, where it played a crucial role in training counter-poaching teams. Meanwhile, in Brunei, the rest of the Coy sought to make up for lost time by approaching training with renewed drive. The Coy had the opportunity to revisit urban training on Ex AMBOOR URBAN in early November, which provided a crucial chance to hone urban skills that had not been practiced since Ex PACIFIC KHUKRI in 2018. Following this, we returned to our more familiar repertoire of training while in Brunei, deploying on Ex KHUKRI DEFENDER in Ulu Tutong. With much of our command structure still in Zambia, A Coy was split into two platoons and attached to B and C Coys throughout the exercise. This attachment provided an excellent opportunity to work with less familiar faces and gain a slightly different perspective on training in the jungle environment from our B and C Coy colleagues. Overall, given the circumstances, a successful year for A Coy. Being able to deploy on Op CORDED in times like these was a privilege. A Coy looks forward to 2021 with the same characteristic enthusiasm and professionalism as the year just gone.

B (Gallipoli) Coy

The initial 2020 plan for B Coy was to deploy on Ex PACIFIC KUKRI in New Zealand to then assume the lead role of the Air Manoeuvre Battle Group (AMBG) in 16 Air Assault Brigade, in the UK. Sadly, with a global pandemic and Brunei adopting a full lock down policy, the unit move was delayed for a year, and no international travel permitted. Nevertheless, B Coy have had an interesting year and made the most of the situation Covid-19 has presented in Brunei. As camp life returned to semi-normality in May, a good proportion of B Coy soldiers attended the all-2 RGR JWIC with all students achieving strong results. Autumn brought



Champion Coy Competition 2020

its own challenges to B Coy whilst on Ex GALLIPOLI STORM, ironically named due to a lightning incident hitting the Coy during the LUP of the final Coy level attack. Fortunately, all B Coy members are recovering well and have cracked on with the rest of the year. B Coy are now proud winners of the Champion Company Competition (CCC)!

The team spirit displayed throughout the competition was excellent across all ranks of the Coy. A strong start for the new OC B Coy - Maj Ben Norfield. There are high expectations for 2021's CCC. Shortly after, B Coy deployed on Ex GALLIPOLI STAR. This was a two-week Live Firing Tactical Training package which saw B Coy operating up to Coy level, at night. After an enjoyable period of Dashain and Tihar, B Coy deployed on Ex KHUKRI DEFENDER. This was a fantastic opportunity for all returning ERE personnel to brush up on their jungle skills and enjoy the wonders of Ulu Tutong. B Coy now look forward to a well-earned Christmas break and are ready to meet the challenges and opportunities 2021 will bring.

C (Tamandu) Coy

2 RGR had a rapid start to the year, launching straight into the Junior Leadership Cadre for Intake 17 soldiers. The cadre was run by Maj Tobias Whitmarsh and C Coy, out of Sittang camp and consisted of the usual mix of conceptual and physical assessments, with the exercise elements of the course focusing solely on specialisation in the jungle environment. This meant the next generation of junior soldiers were given the chance to master skills and command in the Battalion's current specialism, so they are best placed to develop future intakes from what they have learnt. The cadre was a huge success, qualifying all students to promote to LCpl and improving the leadership skills and experience of all involved. Top student was awarded to LCpl Bhupendra Rai of B Coy, who was promoted to LCpl on conclusion of the Cadre.

The next few months brought more difficult times for 2 RGR, however, C Coy were still able to enjoy some fantastic opportunities conducting AT in Bali and working with the RBAF operating in the urban environment, enabling key skills to be honed and good defence engagement to take place.

In the latter stages of the year, C Coy moved onto providing SET support for various exercises in Brunei. Support was given to Ex ATAP HURDLE as well as a variety of exercises run over the JOTIC course.

This provided a great opportunity for soldiers to gather experience in the jungle and enable the training of both potential special forces and jungle warfare instructors. C Coy's year was rounded off with Ex KHUKRI DEFENDER, a battalion level exercise, that mixed LFTT with blank exercising to assess competencies in several areas; including up to platoon level live firing and a series of tactical actions in the jungle up to Coy level.

Sp (Imphal) Coy, Jan - Nov 20

Another busy year for Sp Coy with numerous commitments. After the Junior Leadership Cadre, the Bn was rebalanced and the support weapons platoons received their new soldiers. They were then trained in their new specialisms and participated in cadres for each platoon. Most consisted of a two-week package, integrating theory and classroom-based lectures with practical application in the field. The new soldiers then participated in a final exercise which was the consolidation of all they had been taught aimed at testing their new knowledge to ensure they were competent and capable of fulfilling their new role. The purpose of the cadre was to ensure Sp Coy could continue to deliver its specialist capabilities and support the Rifle Coys in achieving their mission.

Highlights also include 3 members of Sp Coy deploying to Zambia as part of Op CORDED. They have been teaching and mentoring the Zambian armed forces in tracking and counter poaching operations in numerous parks across the country. Machine Gun Pl experimented using map predicted fire through the jungle canopy to assess the effectiveness and possible utilisation in the future. Sniper Pl has been busy forging relationships with Brunei host nation Special Forces, the Regiment Pasukan Khas (RPK) and Special Operations Squad (SOS) via defence engagement exercises. These included live firing together, and the exchanging of knowledge and tactics to enhance effectiveness in the urban and jungle environments. Mortar Pl operated out of the state-of-the-art simulation centre in Penanjong Camp to train both its Mortar Fire Controllers (MFC) and the mortar detachment using the interactive mapping capability. The Coy also put on a capabilities and briefing day for the entire Bn. This was aimed at educating the Rifle Coys about the niche capabilities of each Pl and included planning considerations and constraints which may apply. This will ensure Rifle Coys can use the specialist capabilities to their optimum, and specialist platoons get the most out of being attached to Coys. The year finished off well with the chance to consolidate their training with attachments to Rifle Coys during Ex KHUKRI DEFENDER.

Dashain and Tihar

The festivals of Dashain and Tihar formed the centrepiece of the unit's social calendar, and 2020 was no exception. Dashain festivities started with a temple service and a rousing speech from the Pandit. This led onto the Garrison Officer's Mess party where a wide array of dancers and singers, plucked from across the Battalion, provided the entertainment. Unfortunately, such a night proved to be the climax of Dashain celebrations for



RGR JOTIC FTX



Dashain 2020

the year as Brunei then entered a period of mourning due to the sad death of His Royal Highness Prince Azim. Following this sombre period of reflection and subsequent period of training, Tihar beckoned. Largely free from the constraints of COVID, the unit felt lucky to celebrate Tihar uninhibited and fun was had by all. The end of celebrations heralded the start of Ex KHUKRI DEFENDER and the Battalion, re-energised after the week of festivities, embarked with great enthusiasm.

Ex KHUKRI DEFENDER 20

The new Commanding Officer, Lt Col Andrew Todd MBE, early in his tenure, aimed to test the true capability of the battalion under his command. 2 RGR, having been in Brunei for over three years, exercising regularly in the arduous Close Country Tropical Environment (CCTE) and keen to build on the success of last year's battalion Ex HIKMAT BERSATU 6, the soldiers and officers of 2 RGR were ready to demonstrate their skills and capabilities. As a result, Ex KHUKRI DEFENDER was planned with the aim of deploying a 2 RGR battlegroup into the most challenging of training areas, Area E, Ulu Tutong, for a 10-day exercise. Ulu Tutong consists of steep ridgelines, deep ravines and is almost entirely primary jungle. It is untouched by human activities apart from a sizeable 20 sq km dam with its waterways providing the main route in and out of the training area via boats provided by the Queen's Gurkha Engineer boat section.



CO Saheb arriving on Ex KHUKRI DEFENDER by RBAF Blackhawk

Ex KUKRI DEFENDER ran between 18-29 November 2020. The exercise was split into two phases; the first phase consisted of five days of Live Firing Tactical Training (LFTT) and the second focusing on a dry, tactical phase. B (Gallipoli) Coy deployed first with attachments from A (Amboor) and Support (Imphal) Coys, inserting to the training area by Blackhawk helicopter provided by the Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF). Prior to this a Gurkha soldier had never seen the inside of a Bruneian helicopter despite the longstanding deployment of The Royal Gurkha Rifles in Brunei. This achievement was driven by the Chief of Staff, Major Daniel O'Connor, and demonstrates the strong relationship we now have with the RBAF. The insertion was high quality training and an excellent experience for our soldiers, as many of the younger riflemen had never been inside a helicopter. Strategically, conducting helicopter training was a significant steppingstone, as 2 RGR will be moving back to the UK in the summer of 2021 to take over the high-readiness Air Assault Task Force role in 16 Brigade, where operating out of helicopters is essential. C (Tamandu) Coy inserted two days later via Blackhawk, accompanied by a platoon-sized attachment of RBAF soldiers from B Coy, the 3rd Infantry Battalion. This again was a first for many years, having Bruneian soldiers fully integrated into an RGR rifle coy, conducting joint training on exercise.

The first phase of LFTT saw almost 300 soldiers and officers progressing from individual fire and manoeuvre up to a fully tactical boat-insertion and platoon attack. The continuous heavy rain made the terrain even more challenging. The training was in line with two of the Commanding Officer's directives; being brilliant in the basics and being combat conditioned, both of which were developed throughout the exercise. The ranges were sited in locations that would truly test the firers, with multiple positions, steep inclines, and thick undergrowth making visibility very limited. Significantly, the exercising troops conducted individual fire and manoeuvre at night in pitch-black conditions, using only their night-vision devices to see and shoot. This was something that had never been done as a battalion, with many people outside of Brunei believing it to be impossible. However, it was conducted safely and effectively, showing that live firing at night in the jungle can be done. The exercising troops walked away from this experience with an appreciation of how difficult it is and the need for being completely competent in their low-level skills. His Royal Highness Prince Mateen of Brunei, a graduate of the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, visited the exercise for two days, observing the training being conducted and participating in live firing on several of the ranges. He thoroughly enjoyed his visit to the exercise. Subsequently, the recently appointed British High Commissioner His Excellency John Virgoe also visited the exercise to get an appreciation of 2 RGR's capability. He observed some of the LFTT and discussed the challenges of training in the jungle with both officers and soldiers.



Ex KHUKRI DEFENDER - GPMG pair



*HRH Prince Mateen firing on live ranges during
Ex KHUKRI DEFENDER*



Ex CASSINO STRIKE

**Ex TELEMAR TITAN - FREE THE HEEL,
FREE THE MIND**

By Lt Ben Atkinson 2 RGR

On 11 Jan 20 snow fell heavily on the French Alpine resort of Pralognan la Vanoise, blanketing the trees in a thick layer of soft white powder. The 2 RGR Telemark Ski team arrived in the resort with a rental car overflowing with warm kit and ski race suits at the ready in order to compete on Ex TELEMAR TITAN 2020. This was first time in the history of the Brigade of Gurkhas that a team had been entered and it consisted of the most ‘chadke’ LCpls and one Young Officer from 2 RGR.

Lt Atkinson (A Coy) had competed in the 5 championships previously and after a 3-year hiatus was looking to prove he hadn’t peaked at University. LCpl Saru Rai (Sp Coy) and LCpl Bijaya Limbu (C Coy) had recently competed on Ex FROSTED BLADE in Val d’Isere and had demonstrated their unequivocal courage and determination in conquering the steep slopes and hair-raising speed of alpine racing. For LCpl Ajayan Tamrakar (A Coy) it was his first week skiing downhill having raced Nordic Skiing a few seasons previously. It would be no small task to master a new environment but a challenge that all would soon dispatch like a ‘chukus’ saheb to a chili.

Ex TELEMAR TITAN runs every year and is open to both Army and Navy personnel who feel the need to throw themselves down a mountain for two weeks. The time on exercise is split between training in the first week and then racing in the second. All abilities are welcome on the course and range from novices to GB racers. The question you may or may not be asking yourself is, “Telemark skiing ke ho, saheb?”. And rightly so you should ask, because it’s a damn niche winter



CO Saheb’s Farewell

Despite the continuous heavy rainfall and degrading effect of prolonged periods in the jungle environment, training was able to continue, and morale was maintained throughout. As the exercise ended and Coys were due to return to camp, the road out of the training area was flooded by heavy rain. This caused problems for the motor transport department but was resolved through quick-thinking and a massive effort from the Motor Transport Officer and his team, who worked tirelessly to extract everyone safely. The exercise completed, everyone returned to Tukur Lines to be greeted by a well-deserved warm dahl baht provided by the catering department.

The Commanding Officer was satisfied his intent had been achieved and is confident in the battalion’s ability to deliver in the jungle. A successful, worthwhile exercise both for our relationship with the RBAF and battalion training, which has undoubtedly put us in good stead for 2021.



***LCpl Saru Rai, Cpl Ajay Tamrakar,
Lt Benjamin Atkinson,
LCpl Bijaya Limbu***

sport to do. Telemarking uses normal downhill skis and the same pistes, however, the heel is not connected to the ski, meaning that you must lunge every turn. This makes it technically more challenging than normal skiing and a proper workout on the legs every day.

Days one to five were all about development and all participants were lucky enough to have world class French and British instructors to help them improve their skills. For 2 RGR's newest telemarkers the focus was on the Novice races, building the foundations of Telemark skiing and pushing hard to grow. Their progression was astounding, and they moved into the first races with impressive technique and poise. Telemark racing consists of several gates that competitors must navigate downhill and at speed. Halfway down the course the race-setters have a small psychotic break and decide to place a large jump which the competitors must launch themselves off. If they do not reach a certain line on landing, then they are given a time penalty of 3 seconds.

The Development races saw 40 novice competitors take on Telemark racing for the first time and the 2 RGR racers of LCpls Ajaya, Saru and Bijaya were giving it their all. They showed superb technique and out of all the competitors reached the furthest distance on the jump, a feat that was remarked upon by all watching with much roaring and flailing limbs.



***OCdt Heaton (EUOTC) Lt Atkinson (2 RGR)
Cpl Munns (INT)***



LCpl Saru Rai in action

Next in the competition came the Championship races for those who had raced before. Lt Atkinson had not raced for 3 years and it was a difficult start with 4th position in the Giant Slalom race. The following Sprint and Classic Races involved not only gates but a Nordic style 'skate' to the finish on a flat part of the piste. Lt Atkinson gained momentum throughout the racing and was able to claim 1st place in the final two races. As a result, he secured 1st place as overall Army Champion. After the exercise he was invited to attend the Inter Services Ski Championships in Méribel and came 3rd overall, beating competition from both the Navy and RAF.

The final day of the exercise consists of a mountain race. Here athletes must walk up and then ski down the mountain with 'skins' on their skis which enable them to grip the snow. This proved to be a prime environment for RGR toli and the physical prowess of the team was evident as each member overtook engineers and marines on the way up. Victory may have been on the cards for the RGR team, however, kit difficulties cost them time on the changeovers and left steam coming out of many a team members' ears. Next year they shall return with a vengeance.

2 RGR's first foray in the world of Telemark was an immensely enjoyable experience for all involved. It was an adventure into an unfamiliar environment yet one with a community who welcomed 2 RGR with open arms. The camaraderie between the Gurkha team, instructors and other competitors was exceptional. Importantly, those new to Telemark gave one hundred percent and constantly strived to improve. With some medals now secured in Brunei and newly blooded telemarkers, next year will no doubt be a fantastic opportunity for all.

3 RGR - Battalion Update

3 RGR commenced its reformation on 6 Jan 20 as part of the Specialised Infantry Group (Spec Inf). Spec Inf is designed to use agility through its persistent relationships with Partner Forces and its ability to draw upon and integrate wider capabilities. This offers opportunities to deliver Land Special Operations by generating tempo and achieving a disproportionate effect against the following three core roles: Sub-Threshold Peer Competition, Countering Violent Extremist Organisations (C-VEO), Countering asymmetric threats and enabling symmetric manoeuvre in conflict. Spec Inf is designated, organised, trained and equipped to undertake four core activities: Strategic Liaison and Reconnaissance (SL&R), Military Assistance (MA), Direct Action (DA) and Information Operations/Manoeuvre/Warfare (IW).

In the 10 months since formation, A (Coriano) Coy has deployed on Ex ASKARI SPEAR 20/2 to Kenya on 01 Mar 20, conducted dispersed training during the COVID-19 pandemic and completed the arduous Specialised Infantry Group cadre qualifying all members of the Coy including chefs and clerks as Specialised Infantry Operators and Commanders. Due to the mature nature of Spec Inf's role, each Coy consists of four teams comprising of more rank than is usually found in a conventional Rifle Coy. This allows Teams to conducting operations with Partner Forces with a focus of Training, Advising, Assisting, Accompanying and Enabling (TA3E) two ranks above.

This unique conceptually challenging environment has been an excellent opportunity to empower junior leaders and develop subordinates through genuine mission command.

Exercise ASKARI SPEAR 2020 (AS20) was conducted by 2 LANCS Battlegroup under Spec Inf, comprising of individual companies from 2 LANCS, 1 SCOTS and 2 PWRR forming the 2 LANCS BG. Coriano Coy, 3 RGR deployed in the role of COEFOR on 5 Mar 20. The harsh climate, topography and the complex tribal breakdown, make it the ideal location for Spec Inf to validate operational companies prior to deployments across Eastern Europe, Africa and the Middle East.

This was the first exercise for Coriano Coy, enabling the Coy to establish best practice for future operations and gain an insight into how Spec Inf Coys operate in small Teams and integrate into the Specialised Infantry Group. It also provided an opportunity to demonstrate Coriano Coy's ability to operate at reach, in small teams and in a hostile environment only 2 months after formation. Tactical actions included day and night navigation in the bush, recce patrols, observation posts and ambushes. Coriano Coy also provided support to the BG through assistance in running a complex Coy level LFTT package in the form of a SRCO, RCOs and safety staff; providing not only essential support to the BG, but also developing networks and interoperability amongst the Spec Inf Battalions.



'A' Coy 3 RGR's Re-formation Parade in SJMB on the 6th January 2020



A (Coriano) Coy, 3 RGR the first company to be re-formed in 3 RGR on 6th January 2020



Members of A Coy, 3 RGR relaxing in Kenya during Ex ASKARI STORM in March 2020



Pre-deployment training

Although the entire BG was isolated on the training area and in Nyati Barracks, Coriano Coy was able to use the lockdown to its benefit. Individual Coys completed a MACA estimate which was briefed to the Specialised Infantry Group Comd. Coriano Coy used all ranks in the process, developing the Coy's conceptual capabilities and was chosen as the preferred COA for its efforts. Coriano Coy also conducted a recce to the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy (LWC) Joint Operations Command Centre (JOCC) hosted by Capt (Retd, ex 2 RGR) Barry Cork of 51 Degrees (Kenyan based anti-poaching force training providers) providing an exclusive insight into how the Northern Rangeland Trust (NRT) operates. The NRT are strongly supported by Earthranger software in conjunction with training and operations support from 51 Degrees under the watchful eye of Barry Cork. Operating from Lewa, they are countering the threat to wildlife whilst simultaneously supporting the wider security of Kenya. The Northern Rangeland Trust (<https://www.nrt-kenya.org/>) supports 39 community conservancies (42,000km²) across northern and coastal Kenya (comprising of 18 ethnic groups with rich HTA). Together, they are changing the game; supporting communities to govern their wild spaces, identifying and leading development projects including the building of health clinics and sponsoring 500 students' education from primary to university standard. As well as building sustainable economies linked to conservation, spearheading peace efforts to mend years of conflict and shaping government regulations to support it all.

51 Degrees provides all training across all these areas. Their JOCC coordinates all situation updates from the 791 strong ranger force and 6 x QRFs to respond to incidents across the 42,000km² and further afield where necessary. The JOCC also has a Kenyan Police (KPol) Inspector liaison officer embedded at all times.

COVID-19 has been a challenge to all units but has allowed 3 RGR to focus on the conceptual elements of soldiering that are often overlooked in favour of more time in the field. Coriano Coy's dispersed training focused on geopolitical knowledge, written coherency, and briefing practice. This paid dividends on the Specialised Infantry Cadre which saw 250 applicants from across the British Army seeking to qualify as Specialised Infantry Operators and Commanders. All A Coy members are now qualified to deploy under the Spec Inf banner. A Coy is now conducting pre-deployment training for a Military Assistance operation in East Africa in April 21 and will conduct a confirmatory overseas exercise in Belize 14 Jan - 04 Mar 21 to prepare for this potentially arduous deployment.

Coriano Coy has utilised its time since the Cadre completing a Commander's Cadre which saw speakers from across HMG and 6 Division enhancing Commander's understanding of where Spec Inf can progress its capabilities, integrate with Other Government Departments (OGDs) and 6 Div itself. It also afforded an opportunity for Coriano Coy to develop its Coy level planning process in adherence with Spec Inf's Future Operating Concept. Furthermore, Coriano Coy's wealth of qualified individuals have been offering support to the other Spec Inf Bns in the form of jungle training prior to Spec Inf Gp's deployment to Belize and running an LFTT package to qualify Coy's for deployment. Coriano Coy has been building on their experiences and qualifications completing several courses including CQB instructors, mission specific training to include niche cultural courses and promotional courses to ensure the Coy's tactical proficiency is at its peak before the operational cycle commenced in Apr 2021. The most testing of these events Ex GREY SHARD, a full Bde level estimate and COA back brief to the Bde Comd all in under 48 hours. It was an excellent learning experience for all involved.

A Coy under the command of 4 RIFLES BG, a founding member of the Specialised Infantry Group, has provided a wealth of opportunities for progression in its new role. From joint training to conceptual training, Coriano Coy has seized each occasion to enhance their understanding and capabilities going forward. 3 RGR, through their relationship with 4 RIFLES deployed a Team Commander on the Battalion's first operational tour. Deploying to Afghanistan, Team 1 Commander assisted with the training of the Afghan Special Police Advanced Training Wing. Working with an operational 4 RIFLES Team, has provided 3 RGR an insight into the intricacies of Spec

Inf operations and how empowerment of ranks is vital to success in a hostile area.

B Coy and HQ will form in Summer 21 with C Coy in 2022 the most likely course of action. It is an extremely interesting time to be building a new unit with an operation on the horizon. We look forward to pulling on the Gurkha network wherever we should find ourselves in the world next year.

Jai 3 RGR!



Photograph of the 3 RGR Officers' Mess was taken after the amalgamation parade in Church Crookham in September 1994

Front Row (L to R): Capt C J Clark, Maj D M S Collins RAMC, Maj M M Lillingston-Price, Maj M R Rusby STAFFORDS, Maj G A C Hughes, Lt Gen Sir Peter Duffell, HRH Prince Charles, Lt Col P T C Pearson, Maj P Tabor RHG/D, Maj N D J Rowe, Maj S A Archer, Maj N Jaffray GORDONS, Capt F J Grundy AEC(SPS)

Middle Row (L to R): Capt (QGO) Bhimbahadur Gurung, Lt T C M-K Jackman, Capt (QGO) Ashokbahadur Tamang, Capt C B Darby, Capt (QGO) Kubirjung Rai (att from 2 RGR), Capt J A W Coulson, Capt (QGO) Bishnukumar Rai, Capt T C St J Warrington, Capt (QGO) Tankabahadur Limbu, Capt R B Smith, Capt (QGO) Ombahadur Dewan, Capt R F Thompson AGC(ETS), Capt (QGO) Gajendrabahadur Dewan, Lt A P Hill, Capt (QGO) Jagmohan Rai.

Back Row (L to R): Lt (QGO) Bhaktabahadur Limbu, Lt (QGO) Harkaraj Rai (1), Lt (QGO) Subas Rai, Lt G Maude, Lt (QGO) Shirbir Rai, Lt D Estyn-Jones, Lt (QGO) Keshar Sunar, Lt P J Woodisse, Lt (QGO) Laxmibhakta Rai, Lt D M Rex, Lt (QGO) Devraj Gurung, Lt J N B Birch, Lt (QGO) Harkaraj Rai (2)

The Gurkha Major, Maj (QGO) Chandraprasad Limbu missed the photograph as he was busy organising the reception of the POW in the Officers' Mess.

THE QUEEN'S GURKHA ENGINEERS



History

Formed by the Royal Warrant as the Gurkha Engineers, part of the Brigade of Gurkhas on 28 September 1955. On 21 April 1977 Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II approved the title of The Queen's Gurkha Engineers.

Gurkha Training Squadron RE was raised at Kluang, Malaya in September 1948. Gurkha Training Squadron became 67 Gurkha Field Squadron Royal Engineers in October 1949. Re-designated 67 Independent Gurkha Field Squadron in September 1994. Disbanded on 31 December 1996 in Hong Kong.

68 Field Squadron RE was raised at Kluang, Malaysia in August 1950. Disbanded on 18 December 1993 in Hong Kong.

69 Gurkha Independent Field Squadron was raised at Sungei Besi, Malaya on 1 April 1961. Disbanded in Hong Kong on 17 August 1968. 69 Gurkha Independent Field Squadron re-formed on 1 March 1981 in Hong Kong and moved to Kitchener Barracks, Chatham later that month. Re-designated 69 Gurkha Field Squadron and incorporated into 36 Engineer Regiment on 1 April 1993. Moved to Invicta Park Barracks, Maidstone on 13 September 1994.

70 Gurkha Field Park Squadron was raised at Sungei Besi, Malaya on 1 April 1960. Disbanded in Singapore on 31 July 1971. On 6 August 1982 Support Squadron redesignated 70 Support Squadron. Disbanded on 18 December 1993 in Hong Kong. 70 Gurkha Field Support Squadron was reformed and became part of 36 Engineer Regiment with effect from April 2000.

Both 69 and 70 Gurkha Field Squadrons re-rolled to Search Squadrons in February 2011.

Both 69 and 70 Gurkha Field Squadrons re-rolled to Force Support in 2013.

QGE has successfully transformed into a Force Support Engineer Regiment and is now firmly established within 12 (Force Support) Engineer Group which sits within 8 Engineer Brigade.

Current Organisation

Regimental Headquarters The Queen's Gurkha Engineers
69 Gurkha Field Squadron QGE
70 Gurkha Field Squadron QGE

Affiliated Corps

The Corps of Royal Engineers

Regimental Marches

Pipes Far o'er the Sea
Band Wings

Affiliated Colonel in Chief

Her Majesty the Queen

Staff List

Colonel of the Regiment: Brigadier J L Clark CBE

Regimental Headquarters

Lt Col Mark Hendry MBE RE	Commandant
Maj Kamalbahadur Khapung Limbu MVO QGE	Gurkha Major
Maj James Kelly RE	Deputy Commandant
Capt Lauren Hardern RE	Adjutant
Capt Khadkabahadur Gurung QGE	GRCMO

Field Officers

Maj Michael Gledhill RE	OC 69 Gurkha Field Squadron
Maj Oliver Clark RE	OC 70 Gurkha Field Squadron
Maj Buddhibahadur Bhandari MVO QGE	SO2 G1 Welfare/SSO HQ Brunei Garrison
Maj Purnasingh Tamang QGE	OC BCLT HQBG
Maj Ganeshprasad Gurung QGE	QM 32 Engr Regt

Captains

Capt Edward Borland RE	2IC 69 Gurkha Field Squadron
Capt Chris Marris RE	2IC 70 Gurkha Field Squadron
Capt Dirgha KC QGE	Wing Comd, Gurkha Coy, ITC Catterick
Capt Bishwabahadur Rai QGE	Perie Troop Commander, 1 RSME Regt
Capt Govindabahadur Rana QGE	Quartermaster, British Gurkhas Pokhara
Capt Krishnakumar Pun QGE	Operations Officer, 69 Gurkha Field Squadron
Capt Narendradhoj Gurung QGE	Training Officer, ARRC Sp Bn
Capt Khelendrabahadur Gurung QGE	Operations Officer, 70 Gurkha Field Squadron
Capt Nareshkumar Limbu QGE	BGE, HQ Brunei Garrison
Capt Ashokkumar Gurung QGE	Wing Comd, Gurkha Coy, ITC Catterick
Capt Prithibahadur Chhantyal QGE	Support Troop Commander, 69 Gurkha Field Squadron
Capt Hemraj Gurung QGE	Support Troop Commander, 70 Gurkha Field Squadron
Capt Ramkumar Rai QGE	Platoon Commander, Gurkha Company, ITC, Catterick
Capt Chandra Pun QGE	Troop Commander, Curragh Troop, 3 RSME Regt
Capt Andrew Barker RE	Echelon Commander, 69 Gurkha Field Squadron
Capt Gary Forsey RE	Echelon Commander, 70 Gurkha Field Squadron

Subalterns

Lt Thomas Penman RE	G Troop Commander, 69 Gurkha Field Squadron
Lt Bashir Hamaad RE	H Troop Commander, 69 Gurkha Field Squadron
Lt Helen Bridgeman RE	I Troop Commander, 69 Gurkha Field Squadron
Lt Patrick Burford RE	J Troop Commander, 70 Gurkha Field Squadron
Lt Will Pearce RE	K Troop Commander, 70 Gurkha Field Squadron
Lt Alistair Greatorex RE	L Troop Commander, 70 Gurkha Field Squadron

RSM

WO1(RSM) A P Malone RE	RSM QGE
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Honours, Awards and Achievements

Durand Medal 2020

21169347	Capt Krishnakumar Pun	Winner
21169677	Capt Ashok Kumar Gurung	Runner Up

Bowring Trophy 2020

30085059	LCpl Sangit Gurung	Winner
30120263	LCpl Mahesh Gurung	Runner Up

74 Training Party -Initial Trade Training (Cbt Engr Cl 3)

30337610	Spr	Nischal Shrestha	Overall Top Student
30338366	Spr	Subash Limbu	Top Academic Student

ME Cbt Class 1 Top Student

30208391 LCpl Arun Thapa (Cse 20/03)
 30207816 LCpl Sahadev Magar (Cse 20/06)

ME Cbt Initial Trade Training (Cse 20/10) - Top Student

30293258 Spr Dhawak Garbuja

ME C3S 0-2 4302/20/002 Cse - Top Student

30312724 Spr Hitson Magar

Mason Award

21171246 SSgt Akash Tamang

The Hackett Award

30274671 Spr David Gurung

Corps Sports Award - Exceptional Service to Mountain Biking

30085777 Cpl Topjang Rai

Chief of General Staff's Commendation

21168280 Capt Dirgha KC

General Officer Commanding's Commendation

21169990 WO2 Lalbahadur Rana

Chief Royal Commendation

21171246 SSgt Akash Tamang
 21171826 Cpl Nishan Thakali

Commander Field Army Coin

21170030 SSgt Chandrabahadur Budha Magar

Meritorious Service Medal (MSM)

21169588 WO2 Birendrakumar Kambang
 21170376 WO2 Premkumar Jabegu Limbu

Commander ARRC's Commendation

21170589 SSgt Tilak Pun
 21171742 Cpl Ujjwalkumar Glan

Commander ARRC's Coin

30166829 LCpl Jagadish Gurung
 30188392 LCpl Angsihang Thopra

Commander British Forces Brunei Coin

21170789 SSgt Deepak Rai
 21170752 Cpl Sagar Gurung
 21170809 Cpl Mahendra Angbuhang
 21171061 Cpl Rajkumar Thapa

Commander 8 Engineer Brigade Commendation

21169976 Capt Prithibahadur Chhantyal
 21172032 LCpl Nepal Singh Rai

Colonel of the Regiment's Message

Brigadier J L Clark CBE



The Kukri Journal is a vitally important publication for the Queen's Gurkha Engineers and it is a great privilege to be asked to write a message for this edition. The Journal provides an overview of every year of QGE service to the British Crown and is, as such, an invaluable record of our history. It is, however, more than just history, it puts a very human face on the 'QGE Sappers' and allows our soldiers and officers to showcase the tremendous work they do in often very trying circumstances.

I was deeply honoured and humbled to assume the appointment of the Colonel of The Queen's Gurkha Engineers on 29 September 2020. I am very grateful for the work of my predecessor, Lieutenant General Richard Wardlaw OBE Saheb and pay tribute to his dedication to the Regiment and significant achievements throughout his tenure. Notably, he steered us through the challenging phases of the 2015 Nepal earthquake. This devastating seismic event was felt throughout central and western Nepal and some of the service personnel within the Brigade of Gurkhas including QGE were directly affected. Both 69 and 70 Gurkha Fd Sqns deployed to Nepal as a part of Operation MARMAT and assisted Nepal, the home of the Gurkhas, to return to normality through a series of construction projects. More broadly the Regiment has prospered under his leadership with growth in QGE Phase 1 and Phase 2 training and a significant structural review leading to the growth of third and fourth QGE Squadrons in addition to expansion within the ARRC Gurkha Sp Bn, 3 RGR and the RSME. He has set the conditions for a very bright future and we are lucky that he has taken office as Colonel Commandant Brigade of Gurkhas. *Tapai ko madat ko nimti ekdam dherai dhanyabad, Wardlaw Saheb!*

Although I have never served as a QGE Officer, I come to the appointment with a long history of association with both 36 Engineer Regiment and Brigade of Gurkhas. My first posting was with 9 Parachute Squadron RE, when it was a sub-unit within 36 Engineer Regiment, and I forged close links with 69

Gurkha Fd Sqn during regimental exercises and major events including as the JNCO Cadre Officer, leaving me with many fond memories. I served with 1 RGR on part of Operation HERRICK 12 and in my recent role as Commander 16 Air Assault Brigade, I had the privilege of learning more about Gurkha culture, tradition and Kaida first-hand with the Royal Gurkha Rifles.

I am delighted to take the helm as Colonel of the Regiment at a time of great opportunity. There are plans in place for Phase 3 growth to be completed by the end of this year, the expansion of the ARRC Gurkha Sp Bn by 2023 and the growth of 67 Gurkha Field Squadron by early 2024. This will enable us to offer improved opportunities for promotion at all ranks.

The last year has been very challenging due to COVID-19 and I am sure that its impact will be felt for some time. The pandemic has reminded us that security threats and tests of national resilience can take many forms. The UK will continue to play a leading international role in collective security, multilateral governance, tackling climate change and health risks, conflict resolution and poverty reduction for which it requires increasingly agile and adaptable Armed Forces. The Integrated Review signals a change of approach and recognises the need for a sharper, more dynamic and technically focussed military in order to adapt to a more competitive and fluid international environment. The change in posture will see a restructuring of the Regular Army to 72,500 which will determine the contribution to be made by the Queen's Gurkha Engineers. We will see the results of the Army's work over the next year, but I am clear that the proposition is an exciting one that offers more relevant forces for the threats we face and an abundance of opportunity for those that serve.

The Queen's Gurkha Engineers emerge from 2020 with a subtly different profile and reputation. Our posture and contribution to the people of the UK during the fight against COVID-19 demonstrates our communications capability, planning capacity, trade skills and the ability to deliver under extreme conditions. We have continued to pursue excellence in the field of resilience; Project NIGHTINGALE, and Operations ROSE and RESCRIPT are just a few examples of our outstanding contribution to the nation's fight. The Queen's Gurkha Engineers are an integral, adaptable and flexible part of the Royal Engineers and the modern British Army. The Regiment continues to provide a unique engineering capability based on its cultural identity and operational effectiveness. We must not be complacent and our approach to our profession must continue to seek a simple precept: operationally we must be the best, and we must achieve this by harnessing our strengths of Regimental identity and our *Kaida* - the heady mix of our military traditions, Nepali culture and our unique QGE character. We are unique but we must remain humble and continue to excel.



Col QGE inspecting 74 Training Party during their attestation parade

This year we witnessed a 180% increase in Training Party numbers with 70 Sappers taking the oath of allegiance to the Queen's Gurkha Engineers; my first engagement as Colonel QGE. Despite the cancellation of social, cultural and traditional events including Dashain, I am pleased to report on a multitude of remotely organised events and activities under the Commandant Saheb which has ensured the maintenance of the moral component and our community. Victory in the Unit branding competition, Regiment e-FIFA competition and 'Sing with Sandhya' are a few highlights of QGE Sappers' extracurricular prowess. Unfortunately, the Regiment has been unable to authorise leave in Nepal since March last year due to travel restrictions and lockdown, but it has a plan in place to allow leave in Nepal during the summer should wider conditions allow. I know that our families and children have also been unable to practice social, cultural and traditional events since the onset of the pandemic, so I am pleased with the hard work that is going into the planning of a large QGE social and cultural event in the summer. Pandit Prem Prasad Gaire has provided invaluable religious and spiritual service through remote means throughout this difficult time – this has all been very gratefully received. Despite sadly losing many Gurkha veterans both in Nepal and in the UK because of COVID-19, overall, our relatives and families remain safe and in good spirits both here and in Nepal.

As we move forward together, I will be looking actively at how the Regiment should continue to evolve. For now, we must ensure to deliver additional capability in line with the hard-won growth targets and continue to demonstrate our professionalism and loyalty wherever we serve. Kaida is what makes us different and we must maintain this, always. We enjoy an excellent reputation around the world forged through the brave acts of our forefathers. Reputation is won hard and lost easily: our responsibility is to uphold our special Gurkha name and reputation.

Before I close, I would like to recognise and applaud the diligence, devotion and hard work of the committee of the Queen's Gurkha Engineers Association. A heartfelt thanks to all, particularly to Colonel (Retd) MP Carter who recently stood down as the Chairman after a period of superb stewardship. In his stead it is a great pleasure to welcome Colonel (Retd) Richard Walker as the new Chairman - we are lucky to have him.

I very much look forward to visiting you all as soon as the situation permits. I am immensely proud to have been given this unique responsibility and will commit heart, soul and sinew to take the Regiment forward.

Jai QGE!

Commandant The Queen's Gurkha Engineers Message

Lieutenant Colonel MD Hendry MBE



I have now had the honour of completing my first 8 months as Commandant of The Queen's Gurkha Engineers after being handed the reigns from Lt Col Mark Jones MBE. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone that has welcomed Sarah, Rafa and I back into the fold so warmly. I would also like to extend a warm welcome to Brigadier John Clark CBE in his new role as Colonel of the Regiment and thank the outgoing Colonel, Lt Gen Richard Wardlaw OBE, for his monumental efforts and support over the last 4 years. My thanks also go to the outgoing QGEA Committee Chairman, Colonel (Retd) Mike Carter. Equally, I am pleased to welcome Colonel (Retd) Richard Walker as the new Chairman. Lastly, it is also a great privilege to be working alongside my old friend Maj Kamal Khapung Limbu MVO as our Gurkha Major.

In what has been a memorable year for us all with unprecedented challenges and opportunities, the usual rich array of overseas operational deployments, sporting endeavours and cultural activities have been in somewhat more limited supply than usual. Yet the determination of QGE soldiers to support their families, Regiments and wider community has not faltered. Progress on the 3rd and 4th QGE Squadrons as part of Project SHERPA continues to develop and I welcome the newest 70 QGE members of 74 Training Party from ITC Catterick who passed off the square in March 2021. Growth of 67 Gurkha Field Squadron is well underway, with the lead element implementation team due to arrive in July 2021 and fully established by 2024, allowing for ongoing work on the QGE promotion structure to align. The highlights of the year have no doubt been the support our soldiers have provided to the country throughout the pandemic. The QGE have been at the forefront of the national effort throughout and I commend you all for your hard work, fully recognising the unwavering support to our friends and families during this confusing and troubled period.

Operation RESCRIPT (Defence's response to the global pandemic) continues this year and I am enormously proud of the key contributions we have been able to provide. Whilst large portions of the Army dispersed in early 2020, the QGE remained hard at work and played a key role in the construction of the NHS NIGHTINGALE Hospital at the ExCel arena in London. A Troop from 70 Gurkha Field Squadron, led by Lt Stu Taylor and SSgt Yakthunghang Angbuhang, worked tirelessly alongside the NHS and civilian contractors to deliver this key asset in the fight against COVID-19. Thankfully the hospital was never filled, but their efforts ensured our Health Service had the resilience and extra capacity needed at a critical time for the UK.

Closer to home, 69 Gurkha Field Squadron deployed to conduct targeted mass testing in Kent as part of the Kent Resilience Unit. At a time when the South East had some of the highest transmission rates in the UK, this community testing programme was a vital tool in identifying asymptomatic members of the population and preventing the further spread of the virus. Over a six-week period, 69 Gurkha Fd Sqn conducted thousands of tests and played a key role in helping the local community, enabling the relaxation of restrictions we are beginning to see.



Comd't visiting the M20 test site on Christmas Eve

On Christmas Eve 2020, 70 Gurkha Fd Sqn deployed alongside 36 Engineer Regimental Headquarters as part of the UK Standby Battalion commitment. Our soldiers were tasked to help clear the backlog of hauliers waiting to cross the channel in a scenario which was spiralling rapidly into a national supply chain crisis. As Commander of the UK Standby Battalion, it was a real privilege for me to watch the tireless work of 70 Gurkha Fd Sqn; they should all be immensely proud of their achievements. For up to 18 hours a day, they quickly ensured testing was no longer the limiting factor to keeping this vital national supply route open and allowed thousands of hauliers to return home for Christmas. The relief of those who had been stuck for days was palpable and the effect of their work was enormous with the British Ambassador to France writing personally to thank the subunit.

The QGE have continued to be recognised both individually and collectively for their work. Capt Krishna Pun was the recipient of the Durand Medal, LCpl Sangit Gurung the Bowring Trophy winner and SSgt Akash the Worshipful Company of Mason's Award. Cpl Nishan Thakali was also awarded a CGS Commendation and Cpl Topjang Rai received the Corps Sports Award for Services to Mountain Biking. Many others have been awarded Commander 8 Engineer Brigade commendations and should be rightly proud of their achievements.

Finally, as I look ahead filled with optimism and hope of a brighter year to come, I am reminded of all the things we must look forward to. As travel restrictions lift, I plan to visit our soldiers at other ERE units across the country and hopefully abroad. I look forward to returning to Nepal to conduct a duty trek and visit many old friends and colleagues. Nearer to home in the UK, as restrictions ease, I am eager to see the reinstatement of cultural events and community activities that were unavoidably cancelled over the past year and see our close-knit family physically thriving again. Thank you all for the continued support that you and your families have given to me, the Regiment and the country in what has been a most difficult period. My wife Sarah and I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible in the coming months.

Jai QGE

Gurkha Major's Message

Maj Kamal Bahadur Khapung Limbu MVO QGE



It hardly seems possible that it was 30 years ago that my father, who retired as GM TDBG (Trg Depot Bde of Gurkhas) and GM 10 GR, gave me his blessings and said that I needed to reach his rank and appointment. Here, I am today writing this report as the 26th Gurkha Major of The Queen's Gurkha Engineers; I am deeply humbled and truly delighted. Additionally, I am pleased to work for Commandant QGE, Lt Col M D Hendry MBE. I vividly remember our successful partnership during a deployment to France on a NATO exercise 19 years ago in 2002 as Lt Hendry and Sgt Kamal Khapung and later during Ex WESSEX STORM as Sqn 2IC and acting SSM in 2006.

As another busy year draws to a close, I reflect with huge pride on the achievements of the Regiment despite the COVID-19 restrictions. 2021 has seen both 69 and 70 Gurkha Fd Sqns deployed on Operations to support the UK government during the fight against COVID-19. The tempo of work across 70 Gurkha Fd Sqns portfolio continues to be demanding. The planning, coordination and execution of Op ROSE is worthy of particular note. This enabled more than 20,000 stranded hauliers in Dover and the South East of England to cross the English Channel following the emergence of a new strain of coronavirus in the UK. 70 Gurkha Fd Sqn also deserves praise for the execution of Project NIGHTINGALE. Their dedication, diligence and professionalism were remarkable as they worked round the clock with other agencies, contractors and NHS workers to create the new NHS NIGHTINGALE hospital with 4000 beds for coronavirus patients. Additionally, operational commitments have endured, and 70 Gurkha Fd Sqn has delivered everything that has been asked; from the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF), Winter Preparedness to UK Standby Battalion (UKSB). In addition, the Squadron was also able to schedule exercises incorporating combat engineering, infantry, driver, C3S and plant training including MATTs.

Equally, 2021 has been quite an outstanding year for 69 Gurkha Fd Sqn by any measure. The volume and variety of commitments has allowed the Squadron to continue to promote the QGE and Gurkha brand as a highly agile organisation, capable of responding across a wide range of tasks at short notice. The initial focus of the Squadron was MATTs, Operating in Built Up Area (OBUA) training, combat engineer training and in-house projects building to Alpha (Section) and Bravo (Troop) level collective training. Deploying to Salisbury Plain on the Charlie (Squadron) level exercise at the end of March ensured their combat engineering and infantry skills were tested in demanding and constrained situations in a variety of challenging environments. Deployment within Kent conducting mass testing as part of Op RESCRIPT from 4 Jan to 11 Feb 21 allowed the Squadron to demonstrate its ability to operate in new and demanding situations outside their traditional core role. Their impact was immediate; evidenced by the numerous letters of compliment from locals and dignitaries. In addition, to being held at readiness for multiple tasks and Winter Preparedness, the Squadron also deployed and conducted its annual Section Competition. This showcased tactical and technical proficiency, leadership, management, courage, physical and mental toughness, and developed teams and relationships.



GM conducting a visit to 69 Sqn during Op RESCRIPT



GM presenting QGE beret to Intake 20 during the unit Cap badging ceremony

The Regiment celebrated its 72nd Birthday in September, also saying farewell to the outgoing Colonel of the Regiment, Lt Gen Richard Wardlaw OBE Saheb and Judith Mem Saheb. The Queen's Gurkha Engineers and its soldiers are indebted to him for his outstanding contribution to the Regiment in this role spanning more than 4 years. On behalf of the Regt and *Pariwar*, I sincerely thank him for his commitment and service. We are equally lucky to welcome to the fold, Brigadier J L Clark CBE Saheb as the new Colonel of the Regiment and Seema Mem Saheb to QGE *Pariwar*. I am confident that the Regiment will flourish under his superb leadership. The Regiment has also begun to feel the admirable contributions from new OC 70 Gurkha Fd Sqn, Major O B Clark RE, new Adjt QGE, Capt L Hardern RE and new RSM QGE, WO1 (RSM) A P Malone RE. I am confident that they will continue to build on the legacy of their predecessors.

I am delighted to report that the QGE continues to grow as per Project SHERPA, as a wider appreciation for the special qualities that the Regiment brings to the Royal Engineers is felt. The Regiment welcomed and attested 70 new Sappers from 74 Training Party on 12 Mar 21. QGE has seen growth within RMAS, Warminster, MTMC and 3 RGR. Phase 3 growth is scheduled to complete by the end of this year. The QGE will see growth of additional 10 PIDs within ARRC Gurkha Sp Bn in 3 tranches between 2021 to 2023. 67 Gurkha Fd Sqn growth is well underway; the first tranche implementation team is set to report to 32 Engr Regt in July this year. This will be followed by the majority of the accompanied Service Personnel (SP) and main body joining them from September to December 2021. By 31 Mar 22 (IOC) 39 SPs will have joined 32 Engr Regt. A similar timeline will be repeated for the second and third tranches in order to meet FOC of 31 Mar 24. The re-designation of 67 Gurkha Fd Sqn is currently planned to take place between Oct 22 to Mar 23.

With the reduction of circa 10,000 soldiers as part of the Integrated Review (IR), combined with strong manning, recruiting and retention within RE the growth of 68 Gurkha Fd Sqn, I suspect, may be delayed or reviewed. RHQ QGE continues to effectively engage and communicate with all stakeholders (APC, RE WF Plans, RHQ RE, 12 Gp, Org, HQBG, 32 Engr Regt) in order to ensure QGE growth includes a coherent structure. As a direct result the QGE LE career model and an overall structural review, including other ranks and trades, is taking place as part of Project SHERPA. The GRMO PID will move to APC as SO3-QGE-Sldrs from summer 2021 in order to enable effective management of all QGE personnel in geographically separate sub-units.

COVID-19 has had an impact on almost all aspects of life since Mar 20, naturally one of the worst affected was socials and events. 2020 saw the cancellation of many prominent festivals, sporting events exhibitions and concerts to slow the spread of the virus. Unprecedented lockdowns, strict travel bans, and social distancing

measures saw the cancellation of the BG week, Trailwalker, Dashain, social events and functions including 'Messing'. The QGE Birthday celebration and Attestation Parade were conducted in a scaled back manner whilst religious and spiritual support was provided remotely by Pandit Prem Prasad Gaire. QGE families and ladies have also been unable to practice and organise, social and cultural events since Mar 20. All of this combined has undoubtedly had an impact on morale but RHQ QGE's careful and intelligent mitigation plan allowed SPs and families to engage and partake in remotely conducted events such as TIHAR, Christmas, New Year, Orienteering etc.

SP and families wanting to take leave or travel to Nepal have been hit the hardest by COVID-19 due to travel restrictions and lockdown policies enforced by both the UK and Government of Nepal. SPs with compassionate or severe welfare cases have been authorised to travel to Nepal on a case by case basis. The Regiment has planned for a period during summer this year to allow SPs to take leave in Nepal. We hope that we can all return to normality this summer and be able to meet those we sorely miss.

Despite COVID-19 the Regiment followed their sporting prowess in a series of remotely organised competitions. Wins in the Unit branding competition and Regiment e-FIFA competition were secured by Sprs Bijay and Subham Gurung respectively. Sprs Prakash and Devendra secured Runners Up position in the Brigade of Gurkhas e-sports competition. Cpl Top as always represented the Army during the MTB UK Southern cross country. A six-person team from 70 Gurkha Fd Sqn secured joint first during the 'Sing with Sandhya' competition (virtual) organised by the Gurkha Welfare Trust and Project Hello World. Judges included Ms Joanna Lumley OBE and Mr Stephen Fry. The team recorded a song 'Tungna ko dhunma' that was integrated by Spr Christiano and edited by Spr Susan Nalbo. The music video was shot individually in their rooms.

Last but not least, the invaluable work from the QGEA committee as always remains first class. In particular the outgoing Chairman Colonel (Ret'd) Mike Carter Saheb; thank you very much for your commitment and service. Equally, I am pleased to welcome Colonel (Ret'd) Richard Walker Saheb as the new Chairman and I look forward to working together again.

Jai QGE!

RHQ News

By Captain Khadkabahadur Gurung CMgr EngTech PgDip QGE (GRCMO)



'Pariwar ani Paltan'

My third tour assignment has been a mixture of a short stint at Headquarters Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (HQ ARRC) as Training Officer ARRC Support Battalion followed by Gurkha Regimental Career Management Officer (GRCMO) at RHQ QGE. As I write this report, sadly, I am packing up again. This did not come as a surprise as we all know promotion comes with a new role and a move including family. I will be handing over GRCMO role to Captain Govinda Rana and will take over the role of SO2 G1/SSO Brunei Garrison from Major Buddhi Bhandari MVO in June 2021.

When I took over from Maj Ashok Gurung in May 2020, we were well and truly at the frontline in the fight against COVID-19. Once again, QGE soldiers' versatile utility and professionalism were evident during the construction and delivery phase of the NHS Nightingale hospital, Operation RESCRIPT and Operation ROSE. Outside of 36 Engineer Regiment, QGE members serving in ERE units have massively contributed to tackle the global pandemic across the UK and overseas. We must be proud, how far we have come and what we have achieved individually and collectively including our families who remained resilient, committed and supportive during the darkest hours of the pandemic. I will keep it short and relevant as you have read the Commandant's and Gurkha Major's report and further details are covered in the Squadron's update.

Change of Command and Appointment

In July 2020, Lt Col Mark Jones MBE handed over the command of 36 Engineer Regiment and the role of Commandant QGE to Lt Col Mark Hendry MBE. Simultaneously, Maj Purnasingh Tamang handed over the Gurkha Major QGE appointment to Maj Kamal Khapung Limbu MVO. RSM (WO1) A P Malone RE also assumed the role of RSM QGE at the same time. A historical GSA PiD is now a QGE tight post and renamed as QGE Manning SNCO. SSgt Akash Tamang is the first QGE Manning SNCO and has left a hallmark; his successor has some big shoes to

fill. SSgt Akash is moving to Gurkha Company, ITC Catterick in June 2021 on promotion as the Training Co-ordinator. GRCMO will be located at APC Glasgow as SO3 QGE Soldiers from July 2021, a significant change within RHQ QGE. This move will enable the provision of a professional, effective and efficient career management of QGE soldiers as QGE sees its sub-units geographically spread out beyond Maidstone as part of Project SHERPA. Within Squadron, Capt Sophie Piper RE handed over the second in command 69 Gurkha Field Squadron to Capt Edward Borland RE and Maj Ian Pilbeam RE handed over the batten of OC 70 Gurkha Field Squadron to Maj Olly Clark RE.

QGE Workforce (WF)

QGE WF dated 31 Mar 21 is illustrated in the table including 36 Engineer Regiment and 11 ERE units. Liability = 338. Strength = 374. Over strength = 36. Overall strength is higher than the liability and will remain so during the transition phase of Project SHERPA (QGE) but this will be balanced after the delivery phase. Over strength WF is assigned under Surplus To Establishment Organisation (STEO PiD) commonly known as a bucket PiD within 69 and 70 Gurkha Field Squadron. 3 x RegC (LE) Majors and personnel on the Clerk of Works (CoW) course are not included on QGE WF as they are employed under wider E2 posts and resilience margin.

QGE WORKFORCE		
Unit	Liability	Strength
36 Engr Regt	269	299
1 RSME	9	9
2ITB	12	16
3 RGR	6	6
3 RSME	8	9
ARRC SP BN	11	12
HQ BGN	2	3
HQ BWN GAR	6	5
IBS	8	8
RMAS	2	2
SWS	4	4
MTMC	1	1
Total	338	374 (Encl 3x RegC & Sr Coltn)
Overall +/-		+36
Training Pipeline		
Intake 18		1
Intake 19		33
Intake 20		42
Total		76

Terms of Service (ToS)

QGE Soldiers are included within the RE Soldiers ToS and the statistics dated 31 Mar 21 are shown in the table. This includes all 70 Sappers from RI 20. In 2020, a total of 18 eligible candidates from Intake 12 (x3) and Intake 13 (x15) were boarded for VEng(S) to VEng(F) conditional conversion. Only 28% (x5) of them were offered VEng(F) and accepted. Unlike previous years, the conversion quota in 2020 has been significantly less. This is due to the current QGE WF requirement and largely due to the repercussion of large intakes and all OEng personnel converted to VEng(F). A total of 31 candidates, Intake 13 (x12) and Intake 14 (x19) are

eligible in 2021 for the VEng(S) to VEng(F) conditional selection board. Greater inflow and much lesser outflow compounds the cause of limited quota for conversion. Outflow within QGE is primarily through CoW (variable each year), transfer and retirement at the end of a full career, with the first individual to retire on pension is not before 2023. VEng(F) conversion quota may be further exacerbated if the opportunity to transfer and CoW is decreased. Therefore, a greater expectation management is key at all level. It is imperative that all commanders, leaders and managers play their part to maintain the morale and fighting spirit of QGE WF. We must all understand that QGE WF behaviour is uniquely different to wider arms and services thus requires intelligent leadership and smart management. RHQ QGE is constantly seeking alternatives and exploiting opportunities to avoid the wastage of such a highly trained and versatile WF. Our people do not want to leave, instead they want to serve a full career within QGE. It reminds me of a famous quote. "Train people well enough so that they can leave, treat people well enough so that they don't want to leave" - Sir Richard Branson.

Rank	QGE OR ToS as of 31 Mar 21				
	VEng(S)	VEng(F)	VEng(L)	OEng	Total
Spr	256	3	0	0	259
LCpl	18	48	0	0	66
Cpl	0	58	0	1	59
Sgt	0	23	0	0	23
SSgt	0	21	0	0	21
WO2	0	9	0	0	9
Total	274	162	0	1	437

Service Leavers (SL) and Transfer

Maj Ashok Gurung, Capt Dirgha KC, Capt Bishwa Rai, WO2 Birendra Kambang and SSgt Ram Phago have retired after an illustrious career and decades of sterling service to QGE and the wider Army. Spr Sandesh Gauchan will also be leaving the service early, in 2021. An extension of 3 months service due to COVID-19 allowed him to complete a Diploma Level 6, Gas Engineer course. He is optimistic to work in Kent or London after his placement. Transition and resettlement for our service leavers has been a difficult journey due to the pandemic. However, Capt Dirgha KC has started an FTRS assignment as an Officer Commanding, Brigade Culture and Language Training (OC BCLT) within HQBG. WO2 Birendra Kambang was also offered an FTRS job but he is seeking to secure a career within the RE Reserves as a commissioned officer. We are thankful to our SLs for their dedicated service to QGE. Our best wishes to all of them and their families for their future endeavours. A fond farewell is pending as we eagerly wait for the world and the UK to return to normality. Additionally, six NCOs have passed their CoW course in 2020 and

accepted VEng(F) to serve within RE. LCpl Prem Tamang also received a VEng(F) on a successful transfer to RE.

QGE PIDs Expiring (Folding back)

An increase in the number of Recruit Intake in 2019 saw an uplift of the number of training teams in Gurkha Company, ITC Catterick. PIDs that were uplifted expire at the end of 2021 as the number of Recruit Intake drops down to 240 from 2022. This will result in a number of uplifted QGE PIDs dissolved and will see the return of a WO2 (Wing 2IC), 2 x Sgts (Trg 2IC, Pl Sgt), 3 x Cpls and potentially some PTIs. This means that these personnel will have to be allocated a PID within QGE from the end of 2021. This has already impacted on the SSgt to WO2 promotion and will further impact on promotion opportunity, especially Cpl to Sgt. RHQ QGE has already highlighted the issue and recommended to seek for viable alternatives. We are all aware promotion within QGE has always been highly competitive and fierce.

QGE LE Officers

- Late Entry (LE) Commission.** WO2 (SSM) Bikash Shrestha and WO2 (QMSI) Lal Rana were successfully selected for QGE LE commissioning under Short Service Commission (SSC LE) ToS in 2020. They will take over the roles of Tp Comd, 67 Gurkha Field Squadron (Initially 37 Field Squadron RE) and Sp Tp Comd, 69 Gurkha Field Squadron respectively from July 2021. As you are aware, from 2020, all BG units have accepted a wider ToS and commissioned their officers direct on Intermediate Regular Commission ((IRC (LE)) ToS instead of SSC (LE). A concentrated effort between RHQ QGE and relevant stakeholders is in progress on how QGE LE officers could be commissioned direct under IRC (LE) ToS.
- QGE LE Officer PIDs.** Year 2020 saw the reduction of QM (Tech) ARRC Sp Bn plus AI Leadership within REWW. Year 2021 will see the reduction of BGE British Forces Brunei and Wing Comd, Gurkha Coy. Additionally, Trg Offr ARRC Sp Bn PID did not exist and the QGE LE Offr employed there sat in Ops Offr 70 Gurkha Fd Sqn PID. ARRC Sp Bn is converting to ARRC Gurkha Sp Bn in July 2022 but its ORBAT doesn't contain a Trg Offr PID hence QGE will not be allowed to employ its Offr as Trg Offr ARRC Sp Bn from June 2021. With the support from RE WF Plans and HQBG, RHQ QGE has managed to convert QM (Tech) ARRC Sp Bn to QGE E1 PID from 1 Jul 22. We will also see an increase of QGE LE Tp Comd and QGE LE Ech Comd within 67 Gurkha Fd Sqn from 2021 and 2022 respectively.
- QGE LE Structure and Career Model.** In conjunction with all stakeholders (RE WF Plans, APC, HQ RE, HQ BG, 12 Gp, Army Org) RHQ QGE is conducting a review of QGE LE structure and career model since Aug 20. RHQ QGE is seeking for a sustainable and coherent QGE LE career model which has been agreed by all

stakeholders. QGE LE career model will be discussed during Pj SHERPA (QGE) in May. Comd 12 Gp will then present the career model to RE 7 Ball in summer or autumn 21. QGE LE career model contains a three Squadron structure and a four Squadron structure.

Project SHERPA (QGE)

Phase 3 growth, QGE PIDs within 3 RGR and ARRC, and 67 Gurkha Fd Sqn growth are all part of Project SHERPA (QGE). The Phase 3 growth is almost complete.

3RGR

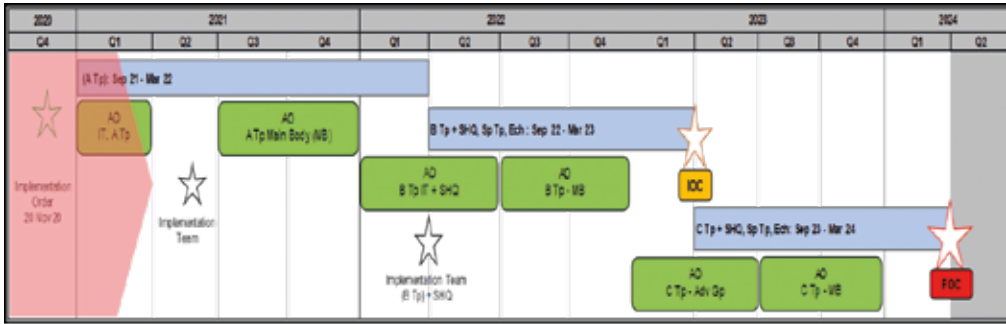
Three QGE members within A Coy are currently deployed to Somalia on Operation TANGHAM for 8 months; 4 months rotation between Team 1 and Team 2. A Coy 3RGR is within 4 RIFLES ORBAT; comprising of 3 Fighting Companies. East Africa is their area of operations and B Coy will follow when ready. An additional three QGE members recently assigned to B Coy have successfully completed a mandatory 2 weeks Specialised Infantry Cadre (SIC). On completion of three weeks live firing tactical training followed by a basic language course in the UK, they will deploy to Kenya on mission specific training, Exercise ASKARI SPEAR. Following the Integrated Review, HQ Coy and C Coy 3RGR growth is temporarily paused. However, our plan is in place for QGE WF to fill the requirement.

67 Gurkha Field Squadron QGE, 32 Engineer Regiment RE

The handover of Hong Kong to China in 1997 seems a distant memory to many of us. I was a young Sapper in C Tp when we witnessed 67 Gurkha Field Squadron flag being lowered in Borneo Lines, Hong Kong for the final time. It was a mixed feeling of sadness and excitement. Sad to see that many members were made redundant and excited that we were moving to the United Kingdom. Who would have thought that 25 years later, I would be planning and managing QGE WF in order to reform 67 Gurkha Field Squadron and raise its flag in 2022 as part of Project SHERPA. Amazing! I feel honoured and hugely privileged. The table below shows a planning timeline of the reformation of 67 Gurkha Field Squadron that will be part of 32 Engineer Regiment RE based at Marne Barracks, Catterick. The implementation team (Tp Comd, Tp SSgt and 2 x Combat Cpls) will report to 37 Field Squadron RE from July 2021 to conduct initial administration, handover process and set the condition to usher the main body including families and children when they arrive. This process will repeat in 2022 and 2023. The Redesignation parade is scheduled between Oct 22 and Mar 23.

ARRC Sp Bn

The Battalion has been renamed as ARRC Gurkha Sp Bn from Jul 21 Each year QGE footprint will increase until 2024.



Note: IT - Implementation Team, AO - Assignment Order, IOC - Initial Operating Capability, FOC - Full Operating Capability



RHQ QGE Photograph

Left to Right: Capt Khadkabahadur Gurung QGE (GRCMO QGE), Lt Col MD Hendry MBE RE (Comdt QGE), Brigadier J L Clark CBE (Colonel of the Regiment), Maj Kamalbahadur Khapung Limbu MVO QGE (GM QGE), WO1 (RSM) A P Malone RE (RSM QGE) and Capt R Pickering RE (Stand In Adjt).

69 Gurkha Field Squadron

Major Mike Gledhill RE, OC 69 Gurkha Field Squadron

This year has been fraught with challenges. The effects of the COVID-19 global pandemic has hit the 69 Squadron Family Group hard, with all within it having to weather this seemingly endless storm. Yet the tenacious spirit of the Squadron has endured regardless, etching out activity to ensure that the fighting power of the organisation lives on. From innovative social functions to the 'back to basics' training exercises in Copehill Down and Pippingford Park, the soldiers of the Squadron have risen to the challenge despite all that has been thrown at them. Resolutely supported by their families, they have done everything that has been asked of them and all should be justifiably proud of what they and the Squadron have achieved during this fractious period.

Squadron Personnel Changes

The Squadron's return from operations in South Sudan in March 2020 saw a number of key personalities come and go. Most notably was the changeover of the Squadron Sergeant Major from the outgoing WO2 Chandrabahadur Pun, who on commissioning took command of Curragh Troop handing over to WO2 Bikash Shrestha. At the same time the Squadron was very sad to see the Second in Command, Capt Sophie Piper, leave the Service after a remarkable tenure handing over the reins to Capt Edward Borland. This period also saw two new troop commanders arrive: 2Lt Helen Bridgman and 2Lt Tom Penman who took command of I Troop and G Troop from Lt Zach Tarrant-Taylor and Lt Louis Trup respectively. Within the Echelon department, Capt Andrew 'Ronnie'

Barker posted on handing over to Capt Rob Green. There was also a large changeover within the SNCO cohort with SSgt Jayendra Garbuja and Sgt Lilaram Rai leaving on promotion and Sgt Dilprasad Gurung and Sgt Bhupendra Rai posted on. They were replaced by Sgt Raju Tulachan, Sgt Dilbahadur Pun, Sgt Sandesh Rai, Sgt Jeffon Beharry and SSgt Shivakumar Rai. The Construction Supervision Cell also saw WO2 Doran-Thorpe, SSgt Cottam and SSgt Charlery join the QGE Family, however, WO2 Doran-Thorpe very quickly moved on promotion back up to Chilwell.

Invicta Park Barracks Perimeter Security Upgrade (27-30 Apr 20)

In and amongst the turmoil of the national lockdown and the subsequent quarantine measures that followed, it was crucial that we recognised the mental strain placed on the members of the QGE, especially those living in Single Living Accommodation. Having just returned to the United Kingdom from South Sudan and with Nepal leave cancelled resulting in a large proportion of the Squadron having to endure lockdown in the block, it was vitally important that we identified opportunities to undertake crucial activity to allow soldiers to once again interact with each other. Such an opportunity presented itself when the Regimental Second in Command identified urgent work that was required to upgrade areas of the Invicta Park Barracks perimeter that had fallen into disrepair. A team under the new troop commander, 2Lt Helen Bridgman and Sgt Raju Tulachan undertook the task, which included anchoring new fence posts, fixing large swathes of barb wire, spot welding brackets onto the front gate and the wholesale clearance of vegetation.



Cpl Gyanendra inspecting the fence upgrade work

A relatively easy first task post operations but an important one, nonetheless.

A shift to the Virtual Realm (13 Apr - 17 Jul 20)

The onset of lockdown required the Squadron to adapt its processes and command from a distance through whatever means available. This led to the instigation of a virtual battle rhythm that encompassed everything from physical training to Squadron 'Tea and Toast'. Although difficult to accept at first, the Squadron persevered and it eventually became second nature to speak to a two-dimensional image of each other as we continued to conduct normal Squadron business through our phones and computers. This of course could never replace actual face to face interaction, and the headquarters sought any and all opportunities to safely allow real interaction. Such an opportunity arose at the beginning of June 2020 as the Government loosened the reins and the need to begin training became paramount. A back to basics Battle Craft Syllabus was put together to enable the troops to conduct section battle drills and revise combat engineering within the confines of Invicta Park Barracks. The field troops practiced their craft up and down Trudos Hill which was good to see after an absence of a couple of months. It also kept those in the nearby married quarters on their toes as soldiers took positions and conducted casualty evacuations in an amongst Malden Drive.

Ex SAPPER FIT (29 Jun - 3 Jul 20)

Having to endure PT within the confines of one's living room for the past few months, it was decided that

it was time to create a safe yet challenging physical training competition within the Squadron. Cpl Basanta Thamsuhang led with the event, having to overcome some serious force health protection risks to enable the competition to go ahead, the final of which would be attended by Colonel Brigade of Gurkhas and Commandant QGE. The event saw soldiers compete in an insidious mix of cardio and static max repetition exercises within the walled garden, ending of course with a mandatory bleep test. The winner of the team event was I Troop with LCpl Rupesh Gurung taking the individual prize.

Management and Squadron Summer Function (15 Jul 20)

After an excruciating long absence of a Squadron social function it was time to explore the possibility of having one, within government rules of course. The first was a management function that took place at the local Nepali restaurant, The Gurkha Kitchen, who were good enough to close the whole facility for our sole use. It was an extremely well attended affair and the Squadron never realised how many REME 'attachments' we had until the offer of a Gurkha curry came up. The event was organised by Sgt Raju Tulachan and was exactly what the management team needed and provided an opportunity to say a few words to a long list of new arrivals and leavers from the Squadron. The success of this function allowed us to roll straight into a Squadron Summer function organised by Cpl Roshan Chhantyal which took place in the Walled Garden. All members of the Squadron attended the event in and amongst much fanfare albeit in a restricted manner.



Cpl Degnath Pokhrel delivering orders during Battlecraft Syllabus training

QGE Welcome to New Commandant and GM (11 Sep 20)

It was great to see the return of Lt Col Mark Hendry MBE back to the QGE as Commandant and equally so the arrival of Maj Kamal Khapung MVO as Gurkha Major. Such an event had to be marked with a celebration and so the Squadron under the SSM, WO2 Bikash Shrestha, planned a fitting QGE welcome to the two prominent new Regimental personalities. Unfortunately, the event had to be scaled down with only a select few from across the QGE family attending. Hosted in the All Ranks Mess, the formal dinner and entertainment was capped by a few drinks in the Unit Study Centre.



Welcoming the new Commandant Saheb and Gurkha Major Saheb

Ex KHUKURI CHALLENGE Squadron Section Competition (15-18 Sep 20)

There are few tests more demanding for a soldier than the Section Competition. After a rather long hiatus of any 'green activity', it was time to take the leap of faith and deploy to Pippingford Park for the Squadron Section Competition. The event took place over three days, encompassing numerous stands during a particular warm spell, resulting in a gruelling challenge for all those that took part. Naturally, the obligatory events of the Section Attack, a CBRN serial, the MGOB build and the Vehicle Recovery stand were interspersed with a Night Navigational Exercise, a Water Crossing, a Waterpoint build, a Signals task and a Mental Agility stand to allow for the full breadth of skillsets to be tested. As the first shake out of the Squadron since its return from South Sudan, there was unexpectedly a large amount of excitement for the event. Probably something to do with the majority of the Squadron being confined to Single Living Accommodation for the best part of five months. Organising such an event had the added complexity of it having to be COVID compliant, and SSgt Basanta Gurung did a sterling job ensuring everyone's safety by drafting a mammoth thirty-page risk assessment. As mentioned, the event itself took part during some particularly high-end summer temperatures, resulting in the Operations Officer, Capt Krishna Pun keeping a close eye on the Wet Bulb Globe Temperature throughout the exercise and curtailing activity when required. This gave some sections a particular advantage as they only had to mimic wearing full 4R during the CBRN serial, much to their relief and the disgust of the other sections. Credit must be given to all who took part as it was a testing exercise with the final weighted run in signifying the end of it all. The winning section came from I Troop under command of Cpl Suryahang Rai with Cpl Gyanendra Thapamagar's Section from H Troop coming second overall.



LCpl Dikendra and his section attempting the river crossing

**Ex RISE OF THE PHOENIX
Trailwalker Alternative (23 Sep 20)**

The cancellation of Trailwalker 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic created a hole in the Regimental program, which thanks to some pragmatic organisation by Cpl Rusal Thapa, was filled by an alternative event known as Ex RISE OF THE PHOENIX. The event, consisted of teams of four having to conduct a marathon over the arduous terrain of the Kent Downs, in particular the North Down's Way. The event would start and finish on the sports pitches of Invicta Park Barracks and saw some 30 teams take part within different age categories on the 42.2km route. It was impressive to see such a good uptake of individuals from across the Regiment not only taking part, but also volunteer to host the three, much needed checkpoints. The event was extremely well orchestrated, with teams leaving at five-minute intervals throughout the morning to begin their journey around the arduous route. Miraculously, only two members of the Regiment had to be retired due to injury/exhaustion which was remarkable as many runners admitted before the event that 10km was the furthest they had ever run. The winning team was from 70 Gurkha Field Squadron, who had conducted much training and had a support team that would make many Olympic teams jealous. They came in on a winning time of 3 hours and 58 minutes. The other results were as follows:



Team C3S looking strong on the run



Cpl Gyanendra's Section leading the charge as the break in group

**Ex KHUKURI URBAN CRAWL - OBUA
Package Copehill Down Village (5-9 Oct 20)**

As with many things in life, it is not what you know but who you know that matters. This is especially true in the Army and it was the connections of the Echelon Commander, Captain 'Ronnie Barker' that secured the Squadron exclusive access to Copehill Down Village for one week in order to allow for some much-needed urban training. Luck would also have it that Captain Barker was also an OBUA instructor and so could also lead with the training which saw a steady progression over five days of urban skills being acquired. The training event was unique in the fact that a sapper squadron could practice whatever they wanted with the full exclusive use of the village real estate. Training consisted of the urban assault course, zero visibility indoor mazes, experience of operating in a claustrophobic sewer system and learning various method of entry serials; all interspersed with lots of room and building clearances. This, of course, culminated in a pre-dawn squadron attack onto the Eastern end of the village which tested troops in a highly kinetic break-in battle.

Ser	Names	Team	Finish Time	Categories
1	Spr Prabin Spr Merin Spr Dipen Spr Tularaj	Team SPARTA	3 hrs 58 min	20-29 Years
2	Maj Gledhill Capt Borland Lt Bridgeman Lt Penman	Team 69 OFFICERS	4 hrs 7 min	Mix Team
3	Cpl Sangam Cpl Manoj Cpl Bikash LCpl Mahesh	Team FLYING CORPORALS	4 hrs 28 min	30-39 Years
4	Capt Krishna Capt Barker Capt Khelendra Capt Forsey	Team LE	6 hrs 21 min	40 + Years

Trim Trail Upgrade Project (14-27 Oct 20)

After many years standing open to the elements it was obvious that the on-camp Trim Trail was in very much need of an upgrade. Not only would such a task benefit all within the Invicta Park Barracks community, but it would give some of our tradesmen a chance to revisit some of their skills. The Squadron therefore took it upon itself to instigate the upgrade work with I Troop leading the charge under the leadership of Lt Helen Bridgman. The project required remediating most of the existing stations as well as putting to bed some of the stations that were beyond repair. After some careful negotiating over resources from the Logistics Node, the two-week project commenced tackling the refurbishment of eleven stations and decommissioning a further four. The project was a success but due to the current COVID restrictions, the Trail hasn't had its Grand opening just yet; one for the future.



Spr Deepak Gurung ensuring the Trim Trail station is level

Gurkha Museum Visit (21 Oct 20)

Long overdue was some cultural activity for the Squadron and so when the opportunity arose, we immediately exploited it in the form of a visit to the Gurkha Museum in Winchester. Planned and executed by Cpl Madan Thapa, the trip saw a large proportion of the Squadron make their way to Winchester to better understand the QGE and their wider Gurkha heritage.

Op RESCRIPT (4 Jan - 11 Feb 21)

The COVID-19 crisis resulted in many units being placed at readiness in preparation to support the Government's mass testing initiative. 69 Gurkha Field Squadron was no different and the Squadron found itself at five days' notice to move for the final quarter of 2020. After two false starts, it was finally mobilised to support Kent County Council deliver mass testing in early January 2021. Under command of 35 Engineer Regiment, the Squadron deployed to set up and run six asymptomatic Mass Testing sites before handing them over to the council. Further into the task, we took over a further two testing centres to run and eventually hand over to the council. Although the task was 12hrs a day and 7 days a week, it was a rather comfortable affair. Certainly, the most comfortable any of us older sweats had experienced on operations as we found ourselves accommodated in 3- and 4-star hotels. That said, the task was testing yet rewarding, as we were able to help in the nation's fight against COVID-19. The finer detail of the deployment is encompassed in a separate article within the journal.

Project MakerSpace (1 Feb - 31 Mar 21)

With Commander Field Army's focus on innovation and a push from the Regimental Second in Command, Maj James Kelly, the Squadron volunteered to support the creation of a MakerSpace; a workspace to allow



LCpl Milan assisting a member of the public complete her COVID test registration

members from the Regiment and their wider families to experiment and learn new skills. The Squadron lead for the project was the Military Plant Foreman, SSgt Scot Petrie, who as the innovation lead, was the natural choice for the project. From the design concept to resourcing and final construction, the project involved elements from across the Squadron, predominantly from H Troop, who provided the bulk of the Military Construction Force under Lt Hamaad Basir and SSgt Bishnu Gurung. The project, delayed many times due to the Squadron deployment on Op RESCRIPT and various iterations of lockdown, finally saw the bulk of construction carried out in the Able Hanger during the period February-March 2021, with Fabricators, Electricians and Builder & Structural Finishers being key to its success. The design saw the procurement of three ISO containers which were then fabricated to make a suitable workspace both indoors and outdoors for interested personnel to utilise. Equipped with lathes, CNC wood cutting machines and other useful tools, it will provide everyone the opportunity to sign up to the MakerSpace group and 'tinker' to their hearts content.



L Cpl Nayan Limbu doing some crucial welding

Ex INVICTA STALLION (8 - 22 Mar 21)

In preparation for the Squadron's impending deployment in support of two Battlegroups on Ex WESSEX STORM, there was a requirement to undergo a validation exercise known as Ex INVICTA STALLION. Originally planned to be a two-week Regimental exercise, the Squadron's deployment on Op RESCRIPT meant that our own sub-unit exercise had to be cancelled and incorporated into Ex INVICTA STALLION. As a result, the training progression was reduced by half and the Regimental Exercise had to be tailored accordingly to allow for the Squadron to train in the first week, followed by validation in the second week; a rather difficult task considering the reduced timeline. Resetting from the rather comfortable deployment in support of Kent County Council whereby we were housed in hotels, to the windswept forestry blocks of Salisbury Plain in what was a horrendous period of weather took some getting used to. This would be a learning curve for all involved, from the young sappers of Intake 2019 to the Squadron Headquarters Group who had not exercised since returning from Op TRENTON 8. Everyone was put through their paces, reacquainting themselves with combat engineering skills and the resourcing effort required to enable such tasks as a 12 Bay Double Story MGB build over the River Avon to the construction of 4-man battle trenches on the RETA. The words, camming up and de-camming became synonymous with the exercise, much to the disgust of all. Night driving, a task not undertaken for a while, became a comedy of errors as Plant Operators and Troop Commanders fell asleep, resulting in split callsigns which, compounded with navigational errors, resulted in a steep learning curve for the whole force. But the inevitable mistakes were quickly learned and by the time we crossed the line of departure for the Regimental exercise in the second week, we were a slick sub-unit ready for anything. An attack on Imber Village and an 18-hour CBRN serial later, saw the Squadron back in for tea and medals after what was a testing but rewarding two weeks on Salisbury Plain. The highlight of the exercise was definitely seeing the Squadron Second in Command, Capt Ed Borland, attempting to pack away his poncho during a particularly windy reveille as well as listening to the sounds of his tent being blown away with him asleep in it at 0300hrs in the middle of the exercise.

70 Gurkha Field Squadron

Maj O B Clark RE, OC 70 Gurkha Fd Sqn

The past year has been unlike any other, it has been fraught with uncertainties and frustrations. Despite this, 70 Gurkha Field Sqn have prevailed and have continued to demonstrate remarkable resilience and determination. It is important to take stock and reflect upon the Squadron achievement of the past year.

This year 70 Gurkha Field Sqn has supported operations at home and abroad, whilst simultaneously upholding its Very High Readiness status for numerous operations. More specifically, it has been committed to the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) in support of NATO (Op AGORA); Op TEMPERER (the UK response to a terrorist attack) and UK resilience operations through the United Kingdom's Standby Battalion (UKSB). Throughout, the Squadron has continued to deliver essential operationally focused training, maintained an impressive 90+% deployability and delivered tangible effect on operations which has been felt internationally.

Project Nightingale (Op RESCRIPT)

The first lockdown in March 2020 dispersed the Squadron and ceased planned activity, as the pandemic's grip on the nation tightened and the concern of the NHS being overwhelmed became more prevalent, Project NIGHTINGALE was activated. This involved the transformation of the Excel center in London into a vast hospital in anticipation that the NHS would not be able to cope with the deluge of COVID-19 patients. At impressive pace, the Regiment deployed a recce team and then a Military Construction Force to the Excel center. The task was lead by 70 Gurkha Fd Sqn and commanded by Lt Stu Taylor and SSgt Yakthunghang Anghuhang. The dynamic team, liaising with numerous stakeholders across government, rapidly constructed partition wall to thousands of cubicles and then installed electrics and ventilation to enable the

hospital to be fully operational. A remarkable effort from the team in supporting the Nation when in need. Following this peak of activity, the Squadron resumed dispersed working but began to diversify its training as its interactions became more vital. The Squadron impressively maintained a substantial level of training through Zoom, Skype and MS Teams, and developed new ways to socialise and engage.

Maintaining Very High Readiness

During a momentary easing of lockdown restrictions, the Squadron grabbed an opportunity to conduct Battlefield Craft Syllabus (BCS) and Specific to Role training within Invicta Park Barracks in June as well as some driver training in July. This break in lockdown was a welcome source of interaction and allowed the Squadron to physically train to maintain its readiness. The BCS training covered both infantry and combat engineering activities which were beneficial in improving the Sprs and JNCOs skills. Thereafter, Support Troop jumped at the opportunity to deliver a drivers General Service Conversion module from Canterbury training area and successfully qualified six soldiers to drive Land Rovers.

August 2020 saw the Squadron welcome Major Oliver Clark RE as the new Officer Commanding who took the reins from Major Ian Pilbeam RE. Soon after a staggered Summer break, 70 Gurkha Fd Sqn was tested on its High Readiness callout procedures as an assessment for its contribution to the NATO VJTF. Individual kit, equipment, documents and vehicles were rigorously inspected to ensure the Squadron could guarantee a rapid and efficient deployment if called upon. The Squadron had no issues in passing with flying colours. As part of the VJTF commitment the Squadron operated out of Husky armoured wheel vehicles. The vehicle has required the Squadron to change the way in which Troops operate, but it has provided the Squadron with a potent platform from which to protect itself and others. The fleet is a force multiplier but does require stringent maintenance and a continuous training schedule to ensure deployability is maintained. A new cohort of Vehicle Commanders and 2ICs completed their Husky Commander course to deepen the Squadron's resilience.

Concurrently, the Squadron demonstrated its versatility in the construction of a Mountain Bike Trail around the perimeter of Invicta Park Barracks (IPB). With the Regiment becoming awash with talented and budding cyclist this 4 km trail that hugs the fence offers a varied and challenging array of obstacles to negotiate. Support Troop worked closely with the Squadron Construction Supervision Cell (CSC) to design and construct the course. It offers some technically challenging parts for the advanced riders as well as moderately challenging sections for the novices and children from the community.

In September, further easing of restrictions together with the necessity for all troops to maintain



Spr Rubin in action during Op RESCRIPT

their currency and competency of core skills saw the Squadron conduct Special to Arms training simultaneously in four locations throughout the UK. The Officer Commanding, Battlegroup Engineer (BGE) and BGE party ventured to Scotland on Ex GALLOWAY HACKLE in support of 3 SCOTS BG. This exercise helped fine tune the Battlegroup's All Arms interoperability as a means to maintain its continued readiness for NATO's VJTF commitment. The Squadron planning team ran through the tactical planning estimates and helped deepen its relationships with 3 SCOTS, as well as hosting General Officer Commanding 1 UK Division. Concurrently, the Field Troops deployed to Wykes Regis Training Area in Weymouth on Ex DHARILO PUL NIRMAN 20. Here under some beautiful weather, they completed combat engineering training which covered bridging (Logistical Support Bridge, Medium Girder Bridge and, Medium Girder Over Bridge), basic combat engineering and watermanship training. A well-run exercise which culminated in a passionate and well fought raft race.

Meanwhile, Support Troop completed refresher plant training at Wainscott training area. This well-planned package helped maintain Troop competencies in operating and maintaining numerous plant vehicles. The graduated training allowed the troops to hone their skills on a range of tasks, testing their abilities through scenario-based stands. The stands covered grading for route maintenance, digging of tank ditches and mortar pits along with lifting schedule for crane operators. All these skills are vital for the Squadron to be competent in its provision of survivability, mobility and counter mobility support. At the same time the Signals Troop proved BOWAN communications at Invicta Park Barracks. They tested and proved both voice and data communications, relaying messages over numerous kilometres throughout Kent. The passing of reports and returns in this manner replicates an importance task that would be crucial during operations. They also explored the capabilities of new recce tablets that will prove to be a force multiplier for recce elements within the Squadron.

After returning from a week of combat engineering training, the Squadron quickly switched its focus to Fighting in Built Up Area (FIBUA) and Fighting in Woods and Forest (FIWAF) training. Planned by J Troop with support from instructors from 1 RGR, this was another well executed exercise that offered the Squadron some variety. Furthermore, with close quarter combat in the urban environment becoming the most likely setting in which the military will fight in, this training is key to the Squadron's rounded skill set. This exercise also displayed the Sappers' ability to operate both as combat engineers and as Rifleman in a range of environments. During October, the Squadron refreshed its core skills on the ranges. A successfully run Squadron range day was followed by some members engaging on a weeklong range package for phase 1 of Ex INVICTA GUNNERY CADRE at Lydd Ranges which qualified the Gunners as Platform Weapon Operators. The 16 qualified gunners moved to Lulworth for phase 2 where they were tested to engage targets up to 110m at both day and night from Husky Armoured Vehicle using the General-Purpose Machine Gun.



Cpl Sangam's Section conducting a room clearance drill



Sp Tp on completion of their Plant Training



Spr Gobinda conducting a PPMG NSP drill

Prior to Christmas, L Tp management led a team of eight to support the delivery of post recruit training and the trade selection for Recruit Intake 2020 (74 Training Party). The team worked dynamically through strict COVID-19 restrictions to interview, mentor and assess the training party. Due to a number of personnel undergoing isolation and with strict social distancing the management team had to swiftly adapt to current COVID-19 situation which meant almost 90% of the lessons and instructions had to be converted to remote delivery. Credit to 2Lt Allister Graetorex and SSgt Joseph Subba that 74 Training party were put through their paces to identify what trade would best suit them for their future career in the QGE. We warmly welcome these men and their families to the QGE.

Operation ROSE

As the Regiment went on a well earned Christmas leave the Squadron remained at readiness over this period as part of UKSB. With COVID-19 causing havoc throughout the UK and extensive flooding in the South West of the country, the Squadron was under no illusion that it was highly likely they would be called to support the Nation in some form and at some point. The new COVID-19 variant found in the UK resulted in the French authority closing its borders to prevent further transmission throughout the continent. This resulted in thousands of hauliers bound for France being stranded in Kent, blocking movement in large areas of the county. This crisis resulted in 70 Gurkha Fd Sqn's high readiness being put to test over Christmas.



Night shift continue to the testing process in sub-optimal conditions

A rapid deployment was activated for the UKSB to support a high tempo UK resilience operation named 'Op ROSE'. The response saw the Squadron deploy as part of a Military Assistance to Civil Authority task to conduct lateral flow coronavirus tests to hauliers throughout Kent in order to allow them to return to the continent. The lateral flow coronavirus testing headquarters was commanded by RHQ 36 Engr Regt & QGE and contained six subunits at its peak. The task force successfully carried out more than 21,000 lateral flow tests (LFT) between 23 - 29 Dec 20. Its quick response tipped the balance unblocking Kent's roads and enabled hauliers to return to the continent for Christmas.



70 Sqn personnel standing ready to issue certificates to hauliers once negative tests have been confirmed

A proud moment for the Squadron to be the first sub unit to respond to the crisis as well as the first to recce and establish three fundamental testing sites in the vicinity of Dover and M20 (Junction 11). What was most pleasing to see was the way the soldiers of 70 Gurkha Fd Sqn conducted their business. Professional, considerate and in a positive upbeat manner despite the arduous conditions. Most impressive was that it was the second time the Squadron was able to support the Nation in its fight against COVID-19.

A pivot to construction

Returning from a well-deserved Christmas leave in February, the Squadron switched its focus to construction projects, with a Joint Force Enabling Exercise (Ex PINESTICK) in Cyprus due in September 2021. The CSC continued tirelessly to conduct operational infrastructure reces throughout the country to scope options for pre-deployment training. A small team, consisting of construction and logistics experts deployed to Cyprus on the initial recce under command of the Operations Officer. This recce helped shape the training and preparation requirements for Ex PINESTICK. As part of a gradual re-focus to trade training the Troops have been taking opportunities to dust off their trade skills in the form of low-level projects within Invicta Park Barracks. These projects consisted of a Mess Decking project (L Troop), Welfare/Troop Shelter (J Troop), modular bar build and the refurbishment of a seating area (K Troop).



Spr Sujan, K Tp stripping aged slats

Just prior to Easter leave Support Troop started their first element of pre-deployment training in Thetford. A substantial task tested both management and trade skills: the team upgraded culverts and enhanced almost a kilometre of road in support of the Defence Infrastructure Organisation. All these tasks have been a fantastic training opportunity. They have provided valuable lessons for design teams, tradesman and management throughout the Squadron. They are also the first of many steps towards Ex PINESTICK and should set the conditions for a successful deployment.

Overseas Exercises and Operations

Throughout the year the Squadron has also maintained persistent support to overseas operations and exercises. In the UK, L Troop and Support Troop deployed two sections to support Op SHADER and Op TOSCA mission specific exercises. They delivered wide ranging combat engineering effect and received high praise from the directing staff for their contribution. Further afield, LCpl Sunil has flown the flag of 70 Gurkha Fd Sqn in fine form, providing excellent engineering and trade advice to commanders on Op NEWCOMBE (Mali). In America the Squadron has been represented in a Corps level collective training exercise called Ex WARFIGHTER 21.4. This simulated exercise is the largest multinational war-fighter exercise ever executed. Support was provided to the Divisional Engineer Group led by 25 Close Support Engineer Group within 3 UK Division. This was a great opportunity to help the Iron Division achieve validation and improve its interoperability with its French and American partners.

Extracurricular

Throughout the year and outside of military training the Squadron has showcased its talents and versatility in numerous ways and in many events.

Adventurous Training and Sports

Sports and adventurous training have been understandably sparse this year. Despite this there have been small windows of opportunity that have been taken. With Trailwalker cancelled, 69 Gurkha Fd

Sqn and gym staff organised an excellent endurance challenge called the RISE OF THE PHOENIX. This arduous challenge involved a 26.2-mile Marathon over the undulating Kent Downs. The 40 teams of four from across the Regiment demonstrated some impressive resilience throughout this challenge. Many teams from 70 Gurkha Fd Sqn went into the race well prepared after countless miles of training and hours of preparation. This effort paid off with 70 Gurkha Fd Sqn picking up three of five of the category wins. Most impressive was 'Team Sparta 18' who topped the competition of 120 soldiers with an impressive time of 3 hours and 48 minutes on a very tough route.



Team Intake 18 - the winner of the Regimental Marathon

COVID-19 unfortunately cancelled an overseas adventurous training exercise to Spain, but this was swiftly replaced by a two-week multi activity package throughout the UK. The activities consisted of walking in Wales or Kent, kayaking or paddle boarding, quad biking locally or walking up then cycling down Snowden. The event was coordinated by the Ech Comd but executed by numerous Section commanders where 72% of the Squadron members got away on an activity package.

Maintaining Tradition

The Squadron had the honour to organise the 72nd QGE Birthday this year. The event could thankfully go ahead but was understandably tailored to reduce its scale and mitigate any spread of COVID-19. The guest of honour was the Colonel of the Regiment, Lt General Richard Wardlaw OBE. More poignant than most years, this year we bid him farewell as Col of the Regt. He has assumed the prestigious position as Colonel Commandant of the Bridge of Gurkhas. The traditional format was maintained as closely as possible. The parade and presentations on the square as well as the cutting of the cake was followed swiftly by food, entertainment and speeches inside the hanger. K Troop did not disappoint in delivering a highly enjoyable event that was rounded off superbly in General Wardlaw Saheb's speech as he reflected upon his time in 36 Engr Regt and fond memories in the QGE.

Unfortunately, a large scale Dashain celebration had to be cancelled this year and Tihar had to take a different format to tradition. J Troop impressively organised the first ever QGE Virtual Tihar celebration. Broadcasted to hundreds of soldiers and their families throughout the QGE community. The wide ranging talents of 70 Gurkha Fd Sqn soldiers were again showcased with some excellent entertainment, including singing and well-choreographed cultural dancing. The highlight of the event was the 'momo' eating competition, in which 20 Fd Sqn ran away with the win after devouring 20 'momos' in a record time. A brilliant event that was a light break for the community during tough COVID-19 restrictions.

During the depths of lockdown, many of the bhaiharu and gurujiharu had an opportunity to further develop their music talents and music production skills. A group from 70 Gurkha Fd Sqn entered a short music video to the 'Sing with Sandhya' competition. The competition was in support of the Gurkha Welfare Trust and Hello World. It was judged by Joanna Lumley and Steven Fry, and the talent group achieved an impressive joint first prize in this hotly contested competition. Well Done.

Charity and support to the community

Despite COVID-19 restrictions the Squadron continued its charitable support by remaining within the government guidelines. WO2 (SSM) Eka Rai kicked off the year during lockdown by completing an impressive 24 hrs Watt Bike challenge, covering a staggering 589Km, he received international support from QGE members around the world and raised an impressive £3,808 for the Maidstone and Royal Tunbridge Wells NHS fund. This inspiring feat was followed later by a team of Sappers led by Cpl Yogesh who organised another Watt Bike event. The event covered 1,566 km in 8.5 hrs (the distance equals the number of days that the First World War was fought for). The team raised a commendable £1,226 for Pahar Trust Nepal and the Royal British Legion.

The Squadron bid farewell to several members of the management; Capt Marris (2IC) retires from the military and is replaced by Capt Collins, Capt Forsey (Ech Comd) is replaced by Capt Fudge and Lt Burford (J Tp Comd) is replaced by 2Lt Campbell. The Squadron wish them all good luck and warmly welcome the new members to the 70 Gurkha Fd Sqn family.

Looking to the future

70 Gurkha Fd Sqn is optimistic for what 2021-22 has to offer as COVID-19 eases its grip on the world. The chance to take those opportunity lost in 2020 will be refreshing and cathartic for all. More importantly the chance to celebrate key events and successes with the wider QGE family is something we are all longing for. Irrespective of what challenges and opportunities next year holds, what will remain a constant is that 70 Gurkha

Fd Sqn will continue to be a positive and inclusive sub-unit that is proud of its history and excited for its future.

We will be ready, and we will be focused.

Jai 36 Engr Regiment, Jai QGE, Jai 70 Gurkha Fd Sqn!

Project NIGHTINGALE - Exhibition Centre (ExCel) London (Op RESCRIPT) SSgt Yakthunghang Angbuhang, K Tp SSgt

In early 2020, with the breakout of the COVID-19 pandemic across the UK, the UK government identified the requirement for an Intensive Care Unit (ICU) in the ExCel Centre, London. This was to be the first of a number of NHS Nightingale Hospitals to be constructed. At the time, 36 Engineer Regiment were held at readiness as the COVID Support Force (CSF) as a part of Operation RESCRIPT.

On 22 Mar 20, deployment orders were issued for a Troop of 31 artisan tradesmen from across 36 Engineer Regiment and the Queen's Gurkha Engineers (QGE). Led by Lt S Taylor and SSgt Yakthunghang Angbuhang, they were immediately deployed to the ExCel Centre, supporting civilian contractors and NHS staff with planning and executing the hasty construction of an ICU capable of treating severely affected COVID patients. The aim of the project, Project NIGHTINGALE, was to deliver 4000 bed-spaces under significant time and resource constraints. Unsurprisingly, the project was a focal point for the government and public, and therefore subject to intense media coverage; it was a privilege for the Regiment to showcase the capability of the military on a national stage.

The Troop was formed of various ranks and trades: Carpenters and Joiners, Heating and Plumbing engineers, Fitters, and Electricians all deployed with the same aim of delivering Military Aid to the Civil Authorities as per the government request. On arrival at the task site, the Troop presence had an immediate impact, demonstrating trade experience, proactivity and a desire to get on with the job at hand. Initially, some challenges were faced collaborating with an array of external contractors; however, as the project progressed, processes were aligned, and a comfortable, co-operative working environment endured. This was testament to the commitment of all present to achieve their common goals.

The Carpenter and Joiners were heavily involved with the construction of cubicles from plyboards and fabricated metal frames, before the Electricians setup the required trunkings on cubicle walls. The Fitters and Heating & Plumbing engineers added great value assisting civilian contractors with installing the emergency gas pipes on patient bed spaces, as well as installing hand washing basins on every cubicle. During the construction phase, the Tp Comd, Lt Taylor, became a key figure in assisting with planning and delivering the project to time and



Military Construction Force from 36 Engineer Regiment and The Queen's Gurkha Engineers

quality constraints, whilst Tp SSgt, SSgt Yakthunhang Angbuhang, liaised with civilian contractors on the ground; roles were clearly defined and understood. Strong work ethic, clear communication and effective command and control allowed the Troop to punch well above its weight, demonstrating the versatility and capability of the military in an adverse environment.

Ultimately, the efforts and enthusiasm of the deployed Troop enabled the timely and successful delivery of this project on the national main effort. The opportunity to deploy on Op RESCRIPT in this capacity was unique and extremely satisfying, particularly using artisan trade skills to serve the country at what was and continues to be a difficult time, and should form a source of pride for those involved for years to come.



Military and Civilian Electricians preparing trunkings for ICU cubicles

'Jai QGE'



C & J constructing the ICU cubicles



H&P installing medical gas hoses



ICU beds are ready to receive COVID patients

Operation ROSE

Lt Will Pearce, K Tp Comd

On 20 Dec 2020, following the discovery of a new UK-based COVID-19 variant, France closed its borders with the UK. Hauliers were stacked up across Kent, unable to continue their journey to the Continent, and the French government subsequently mandated all cross-channel transport require a negative COVID-19 test in order to travel. As the lead UK Standby Battalion contingent for the South East, 70 Sqn and RHQ rapidly deployed to assist their civilian counterparts as part of Op ROSE, the UK government's response to the issue. The Haulier Testing Reliance Unit (HTRU) was established and commanded by CO 36 Engr Regt, where he quickly focused efforts to recce and conduct mass testing of hauliers throughout Kent. Focus was centred on three sites: Manston Airport (also HTRU HQ), the M20 and Dover Port.



70 Sqn receive an initial brief on the use of lateral flow test kits

Having received a tuition package in the use of Lateral Flow Devices from 35 Engr Regt, 70 Sqn moved first to the M20, where miles of stacked vehicles greeted them on arrival. The initial recce adapted processes already in use at static testing sites across Kent for use on a mobile site, and by 1800 on 23 Dec 20, testing was underway. Impressively from receipt of deployment orders to delivering effect had taken as little as 18 hours. Shift patterns were established to enable 24-hour testing, and, in bitterly cold conditions, the initial 12-hour + rotation settled in for their first night combing through the miles of stranded hauliers.

In the early hours of 24 Dec, as the M20 site testing gathered pace, SHQ elements reced two further testing sites at Dover Port and on arterial roads to the Port itself; the stranded hauliers filled all the roads into Dover, grinding the town and Port to a standstill. The atmospherics grew more tense as drivers became increasingly agitated and aggressive after days of being stuck in sub-optimal living conditions. Quick decisions and reactions directed force elements to Dover to resolve the issue, and by the following morning 70 Sqn had established a further two testing sites. The pace of testing was multiplied as civilian Mobile Testing Teams

and French paramedics joined an international effort to collaboratively resolve the crisis. Once fully established, the Dover sites were handed over to follow-on forces from 1 Royal Welsh on their arrival on Christmas Eve. This allowed 70 Sqn to focus on the M20.



An aerial view of 70 Sqn testing groups of hauliers on the M20



LCpl Padam demonstrating the use of a Lateral Flow Device to hauliers

Over the course of the next 48 hours, 70 Sqn refined the testing process. Ratios of hauliers to testers were optimised, with a half-squadron force achieving in excess of 100 tests per hour. Great innovation, empathy and patience was shown by personnel on the ground as they attempted to overcome an often-significant language barrier with hauliers originating mostly from Eastern Europe. Inevitably, this did result in some very amusing miscommunications and Google translate attempts! On Christmas Eve, the M20 site, combined with the expansion of the testing sites at the Port of Dover, brought a degree of order to an initially chaotic environment. This enabled organised loading of cross-channel ferries to alleviate some of the congestion.

Christmas Day itself brought an uplift in spirits from both hauliers and military personnel alike (particularly with one lorry driver, who, having over-indulged on Christmas drinks, decided to drive and found herself becoming more familiar with our police colleagues). Op STACK, the first of two multi-mile M20 vehicle packets, had been fully cleared. As the Army assumed command on the ground, it was also identified that food



Capt Mark Paul, QM(T) 36 Engr Regt, running the welfare support depot

provisions to stranded hauliers were insufficient and required a specialist contribution to support procedures already in place. Engaging with charities, external organisations and hauliers, a team from the Sqn led by the QM (Tech) and LCpl Umesh were able to deliver in excess of 1000 hot meals twice daily to where they were most needed.

As progress moved to Op BROCK, the second M20-based vehicle park, a workforce surge arrived. 70 Sqn was tasked to lead a tri-sub-unit workforce peaking at over 150 deployed personnel along with attachments from the Polish military keen to assist with helping lorry drivers return home. Having delivered lessons to Companies from both the Royal Welsh and Welsh Guards, 70 Sqn embedded sections within these sub-units, mentoring and coaching them through the testing process with great effect. Coordinating with police forces on the ground to manage traffic flow, over 8 miles of stacked vehicles had been tested, certificated and cleared for release within 24 hours.

By 1900hrs on the 26 Dec, the backlog of stationary vehicles that stretched as far as Maidstone had been tested ready for release, leaving a manageable trickle of vehicles arriving from across Kent. With the bulk of the work complete, 70 Sqn re-focused efforts on training up the 1 RGR Battalion who were set to take control of the haulier testing program. Subsequently, on 29 Dec 20, 70 Gurkha Fd Sqn and 36 Engr Regt HQ officially handed over their responsibilities; it had been a great privilege for all involved to contribute to a national main effort. Through perseverance, work-ethic, and effective coordination with both civilian counterparts and military sub-units alike, the M20 and Dover Port were successfully tested and vehicles certified for



70 Sqn personnel conducting an RSOI package for 1 RGR in preparation for handing over control of testing sites across Kent

release for their onward journey to France; a very rewarding Christmas that will stay with those deployed for years to come.

OPERATION RESCRIPT

Lt Helen Bridgman and Lt Tom Penman

Introduction

Flexibility and adaptability are critical to handling unique and unprecedented challenges during a global pandemic. On 7th Jan 2021, 69 Gurkha Field Squadron deployed on Op RESCRIPT, as part of Kent Resilience Unit, to work hand in hand with the Kent County Council in the delivery of a community testing programme.

A little over a year since the first national lockdown and the military has certainly been kept busy. Everyone's lives have been impacted in some manner and we have all been called upon to play our part. Having seen our QGE counterparts in 70 Gurkha Fd Sqn contribute to both the Nightingale hospital and Op ROSE in Dover, there was eagerness to deploy and assist the national effort. Prior to Christmas, 69 Gurkha Fd Sqn was assigned to 'Winter Preparedness 20' and transitioned to a state of readiness. Simultaneously, a new, more contagious variant of COVID-19 was emerging in Kent.

Kent County Council issued a Military Aid to Civil Authorities (MACA) request for support, rolling out a rapid community testing programme. 36 Engr Regt were geographically well placed to be of assistance. The nature of the task became clear in late December and our soldiers, many of whom had spent several months in Single Living Accommodation, began their preparations. This included completing online training packages and analysing the Standard Operating Instructions and lessons learnt from the Liverpool pilot. Immediately following Christmas leave, 75 members of the Squadron departed Invicta Park Barracks to task sites in Birchington, Kemsley and Canterbury. Over the course of the next 39 days, the Sqn tested asymptomatic members of these communities before moving on to establish further testing centres.

Our work helped break the chain of transmission by identifying carriers, informing them to isolate and hence reducing the pressure on the NHS. Testing was conducted using Lateral Flow devices which provide results within 30 mins.



Spr Rajan Sunam checking a customer's temperature before they enter ATS Birchington



Spr Pujan Shrestha combining the swab with the extraction solution at ATS Birchington

Site Recce

Asymptomatic Testing Sites were established in pre-existing buildings ranging from youth centres and libraries to art galleries. The location of Asymptomatic Testing Sites and the facilities available were critical for mission success. On receiving the postcode for the proposed site, Troop Commanders were deployed as Recce assets to establish the feasibility of the venue. The establishment of the site would prove the most challenging aspect due to the number of stakeholders and time pressure of impending bookings. Typically, a two-day window was allocated for recce and site set up. Within this time period, several large deliveries of critical stores were received and processed by the team. Liaising with key stakeholders was essential for smooth operation. This varied from site to site; however, typically included building owners, Council representatives, cleaners, security guards and the waste

management team. The efficient flow of customers through the site was important to avoid queues. Bottlenecks needed promptly identifying and resolving. Some sites were ideal for meeting our requirements; others required significant redesign. Key attributes included good ventilation and a one-way system with disabled access at both the entrance and exit. Further, a large registration room was also necessary to facilitate a fast-track system. Welfare rooms were established to allow the team to relax during breaks and take on highly nutritional pot noodle!



Spr Dilip Singh Pun Magar sanitising a booth ready for the next customer at ATS Kemsley



LCpl Finju Sherpa recording test results at ATS Kemsley

Clinical Training

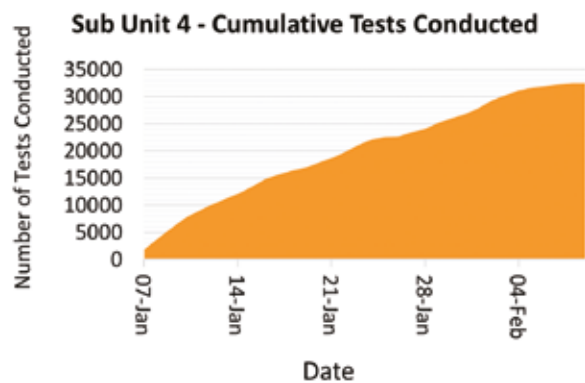
NHS representatives delivered a training package to the workforce at Kent County Showground. This covered the registration process, donning and doffing PPE and importantly how to physically conduct the test. The team needed to understand how to instruct the public to take the swab and to gain this understanding, physical experience was required. Unfortunately for the bhai haru nominated to act as customers during training, this caused slight discomfort for a little longer than anticipated. At the testing centres, this explanation would then take place behind a perspex screen, hence clarity and visual cues were critical. Once content that the swab was complete, the clinical aspect of the

process commenced. All personnel were trained in combining the swab with the solution and dripping the solution into the well on the device. JNCOs, such as LCpl Finju Sherpa seen on previous page, operated the results processing station, whereby devices were placed whilst the 30 min maturation period was observed. The test processing arena was cordoned off and termed the 'red zone' with full Personal Protective Equipment required to enter. The time the test was conducted was marked on the test along with the bay number. A robust cleaning routine was conducted between customers on both the customer facing and clinical side of the booth. The bay numbering system allowed us to identify which bays positive individuals had occupied. For added assurance, these bays received a deep clean and all parties who had been in contact with the test donned fresh PPE.

Working alongside Local Authorities

Every site had two representatives from the council working in shifts throughout the week. They were ultimately leading the project with our support before we would eventually hand over to them when a civilian work force had been trained and established. The Kent County Council site leads had been recruited specifically to run these sites and were generally retired individuals from the Armed Forces or the Police. This made it easier to establish a working relationship, with them also providing a huge amount of their own experiences, spanning an entire career which was very useful. Due to the sites being rapidly established, we were not sure whether the testing booths had been built already resulting in us, as all good sappers do, deploying with the G1098, just in case. Luckily, the booths were already constructed allowing us to focus on how the site would function when the influx of people came on opening day; all whilst bearing social distancing in mind. The sites were run by the Troop Commander and Staff Sergeant, with the total Troop size being 22 personnel. Interesting as the local council were planning a staffing size of 44 personnel.

Over the course of the deployment 7 Asymptomatic Testing Sites were established, operated and then ultimately transitioned to the civilian workforce. Figure below shows the geographic location of the ATS within Kent county. Through the delivery of 33 days of testing, 69 Gurkha Fd Sqn administered over 31,000 tests, finding over 280 positive cases in the community. The figure below demonstrates how these tests were accumulated over the deployment. A drop in asymptomatic carriers circulating within the community was observed towards the end of the deployment as showcased in Figure 10. Sites were operational from 0900hrs - 1900hrs, 7 days a week in order to permit maximum attendance. Typically, key workers would occupy the early morning slots with families and elderly preferring weekend appointments. The customer demographic changed drastically between sites, but our flexible workforce were able to respond to evolving requirements. The daily capacity of a centre was predesignated based on its catchment area and building size. Medium sized centres, running at 100% capacity, administered approximately 800 tests per day. Individuals familiar with the registration process would spend less than 5 minutes onsite. Minimising the time spent queuing was critical to encouraging individuals to return for repeat tests as per the government's recommendation. In addition, processing individuals faster reduced unnecessary exposure to other members of the community whilst queuing. However, speed was never a substitute for safety of either our workforce or our customers.



Lt Tom Penman explaining the operating process to KCC Site Supervisor at ATS Canterbury



Spr Bikesh Shrestha handing a swab to a customer at ATS Kemsley

Safety of the Workforce

Being on the frontline against an adversary is commonplace for military personnel. In this instance, COVID-19 played the role of the invisible enemy. As with any environment, the risks posed to the workforce were thoroughly analysed and mitigating measures implemented. Throughout the operation, the number 1 priority remained the safety of the workforce. Without a fit and healthy team, we would be unable to provide a testing service so desperately required by the nation.

A multitude of mitigating measures were enforced. First, the team were tested regularly to allow any outbreaks to be identified and isolated early. This testing was extended to external cleaners, security guards and any other individuals who were operating in close proximity to the team. Second, social distancing was rigidly enforced across all aspects of operation. Feeding times were staggered, coach seating dispersed, and accommodation blocks occupied at reduced capacity. In the rare instance of infection, government guidelines were followed with close contacts traced and isolation enforced.



Spr Dipesh Magar explains the process to a customer at ATS Kemsley

Problem Solving

There was a vast amount of problem solving and quick thinking that took place from day to day at all levels, as no one had personally taken part in anything like this before; it was a steep learning curve for us all including the local authority. We initially had to use our imagination before the public arrived to pre-empt any problems we may have. The key problem born out of Liverpool was that it took so long for people to register on their mobile devices at the site when they received their registration card. With a variety of technological abilities across the wide customer demographic, there was

ultimately going to be people who were going to hold up the entire queue. The Troop came up with a method, by utilising the space that the art gallery provided, to create a fast lane. This way, those requiring assistance could stop at a 'help station' and those who had completed the registration process could take the fast track.

Another piece of great innovation was thought up by Spr Bijay Lama who came up with a step-by-step guide for the public to follow through the process, saving swathes of time. This freed up the workforce to help those absolutely in need and unblocked the registration choke point, giving us a good flow through to the testing area.

Interactions with the General Public

It is not often that Gurkhas have the opportunity to interact with the British public on mass and all were very excited to offer some good customer service. I, on the other hand, had not long ago reflected on my many days working in hospitality waiting on tables and did not expect to be back in a similar situation so soon. But this was quite different, and I was eager to make people feel at ease and get them through the site as safely and efficiently as possible.

As expected, the public coming through the door were a complete variety from all walks of life, from young to old, from native English speakers to those did not speak a word of English. Being in the South-East, so close to the borders with Europe meant there were a number of individuals who we had to assist using the Google translate application to try and bridge the language gap, which worked very well.



LCpl Santaraj Budha Magar explaining the correct method to do a swab at ATS Canterbury



Spr Sanjok Gurung liaising with the general public

We also had some brushes with fame during the operation with a visit from BBC Radio Kent to follow the Chief Executive of Kent County Council through our site, on the opening day. We even featured in a national newspaper, the Daily Star, where Spr Sumanraj Iwahang was modelling some test tubes in full PPE. LCpl Dikendra Limbu, as the Section Commander, was interviewed by BFBS for a piece on Op RESCRIPT which aired in late February.

We were taken back by the outpour of good wishes, appreciation, and generosity by the good people of Kent. We received several cards that had been handmade by children; we would be stopped and thanked by passers by; and we would sometimes get treats donated by local businesses which was fantastic for everyone's morale. Especially when it was from Wagamamas.



Spr Binod Saru Magar receiving a food parcel from Sittingbourne Morrisons store

Transitioning to a civilian workforce

Following a couple of weeks of running the site and refining processes it was time to handover to the civilian workforce, who were now trained and ready. The site would close for the day to allow them to take a COVID test on arrival and conduct their physical training in a safe manner. Cpl Bishnu Magar, LCpl Himel Limbu, LCpl Prabin Limbu, and Spr Shishir Budha Magar would make up the continuity team at the Canterbury testing site to facilitate their training alongside the Kent County Council instructor. They did a fantastic job of making them feel at ease, where some may have felt intimidated by the uniform. Not only did they learn about the running of a testing site, but also about the Brigade of Gurkhas, the QGE, and some of our customs and traditions.



LCpl Min Kumar Rai teaching and demonstrating donning and doffing PPE at ATS Birchington



LCpl Batawaran Dhamala explaining the IT process to civilian partners at ATS Hawkinge

It was incredibly interesting to get the chance to work with the local authorities, an experience you don't expect to have when you think of joining the Armed Forces, but one that will stay with everyone for many years to come.

Conclusion

For the 90 SP deployed as part of the Kent Resilience Unit, this MACA task was an opportunity to play our part in a time of national distress. Providing a service on our own doorsteps within the communities of Kent, made the task particularly poignant. The people of Kent were most welcoming of the military, their kind words and generosity acting as a catalyst boosting morale and driving the team forward. Engaging and assisting individuals from a diverse range of backgrounds allowed us to develop and refine our communication skills. Diplomacy, humility and professionalism were critical in equal measure. We are very proud to have played our small part within the wider national response. Together, we have overcome challenges and in doing so exhibited the very best qualities of Gurkhas. We stand ready, better prepared than ever, to be called upon should our services be required.

Jai QGE!



Spr Bharat Tamang disinfecting the bays to maintain COVID free environment at ATS Canterbury

QGE Birthday and Farewell to Lieutenant General Wardlaw OBE

Lt Will Pearce, K Tp Comd

An annual highlight on the QGE calendar, the QGE Birthday was not to be stopped by such trivial obstacles as global pandemics. On the contrary, in 2020, the 72nd Birthday celebration had a heightened sense of importance, providing an opportunity for a community to come together and celebrate their unique history, traditions and Kaida; a source of joy against an otherwise sullen COVID-dominated backdrop. The celebration also served as a send-off for the Col of the Regt, Lt Gen Richard Wardlaw Saheb, as he moves on to pastures new; we were delighted he was able to join us for the day.

This year, K Tp, 70 Gurkha Fd Sqn were tasked with the formalities, and the setup was necessarily different to years gone by. Due to COVID-19 considerations, the unfortunate decision was taken to limit attendance to serving QGE personnel only, with the Col of the Regt as our special guest - we look forward to welcoming our families and externally employed QGE Pariwar back on future events. And so, on a bitterly cold 26 Sep, the Regt gathered on the parade square for a socially distanced celebration.

The Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas set the tone for the festivities with true spirit in the face of challenging weather. A dynamic program, including multiple musical numbers and a Khukuri pattern, couldn't be dampened (figuratively speaking) by sporadic downpours. Fortunately, these had subsided prior to the presentation ceremony, much to the relief of the support team standing by with the emergency gazebo! The Regt was privileged to recognise the enduring contributions of Capt Krishna Pun, winner of the Durand Medal 2020, for his outstanding service to the QGE over a career spanning more than 20 years. Congratulations were also given to LCpl Sangit Gurung, winner of the Bowring Trophy 2020 and LCpl Mahesh Gurung as runner up. This is awarded to the JNCO assessed to be the best in QGE; an individual full of potential to be realised, and a career to watch!



Maj Kamal Khapung Limbu MVO QGE (GM QGE), Lt Gen R Wardlaw OBE (Col QGE), Lt Col M D Hendry MBE RE (Comdt QGE) - Cutting Birthday cake



Lt Gen R Wardlaw OBE delivering his final speech as the Col QGE

Following the Birthday cake cutting ceremony, the Regiment were fortunate to hear from Comdt QGE, Lt Col Mark Hendry MBE, as he summarised the vast and varied achievements of both QGE Squadrons over the past 12 months. Lt Gen Wardlaw Saheb's stories from a lifetime of service to the QGE also provided great amusement and pause for thought; his presence at the helm as Col QGE will be greatly missed. It was therefore fitting that a Gurkha curry and traditional entertainment package should follow the parade; any send-off would be incomplete without them. Following the speeches, in the (questionable) warmth of the AV(W) hangar and Regimental restaurant providing an enhanced Gurkha curry lunch was served. This was greatly enjoyed by all, and our thanks go, as ever, to the Gurkha chefs for their tireless work and engagement with the planning process.



Col QGE escorted by Comd't & GM



Entertainment - QGE Drummers



A socially distanced birthday lunch

As for after-lunch entertainment, the audience were treated to a range of talents, from aggressive khukuri patterns, to both modern and traditional Nepalese dance performances. The diverse abilities possessed by serving QGE soldiers never fail to disappoint, and the quality of performances is a testament to our soldiers' dedication and passion for tradition, and commitment to entertaining their peers.

An emotive pipes and drums display brought an end to proceedings. The Regt was able to say a final farewell to Lt Gen Wardlaw Saheb and wish him well in his new role as Comdt Brigade of Gurkhas; his understanding of Gurkha soldiers and Kaida will undoubtedly serve the Brigade well in the years to come. Final thanks go to Commandant Saheb for permitting a COVID compliant event; all attendees; and all who assisted with the setup and delivery. We look forward to seeing what the next 12 months hold for the Regt, and a hopefully more widely attended celebration in 2021.

Jai QGE!

Life as Unit Welfare Warrant Officer (UWWO)

WO2 Rojan Rai, UWWO

I took the appointment of Unit Welfare Warrant Officer in Aug 20 and my role is to provide accessible, independent, confidential and professional specialist welfare services to Service Personnel (SP) and their families of 36 Engineer Regiment and The Queen's Gurkha Engineers in order to strengthen and enhance the resilience and resourcefulness of SPs and their families. I have been trying my best to deliver support closely to the Nepalese community and the rest of the regiment.

This pandemic has hugely impacted on our normal life and has affected us all in many different ways. However, we (the Welfare Team) managed to conduct some Virtual Family Activities and delivered welfare services for all the families of the soldiers mobilized in support of the response to Op RESCRIPT from 4 Jan - 11 Feb 21. The main aim of the activities was to promote an inclusive and social engagement within the 36 Engineer Regiment Families Community. We conducted Virtual

Coffee Catch Up with Quizzes, a Weekly Photography Competition, a Treasure Trail and Family Orienteering Challenge. All these helped the families to reduce their loneliness and receive comprehensive welfare services. It also helped us to ensure that community members had access to valued social settings and activities.

BFBS Shorncliffe has been broadcasting 24 hours per day 7 days per week offering an attractive mixture of programming aimed at Gurkha Soldiers and the wider Gurkha community. Their mission is to champion the amazing work of the UK armed forces. They have worked tirelessly throughout lockdown to keep their media and welfare services going for the Armed Forces, and to highlight the achievements of individuals and groups within the military community. Some of the families from QGE participated in Lockdown Diary (BFBS Gurkha Radio) to describe how life was going, including thoughts, feelings, facts, whatever they thought was important. I witnessed that this programme helped others to gain courage to share their stories, too. Lt Col M D Hendry RE MBE (CO 36 ER & The Comdt QGE) and Maj Kamal Khapung Limbu MVO (GM QGE) also utilised the BFBS connectivity for key messaging across the Brigade community, which helped us (SPs and families) to enjoy a better understanding of QGE affairs.

Due to COVID-19, our community temple was closed, and mass gatherings were prohibited since March 2020. As a result QGE was prevented from celebrating our key festivals in the traditional manner and the GM QGE also appealed to restrict this year's Dashain within family members in the house following health & safety protocols.



Jamara Aunsi Puja by GM QGE and the Pandit Ji



Virtual Activity Winners: (From Left) Mrs Rubi Sherchan, Mrs Asha Pun, Mrs Kiran Rana and Mrs Tenzing Sherpa

Dashain is the longest and most auspicious festival in Nepal; celebrated by the Hindu community of Nepal and within the Brigade of Gurkhas. Where possible Nepali people return to their homes during the festival.

Jamara Aunsi, the start of puja (worship) was observed in the temple on Fri, 16 Oct 20. On behalf of the QGE Pariwar, the puja was conducted by GM QGE and Pundit Prem Prasad Gaire. They abstained from alcohol and were forbidden from consuming any contaminated food and meat products.

On the second day - Ghatasthapana, a mixture of barley and maize seeds (Jamara) were sowed and cultivated over the next ten days in order to use as part of the blessings given during Tika to all individuals.

Phulpati was observed on 23 Oct 20 and it literally means flowers, leaves and plants. Key personnel including Command elements gathered to celebrate the day with a great joy. 'Bringing Phulpati', brings all the nine goddesses into our unit. Each of the nine plants represent a goddess - collectively taken to represent Health, Wealth and Prosperity. Entering a 'Phulpati home' is to enter into Health, Wealth and Prosperity.



Phulpati Celebration

Kalaratri is the seventh of the nine forms of the Goddess Durga, collectively known as the Navadurga. This form of the Goddess Durga is believed to be the destroyer of all demon entities, ghosts, spirits and negative energies, who flee upon knowing of her arrival. All members of the QGE could not gather for an evening of entertainment to celebrate the event traditionally.



Vijaydashami, Tika Celebration

Mahanawami was celebrated on 25 Oct 20 and it was the day of sacrifice. After prayers multiple goats (replica) were sacrificed using a large ceremonial Khukri. This day was also known as the 'demon-hunting day' because members of the defeated demon army strive to save themselves by hiding in the bodies of animals and fowls. The Cmdt QGE rewarded the man who slayed the goats with a monetary gift and a white Pagari (head covering). On 26 Oct 2020, the QGE SPs and their families could not assemble at the Temple due to the pandemic where GM QGE and Pundit Ji could present each SP with Tika and bless them good health, wealth and prosperity. However, Jamara and Tika were made available for collection for all SPs and their families from the temple.



Mahanawami Celebration

Despite lockdown, The Queen's Gurkha Engineers observed a major festival successfully following Defence and Government guidelines and adhering to Force Health Protection measures.

Virtual Tihar Celebration

Lt Patrick Burford, J Tp Comd

Given the restrictions imposed by numerous national lockdowns and the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions, recognising, and celebrating traditional Nepali festivals has been exceedingly difficult this year. For this reason, it was only right that 36 Engineer Regiment and the Queen's Gurkha Engineers, cancelled the planned Dashain celebrations. As a result, household bubbles were forced to adjust and observe the Festival in private. However, not wanting another Festival to pass us by unrecognised and with a momentary easing of COVID-19 restrictions the Regiment successfully observed Tihar, albeit in virtual form.

Celebrations were opened to the entire 36 Engineer Regiment community, including all British counterparts, who attended the event in great spirits. This was an excellent opportunity for all members of the Regiment who may be unfamiliar with Gurkha culture to better understand QGE's beliefs and traditions. This was further enhanced by the Gurkha Major who delivered an introductory presentation on what Tihar means and why it is celebrated.

70 Gurkha Field Squadron then delivered an interactive entertainment package that observed traditional Tihar customs. The entertainment included cultural songs, dances and blessings. The highlight of the event was a momo eating competition. Department leads from across the Regiment, including the Commanding Officer, were selected to go head-to-head in a live competition where they were challenged to eat 15 momos as quickly as possible. The competition was closely contested but in the end, it was 20 Squadron that were victorious.



Senior Management team of 36 Engr Regt taking part in a momo eating competition

The event was a welcomed distraction from the ongoing pandemic and brought together the Regiment by virtual means. We now look forward to next year's celebrations in the hope that we may once again come together and observe Tihar in the usual manner.

QGE Sports Journal

SSgt Joseph Subba, L Tp, 70 Gurkha Fd Sqn

Sporting events throughout the year have typically been fantastic opportunities to build team spirit, enhance competitive edge and raise moral. Unfortunately, this year has been highly different. Despite this, the Queen's Gurkha Engineers (QGE) have strived to grasp every sporting opportunity. The invisible enemy (coronavirus) has disrupted all aspects of life and sports have been no exception. From the QGE's key events (Tihar, Dashian) to sporting activities, events had to be either cancelled or postponed. Significant annual events such as the Nepal Cup, as well as the sports that the QGE have historically enjoyed huge success in, such as badminton, volleyball, cricket and squash, were understandably cancelled to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Regardless, the thirst for competition prevailed and every opportunity was taken during the brief periods when lockdown was eased to play sport. Furthermore, our soldiers adapted their skills as the sporting competitions moved from the pitches to the computer consoles with e-sports now taking a prime position in the sporting calendar.

With people spending more time indoors due to lockdown, the global video game industry has thrived.

36 Engineer Regiment and The QGE became pioneers by organising the first ever e-FIFA competition. With the ability to easily social distance, e-sports provided the perfect platform from which Soldiers and Officers to maintain competition whilst remaining safe. Amongst all the talented and proficient video gamers, Spr Subham from C3S Troop 70 Gurkha Fd Sqn won the first ever QGE e-FIFA competition. With QGE leading the way, this competition was a stepping-stone for QGE Sappers to participate in the Brigade of Gurkhas e-Sports competition.

This initiative allowed soldiers from all the Gurkha units to bond in a way that had not been witnessed before. The competition was 5 days long, with 2 representatives from each unit participating. The competition was fierce as all competitors were well prepared having honed their skills during lockdown. Although the voraciousness seen during the Nepal Cup may not have been as prevalent in the e-sports competition, the passion and skill most certainly was. Sprs Prakash (69 Gurkha Fd Sqn) and Spr Devendra (70 Gurkha Fd Sqn) took part in the competition and secured the positions of runners up. After the PM announced the easing of lockdown restrictions in Jun 20, the golfers were in good spirits. A friendly match against the Met Police was organised by SSgt FJ Sherpa in which members from 36 Engineer Regiment and the Queen's Gurkha Engineers including Comdt QGE and the QM participated. Despite being the defending champions and with high expectations, the Regiment couldn't defend its title this year as most of the team were unfortunately out of practice.



Comd't and his team during the RISE OF THE PHOENIX

As a result of the pandemic, Oxfam and the Gurkha Welfare Trust sadly announced the cancellation of the Trailwalker event. Losing this QGE tradition was a real blow to moral; despite this the Regiment replaced this event with the Ex RISE OF THE PHOENIX. Cpl Rusal and his team organised a meticulous event where almost 40 teams from across the Regiment participated. In teams of 4 people the runners were subject to a gruelling 42.2 km run across the undulating Kent Downs which started and finished at Invicta Park Barracks. It had 5 categories; overall winner, below 30

years, 30 - 39 years, 40 years plus and mixed teams. An incredible effort by all participants and some impressive times for the distance, 70 Gurkha Fd Sqn were victorious. Seizing the overall win, the below 30 years and the 30 -39 years categories, with 69 Gurkha Fd Sqn winning the mix and a strong mixed team from 70 Gurkha Fd Sqn and 69 Gurkha Fd Sqn winning the over 40 years category. Over 120 runners in total entered the event, all displaying exceptional resilience and dedication. The event was meticulously organised by 69 Gurkha Fd Sqn and a wider Regimental support team. Although not the traditional Trailwalker event it was a fitting competition in its place.

Mountain Biking was also one of the very few permissible sports and has grown in the Regiment. Since lockdown, it has gained even more popularity and the number of participants has sky - rocketed. Cpl Top (70 Gurkha Fd Sqn) competed in the UK Southern X-country series representing the Army team in Jul 20. Invicta Park Barracks also inaugurated a new mountain bike trail in May 20, where soldiers and the wider community can polish their biking skills.



Cpl Top representing the Army and 36 Engr Regt on the Army Cross Country Competition

2020 was a disappointing year for sport. However, the QGE remain optimistic for the forthcoming year where our commentative spirit and love of team endeavours will no doubt be fulfilled.

Road to Becoming a Sapper

Spr Pukar Gurung

Ten weeks of gruelling on the Combat Engineer Class 3 course is what it takes to become a proud Gurkha sapper in the Queen's Gurkha Engineers (QGE) and a Sapper in the Royal Engineers. 74 Training Party completed their Combat Engineer Class 3 course and took the oath of allegiance to The Queen's Gurkha Engineers during the Attestation Parade held at Gibraltar Barracks on 12 Mar 21. The oath of allegiance was taken in the presence of the Colonel of the Regiment Brigadier J L Clark CBE, Commandant QGE, Lt Col M D Hendry MBE and Gurkha Major QGE, Maj K B Khapung Limbu MVO.

The primary aim of the course was to provide a spectrum of combat engineering knowledge and skills in order to deliver both Force Support and Close Support engineering to the Field Army. Due to the large number of students, we completed the course within two separate troops alongside British and Commonwealth soldiers. The course was divided into four different phases culminating with a final exercise. Classroom lessons and in camp instruction provided us with the ability, knowledge and skills required to perform combat engineer tasks. Whilst the final exercise assessed our ability to apply Combat Sapper knowledge and skills under pressure in a tough and constrained environment. We were all presented with a QGE stable belt on completion of a gruelling and tough final run at the end of the final exercise.



74 Training Party building MGOB

The COVID-19 pandemic was at its height throughout the course but with a thorough mitigation plan the course was run and managed in an effective, efficient and professional manner; hats off to all the instructors. During the initial phases of the course we found it quite challenging to cope with an e-learning environment. This was further exacerbated by a busy course schedule and different regional accents from the Royal Engineer instructors. Early exposure to the Royal Engineer instructors is the way forward in order to continuously improve communication skills from the very early stages of our career; one we recommend we sustain.



Brig JL Clark CBE inspecting 74 Trg Party during their attestation parade

We were extremely fortunate to be exposed to activities in addition to the course. Cpl Amber Mangmu organised a potted sports day and a charity run covering the length of the UK, north to south, in support of various charities. All instructors and students took part and we managed to raise just over £1500. This was the first team building and charity event that I was introduced to. All of 74 Training Party learnt hugely and we will continue to support worthy causes during our career. The attestation parade started with all 74 Training Party and instructors formed up at the parade square during a very cold and rainy day. The Reviewing Officer arrived at the dais and after the general salute, he inspected the parade. Next the oath of allegiance was read by the Gurkha Major QGE which was repeated by us all. We then sang the corps song and took the oath of allegiance to the Regiment in groups of three by touching the QGE flag. The reviewing officer awarded the Top Academic Student award to Spr Subash Limbu and the Overall Top Combat Engineer Student award to Spr Nischal Shrestha.

I was very touched by the reviewing officer's speech when he reminded us that this was the last course that we will

complete as a group with all our Numberies. From this point forward we will embark on separate journeys, some of us will go straight to 1 RSME to begin trade courses, some will start driver training in Minley, whilst some will join the Regiment in Maidstone. He also reminded us that we are all at the beginning of our military journey and our career is in our hands. We are only as good as our next move, so, we need to give our all, and be ambitious. We should not get to where we want, at the expense of our fellows and our family, but to make a difference in our Troop, our Squadron, our Regiment and our Army. We should set high goals, listen to and respect others, learn & adapt and seek continuous improvement. I will never forget the last words from the reviewing officer; "Always remember who you now are; a Sapper in the Queen's Gurkha Engineers, a Gurkha in the Brigade of Gurkhas, and a soldier in the British Army. Be proud of all."

I wish to thank all the instructors for their time, effort and dedication during the course. I wish all my Numberies, the very best of luck in their dedicated service from this day forward.

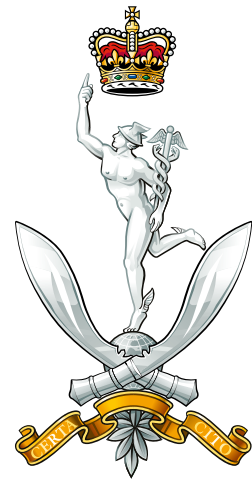
Jai QGE!



Spr Nischal posing for a photograph after receiving his Top Student Shied from Col of the Regt

QUEEN'S GURKHA SIGNALS

Two Khukuris point upwards, the handles crossed in saltire, the cutting edges of the blades inwards, between the blades the figure of Mercury on a globe, the latter supported above by a scroll bearing the motto "Certa Cito" and below by nine laurel leaves, the whole surmounted by Saint Edward's Crown.



Raised in Kuala Lumpur in 1948, by Major A C Cox R SIGNALS, from Gurkha soldiers of each of the eight battalions of the then new Brigade of Gurkhas. They, together with re-enlisted ex-servicemen of the Indian Army, British officers and soldiers of the Royal Signals, formed the Gurkha Signals Training and Holding Wing in early 1949.

The first elements were designated "Royal Signals Gurkha". In 1952 this was changed to "Gurkha Royal Signals". The present badge was granted on 23 September 1954, the date which is now the official Regimental Birthday. The regimental title became "Gurkha Signals" in 1955 and on 21 April 1977, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II approved the title "Queen's Gurkha Signals". On 16 May 1983 Queen's Gurkha Signals restructured to a Regimental organisation.

Since the closure of the base in Hong Kong in 1997, the Regiment has gone through considerable change. QG SIGNALS reduced to a Squadron and then continued to expand to an establishment that includes 3 Field Squadrons, training elements in Blandford and Catterick as well as Troops in Brunei and Nepal. Finally, an addition of 10 posts with 18 (UKSF) Signal Regiment and 16 posts with RMAS, gives our soldiers the opportunity to serve with Special Forces and the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.

Affiliations and Associations

Affiliated Corps	The Royal Corps of Signals
Affiliated Regiment	32nd (Scottish) Signal Regiment (Volunteers)
Association	6th Signal Regiment, The Royal Australian Corps of Signals
Regimental March Past	"Scotland the Brave"

The organisations and units which currently comprise Queen's Gurkha Signals

Regimental Headquarters Queen's Gurkha Signals	Bramcote
246 Gurkha Signal Squadron	York
247 Gurkha Signal Squadron	MOD Stafford
248 Gurkha Signal Squadron	MOD Stafford
249 Gurkha Signal Squadron	Bulford
250 Gurkha Signal Squadron	Bramcote
11 (RSS) Signal Regiment	Blandford
Brunei Signal Troop	Brunei
Nepal Signal Troop	Nepal
Seremban Troop	RMA Sandhurst

Additionally, personnel, in less than a troop strength, are employed in Gurkha Company at Infantry Training Centre Catterick, 13 Sig Regt, 18 (UKSF) Signal Regiment, HQ ARRC, Blandford Garrison Support Unit, Specialist Weapons School, ATC (Pirbright) and ATR (Winchester), Sandhurst Support Unit and Directorate Information Army Headquarters (D Info Army HQ).

Staff List

Colonel of the Regiment

Major General J J Cole OBE

British Officers

Lieutenant Colonel H J Stoy
 Major T J W Masi
 Major A Fitchett
 Major T M Collins
 Major J Corns
 Major E Adams
 Capt G Gurung
 Capt T Sachs
 Lieutenant A P Newman
 Lieutenant M D Hynd
 Lieutenant D J Pretorius
 Lieutenant K Macphee
 Lieutenant K J Constable
 Lieutenant E A Law
 Lieutenant T Weatherhead
 Lieutenant D Clifton
 2nd Lieutenant J A Lowe
 2nd Lieutenant A P Altree
 2nd Lieutenant A Richards
 2nd Lieutenant W Skirrow
 2nd Lieutenant O J Masterson
 2nd Lieutenant A Stoddart

Comd QG SIGNALS
 OC 246 Gurkha Sig Sqn
 OC 247 Gurkha Sig Sqn
 OC 248 Gurkha Sig Sqn
 OC 249 Gurkha Sig Sqn
 OC 250 Gurkha Sig Sqn
 Ops Officer 249 Gurkha Sig Sqn
 Ops Officer 250 Gurkha Sig Sqn
 Tp Comd 246 Gurkha Sig Sqn
 Tp Comd 247 Gurkha Sig Sqn
 Tp Comd 247 Gurkha Sig Sqn
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 Tp Comd 248 Gurkha Sig Sqn
 Tp Comd 250 Gurkha Sig Sqn

Gurkha Officers

Major Amrit Gurung
 Major Shankar Gurung
 Captain Deepak Rai
 Captain Indrabahadur Thapa
 Captain Khagendra Pun
 Captain Subaraj Sunuwar
 Captain Sureshkumar Limbu
 Captain Gyanendrabahadur Rai
 Captain Simbahadur Chochangi
 Captain Laxmanbabu Rana
 Captain Lalitbahadur Thapa
 Captain Ashok Gurung
 Captain Gopalkrishna Saru
 Captain Robin Rai
 Captain Hembahadur Rana
 Captain Jagatram Rai
 Captain Sanjeev Rai
 Captain Sekendra Gurung
 Captain Rajkumar Gurung

GM QG SIGNALS
 QM, 22 Sig Regt
 Adjut QG SIGNALS
 RCMO QG SIGNALS
 OC NST
 2IC 250 Gurkha Sig Sqn
 2IC 248 Gurkha Sig Sqn
 2IC 249 Gurkha Sig Sqn
 2IC 247 Gurkha Sig Sqn
 OC BST
 Tp Comd 250 Gurkha Sig Sqn
 QM, 16 Sig Regt
 2IC 246 Gurkha Sig Sqn
 OC Battleaxe Tp 3 Sqn
 Ops Officer 246 Gurkha Sig Sqn
 Ops Officer 248 Gurkha Sig Sqn
 Trg Offr 4 (Mil) Sqn
 Pl Comd ITC Gurkha Coy
 MTO 30 Sig Regt

Gurkha Officers holding E1/E2 Appointments

Lieutenant Colonel Tolbahadur Khamcha
 Major Hebindra Pun
 Major Ganeshbahadur Gurung
 Major Dhirbahadur Pun
 Major Omprashad Pun
 Major Surendrakumar Gurung MVO
 Major Lokbahadur Gurung MVO
 Major Vishal Pun
 Major Kamal Gurung

CO/Dep Gar Comd HQ Tidworth & Bulford Gar
 AMA BGN
 QM 2 Sig Regt
 OC HQ Coy, 2 MI Bn
 2IC Sandhurst Sp Unit, RMAS
 SO2 G6, 2 Med Bde
 Ops Maj 71 Yeomanry Sig Regt
 OC HQ Coy, 4 MI Bn
 Staff College, Nepal

Foreword by Colonel of the Regiment

Major General J J Cole OBE

Like so many people across the globe, this has been a challenging time for our people. COVID 19 has brought havoc to so much of the security that we have assumed, and despite so many good developments - testing, vaccinations, economic support - this virus is not going away as soon as we like, and we will have to live with the impact of it for the foreseeable future. My thoughts and prayers go out to all members of our Regiment and its Association who might be feeling that impact most acutely. Inevitably this awful virus has taken so many lives, including members of our Association, and I would like to express my deep sadness.

Nevertheless, the serving Regiment has helped in the efforts to fight this - and no doubt there will follow in this annual newsletter some heart-warming stories of how our soldiers have deployed to establish Nightingale Hospitals, Testing Centres, and assisted vaccine delivery. Shyabash to all involved! Our Association members have looked out for each other too, and I am also grateful for the support by the Gurkha Welfare Trust and other charities to provide additional care for our most vulnerable people.

The Regiment has further improved its manning, with a bumper crop of trainees this year, as we grow to fill up our five sub-units, with our newest two: 247 Gurkha Signal Squadron playing a major role in 16 Signal Regiment, and 249 Gurkha Signal Squadron now ensconced within 3rd (United Kingdom) Division Signal Regiment. The variety of operational tasks provides our soldiers with varied careers, a breadth of opportunities, and crucially it enhances the Royal Signals with its operational outputs. This year the Corps celebrated its Centenary, and despite its events being modest due to COVID restrictions, we were recognised for the role that we play. In particular, we were honoured to have Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal attend our Birthday Parade, giving us an inspiring speech and cutting the cake. This was in the presence of the outgoing Master of Signals and Colonel Commandant Brigade of Gurkhas, our very own Lt Gen Sir Nick Pope, now one of our "burho tholi". Thank you Pope Saheb for all of your service to us. We owe you a great deal for the strength and reputation of our Regiment today.

Looking to the future, we will remain strong in the Army's order of battle, and the forthcoming Integrated Review will provide a wealth of opportunities for us to play our part in what the Chief of the General Staff calls "An asymmetric Army in the digital age". My staff in the Army Headquarters are developing plans for the Royal Signals and Queen's Gurkha Signals as a collective, and we are maintaining oversight of terms and conditions of service and wider Brigade alignment with the Headquarters Brigade of Gurkhas.



Whilst events have been curtailed this year, I do thank those of you that have found ways to take part in fundraising, and thank you to the kind donors to so many good causes. Please also remember our own small charity, the QG SIGNALS Trust, which our Regiment and Association directly benefit from. I am grateful to Col (Retd) Taff Watts MBE for managing this so well. I am also hugely thankful to Lt Col (Retd) Complin and Lt Col (Retd) Yam Rana for their ongoing leadership of the Association.

Many of our soldiers have still been hugely committed to deployed overseas operations, readiness, and exercises. These have been conducted with professionalism and excellence amidst the global pandemic. We have a generation of commanders and junior soldiers that we can all be proud of, and they have my full confidence. We thank Lt Col Stoy and Maj Dhir Pun for their service as Commander and GM, and wish them every success in the future. And a warm welcome (back) to both Lt Col Smith and Maj Amrit Gurung as our new command team.

Thank you for reading this; keep excelling whether you are in service or one of our retired walas. Do good for our Paltan's name.

Jai QG SIGNALS!

Foreword by Commander

Lieutenant Colonel H J Stoy

2020 - What a year! It is quite extraordinary to look back on the last 12 months to reflect on what the Paltan has achieved, how it has evolved and adapted during the COVID pandemic, and of course we were honoured to host a visit from HRH The Princess Royal. 2020 was the Centenary of the Royal Signals as well as our 71st Birthday. Plans for the year, over and above our routine outputs, were ambitious and exciting. It is no surprise that the Paltan has continued to build on its remarkable reputation with the highest professional standards: continuous delivery across the globe on operations; unswerving loyalty; unquenchable cheerfulness; and phenomenal success. You should all be immensely proud of everything that has been achieved.

January started with unease in the Middle East which sadly meant that I had to pull out of my trip to see BST, but the GM and RSM managed to visit the team in Brunei, who were in great spirits and they were hosted superbly well. Across the Paltan preparation for Op CABRIT and Ex DEFENDER, deployment on Op TURUS and Op TANGHAM, as well as the largest recruiting effort in three decades by NST, ensured that there was plenty to focus on. The GM's lead in planning and delivering the Corps' Centenary Squash Tour to Nepal got in just in time, prior to seeing COVID take hold and change much of what we would all associate with as 'business as usual.' Fortunately, the expansion planning for the Paltan continued at pace, and it is brilliant to pause and consider the reach and influence that Gurkha Signallers will have across the Corps, Army and society when we have 7 Gurkha Signal Squadrons in the ORBAT.

Commitments to Op RESCRIPT have increased as the year has progressed, and we have seen the very best of the Gurkha Brand in action. Where Queen's Gurkha Signals soldiers went, praise quickly followed. We have seen some wonderful examples of ingenuity as we have collectively had to adjust to lockdowns and constraints on travel and our day to day existence, and I am grateful to the whole Pariwar for embracing the changes and looking for new ways to honour our festivals and key events. Throughout COVID Seremban Troop has supported RMAS and the delivery of training for the next generation of officers and this has meant an even more demanding programme to meet the demand signal. In the summer we welcomed the 26th Gurkha Major to the Queen's Gurkha Signals - Amrit Gurung and with his wife Jam and son Swikaar. A huge thank you to Major Dhir Pun and his wife Belu, son Anurag and daughter Dikshya, for their commitment, hard work and passion over the last couple of years and we wish them every success in the future.

The physical delivery of Trailwalker was another victim of COVID, but it was fantastic to see participation from across the sub-units in the virtual event, and the monies raised were gratefully received by both the Gurkha Welfare Trust and OXFAM.



In September HRH The Princess Royal visited Gamecock Barracks and took the salute for the 71st Birthday Parade. It was the first time since 2004 that she had taken a parade with representatives from across the entire Paltan present. It was also rather fittingly the last occasion that The Master of Signals and Colonel Commandant of the Brigade of Gurkhas, Lt Gen Sir Nicholas Pope, was in uniform prior to his retirement, and we were delighted that he could be with us.

Honours and Awards have been a regular feature of the year which is testimony to the unrelenting standards that are demanded and delivered across the Paltan. As the year came to a close Ex LOYAL LEDA, Ex CERBERUS and the first deployment on Op NEWCOMBE as part of the Long Range Recce Group in Mali, were all successfully executed. The new Gurkha recruits completed their Phase 1 training in Catterick and started their trade selection in Altcar Camp with a bespoke team in place providing oversight and guidance.

A huge thank you to the RHQ team, who under the leadership of the GM, plan and deliver much of the activity throughout the year. This year in particular, they have remained flexible, in good spirits and have always prioritised the Paltan over their own personal lives. We are collectively indebted to them and their families. When you take the time to pause and reflect, there is so much to celebrate about 2020. As my tenure comes to an end, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you, serving, retired and all of your families too, for the support that you have given me, Charlie, Edward and Alice. It has been the greatest privilege to be your Commander; we have been welcomed with open arms, and we leave with a full heart and immense respect for you all. Good luck in the future.

Jai Queen's Gurkha Signals!

Foreword by Gurkha Major

Major Amrit Gurung

It is my honour to have been appointed as the 26th Gurkha Major of the Queen's Gurkha Signals. I would like to take this opportunity to thank my predecessor Dhir saheb for his outstanding service to the Paltan as the Gurkha Major. I wish him well as he embarks on his new role as the OC HQ Coy at 2 MI Bn.

Since taking over the post, the Commander memsahib and I have visited all our UK based sub-units, Blandford, Seremban Tp and Gurkha Coy, Catterick. Unfortunately, we had to cancel our visit to some of our smaller contingents; 18 (UKSF) Signal Regiment, ATC(P) and ATR(W) due to the 2nd national lockdown but I have been in touch with them virtually. I have been very impressed with their professionalism, dedication, total commitment and focus during this challenging time. I have received nothing but praise from their chain of command.

This year, 2020 has been like no other. Who would have predicted that the virus that started in Wuhan City of China at the back end of 2019, would have such a profound impact on a global scale. So many lives have been lost across the world. Closer to the Paltan, we too have felt the impact more intimately having lost some members of our Association and some close family members of our serving soldiers. On behalf of the Paltan, I would like to convey our deepest condolences - our thoughts and prayers are with them. There is a light at the end of the tunnel with the vaccine rollout programme underway, I urge everyone to be safe and strictly follow the government guidelines.

The last 12 months have been particularly difficult for members of Nepal Signal Troop. When COVID took hold in Nepal in Spring 2020, many of our bhaiharu and their families were repatriated to the UK. They were based at Larkhill Camp with limited facility and separated from their spouses. What was predicted to be few weeks stay ended up being more than six months due to deteriorating COVID situation in Nepal. Commander memsahib and I visited them in October. In defiance of all the trouble, we found them in very positive and good spirit. Now they have all returned to Nepal, reunited with their loved ones and in good health.

The serving Paltan has been at the vanguard of helping to fight this virus. Many members of the Paltan were deployed on Op RESCRIPT, Defence's contribution to Her Majesty's Government's COVID-19 response, all over the UK assisting Civilian Authorities in building the NHS NIGHTINGALE Hospital, transporting medical stores and in the running of various static and mobile testing sites. Now the vaccines are available, members of the Paltan are again deployed on the front lines helping the government with its vaccine rollout programme.

Despite the pandemic affecting day to day business, officers and soldiers of the Paltan have continued to



excel in providing vital military effect at the highest of standard. All five Field Squadrons; 246, 247, 248, 249 and 250, part of 1, 16, 22, 3 and 30 Signal Regiments respectively including the independent troops (Brunei Signal Troop, Nepal Signal Troop and Seremban Troop) have been extremely busy on operations and in high profile training exercises throughout the year providing robust CIS Support to their respective Headquarters and Units. Members of the Paltan currently serving in Blandford, ITC Catterick, Hereford and other ERE/ Singleton posts are relishing the challenges and opportunities to work in the wider E1/ E2 arena.

Manning

The Paltan is currently 26+ 578 strong. This figure does not include 96 new RI 20 bhaiharu who are undergoing their Induction and Trade Selection training at Altcar Training Camp. Our footprint is larger than ever. Now we have soldiers serving in Army HQ (technical roles), ARRC (J2 role), ATC Pirbright and ATR Winchester (Section Commanders), UOTC Nottingham (Staff Sergeant Instructor) and Specialist Weapons School (SWS) Warminster (TacCIS technical roles).

Paltan Growth and Basing. Our growth continues. Our fifth Sqn, 249 Gurkha Signal Squadron with 3rd (UK) Division Signal Regiment at Bulford, has reached its Full Operating Capability (FOC). We have just received an Implementation Order (IO) for our sixth Sqn, 242 Gurkha Signal Squadron, part of 22 Signal Regiment based at Stafford. It is a four years growth plan with Initial Operating Capability (IOC) of 31 Mar 23 and FOC of 30 Apr 2024. The RHQ team is in full swing with

implementing this growth, liaising with all stakeholders. This means 22 Signal Regiment will have two Gurkha Signal Squadrons in the future. With 247 Gurkha Signal Squadron (part of 16 Signal Regiment) already stationed at Stafford, our centre of mass in the future will be Stafford. As per the current plan, growth of the seventh Squadron will start in Q1 2024. The nomenclature for the seventh Squadron will be 243 Gurkha Signal Squadron. Where it will be based and with which Regiment is yet to be decided. 246 Gurkha Signal Squadron based in York has now become part of 1 Signal Regiment (previously 2 Signal Regiment). They will move to Perham Down with 1 Signal Regiment in August this year.

Promotions / VEng(F) Conversion / Commission Conversion

2020 has been a good year for our service personnel in the field of promotions and Versatile Engagement (Full) conversions, with a total of 108 promotions (1 x WO1, 7 x WO2s, 10 x SSGts, 18 x Sgts, 36 x Cpls and 36 LCpls) and 97 conversions to VEng(F). We also had a good year on officers' promotions and commission conversions (1 x Major, 2 x Regular Commission (Late Entry) and 5 x Intermediate Regular Commission (Late Entry)). 2 x Warrant Officers have been successful on the Late Entry Commissioning Board in September 2020. They will be commissioned directly into IRC(LE) in promotion year 21/22.

Sports

Unfortunately, due to the pandemic major sporting events such as Trailwalker, Brigade of Gurkhas Tug of War, Lanyard Trophy Competition and Army Operational Shooting Competitions were cancelled. This meant we remained the reigning Trailwalker, Nepal Cup and Tug of War winner for a further year.

Regimental Events

Throughout 2020 all Regimental events were curtailed due to COVID-19. The Annual Regimental Dinner Night, Association Dinner and Trailwalker were cancelled. Although the Regimental central Dashain celebration at Bramcote was cancelled, sub-units marked this auspicious festival in their own locations in a cut back scale and fully COVID compliant way. Ten days of religious rituals were performed fully at Bramcote Temple by Pundit, GM and pujari team. The daily rituals were live streamed for all sub-units to follow.

In September, our Colonel in Chief, Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal visited Gamecock Barracks and took the salute on our 71st Regimental Birthday Parade and cut the cake. For the first time in the history, the Birthday Parade was held in full ceremonial service dress. We had special dispensation to have 150 service personnel on the parade, hence, representatives from all five Field Squadrons were able to take part in the Parade. Also present on the parade were The Colonel

Commandant Brigade of Gurkhas and The Master of Signals, Lt Gen Sir Nick Pope saheb and our Colonel of the Regiment, Maj Gen Jon Cole saheb. It is rather unfortunate that this special occasion could not be witnessed by all members of the Paltan and Association. It was the last day in uniform for General Pope saheb. On behalf of the Paltan, I would like to thank him for everything he has done for the Paltan and the Brigade of Gurkhas. We wish him a very happy retirement and our very best for the future.

Change of Command. Lt Col Simon Smith saheb has taken over as the Commander QG SIGNALS from Lt Col Hannah Stoy memsaheb on 4 January 2021. On behalf of the serving Paltan, Association members in the UK and Nepal and all the families, I would like to thank Hannah memsaheb for her superb leadership, passion, commitment and exemplary service to the Paltan. We wish her, Charlie saheb, Edward and Alice the very best for the future. Similarly, a warm welcome home to Simon saheb, Natalie memsaheb and Oliver. Simon saheb has previously served as OC 248 Gurkha Signal Squadron (2013-2015). The Paltan very much look forward to flourishing under his leadership.

In summary, the Paltan continues to provide the highest level of communications and military support across Defence and the standard of this support is evidenced through the numerous commendations received by our service personnel throughout the year. It has been a challenging year with COVID impacting business as usual, but our people have been flexible, resourceful and found new innovative ways to do things in fully COVID complaint manner. The Paltan has much to look forward to in 2021.

Jai Paltan!

246 Gurkha Signal Squadron News

A year of two very different halves! The main effort for 246 Gurkha Signal Squadron (GSS) has been to FGen troops to deploy on Op CABRIT 6 and 7. This was closely followed by the requirement to fulfil our standing mission to provide Comms Sp to 20 Armd Inf Bde as it entered its readiness year. All the while, the Sqn has continued with its preparations to up-root from our current home in York and move to Perham Down, to be colocated with our parent unit, 1 Signal Regiment, as part of Army 2020 Refine. The first quarter went according to plan, with the Sqn FGen troops for CABRIT 6 whilst concurrently supporting a variety of 20 Armd Inf Bde exercises. The second and third quarters were dramatically affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Many activities were cancelled or put on hold, including our unit move. Consequently, we adjusted to new working conditions and, testament to the Sqn's versatility and ability to overcome adversity, we were able to provide invaluable support to the Op RESCRIPT effort. The fourth quarter has been all about returning to normality. As I write, the expectation is that the Sqn will again be called to provide military support to the civilian authorities over the winter period. Certainly, a new operating environment for the Sqn but nonetheless one it is adjusting to well with its usual enthusiasm and professionalism.

Operationally, 246 GSS has been increasingly active. Under the leadership of Lt Sam Lonsdale, ably supported by Sgt Gajendra Tamang and Sgt Samir Rai, the lion's share of Sek Kong Troop deployed on Op CABRIT 6 supporting the First Fusilier BG as part of the UK contribution to NATO's enhanced Forward Presence in Estonia and Poland. Currently, Kowloon Troop, led by Lt Alex Newman and his Troop Sgt Arjun Gurung deployed to support the 5 RIFLES and QDG BG on Op CABRIT 7. As part of Op RESCRIPT, the Sqn gained a Troop from 71 Reserve Signal Regiment to provide an extremely high readiness capability for Covid-19 Support Force 23. Of note, Sgt Shankar Gurung and Sgt Ridesh Mukhiya from Island Troop delivered several bespoke and extremely well received training packages to the mobile Covid-19 testing teams in the West Midlands AO as part of their role as a Mobile Training Support Team.

Away from operations, the Sqn has continued to pursue many other significant opportunities. The Sqn managed to secure places for 23 pax on Ex DRAGON WHITE RHINO, a regimental skiing AT Exped to Andorra. Covid-19 prevented the Sqn from fully demonstrating its shooting and endurance talents as the Army shooting championships and Lanyard Trophy were cancelled this year. However, in Sept Sgt Kaji Limbu organised a great Level 2 multievent AT package to the Lake District. Although the AT was conducted under strict force health protection measures there was no disturbance to the activities, or the enjoyment had by all. Proudly, I have been able to

present 21 promotions throughout the year across all ranks from Signaller up to Lieutenant. Also, Cpl Vijay Tamang was selected for Foreman of Signals training, we wish him luck. In addition, and in recognition of their professionalism and commitment, several awards have been received by members of the Sqn.

Jai Queen's Gurkha Signals

OP CABRIT 6 (Estonia)

By Sig Rishav Gurung, 246 Gurkha Signal Squadron

As a part of the NATO Enhanced Forward Presence (EFP), a team of 1+17 SP from 246 GSS were deployed to OP CABRIT 6 (Estonia) to provide robust and resilient G6 support to the entire exercise period. Elements of 246 GSS took over OPCIS and RLD, and performed incredibly well as tradesman first, and as soldiers always. I got the opportunity to enhance and exploit my knowledge and skills whilst being a part of the OPCIS team.

Being my first tour, this helped me to broaden my trade knowledge as we dealt with various detachments. Our primary platforms including, Housekeeper and Falcon and our secondary platforms were Kingfisher, Type 4 Node, OLRT, CCT 120 and 117F. This provided variation to our working routine throughout the tour. Most importantly I worked with Housekeeper switches and learn how to configure and modify them. Being a University student myself, this was great for me as a lot of my studies are related to my job role.

In addition to this, OP CABRIT gave me ample opportunities to diversify and explore. I exposed myself to a few different courses, competitions and the wider parts of Estonia. Recertification of my team medic course has helped me to align to the direction of being a MATT 3 instructor. Secondly, participation in the DANCON march, a 25km march hosted by the Danish Army with 313 participants in which all of us came within the top 20 and one of us grabbing the glorious 2nd position. Last but not least, Estonia is a beautiful country and I enjoyed exploring and roaming around different cities. In my personal view, Tallinn is a must go for any tourist or deployed person as it is the capital city. The old town reminds me of York shambles and the picturesque beachfront reminds me of our Phase 2 weekends spent at Durdledoor.

Finally, in my view, as a soldier we must seize the opportunity and get exposed to the outer world as this develops us personally and professionally. We get paid to visit these places for free, where (and I know its cliché) civvies would pay thousands, to not jump at the opportunity to experience new cultures and work with interesting people is profound. Thus, I feel fortunate that I was a part of this tour and look forward to future deployments and seek opportunities to return.

Ex TRAILWALKER 2020

By Cpl Pratik Paija, 246 Gurkha Signal Squadron

A 10 man team led, by Cpl Pratik from 246 Gurkha Signal Squadron (GSS) took part in the Virtual Ex TRAILWALKER in September 2020. Accumulating a total of 159km and fundraised a sum of £365.00 for Oxfam and the Gurkha Welfare Trust (GWT) Charities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected many lives around the globe and is now a global crisis. Due to this unfortunate global pandemic, people are drastically suffering physically, mentally and economically. Moreover, it has badly affected those who are unable to afford their basic necessities as well as the old and frail who may require assistance to live their day to day lives. Thus, at a challenging time like this, various charity organisations are encouraging and trying new ways to fundraise in order to help those in need. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, the Queen's Gurkha Signals and the Oxfam Team were unable to organise this year's Ex TRAILWALKER event like previous years. Despite restrictions imposed by COVID-19, it didn't prevent the Queen's Gurkha Signals from organising a Virtual Trailwalker Relay event.

When the event was announced, 246 GSS had no hesitation and jumped at the chance to help fundraise for the Oxfam and the GWT charities. The team members were: Maj T Masi, Capt Gopal Saru, SSgt Dipal Gurung, Cpl Pratik Paija, LCpl Sandesh Gurung, LCpl Ash Tamang, LCpl Nabin Rai, LCpl Sanjock Gurung, Sig Om Bahadur Gharti and Sig Rewadhan Rai.



74 Training Party building MGOB

Everyone was very enthusiastic to participate and worked hard to fundraise for the charity. It gave us a great sense of achievement as well as helping utilise our fitness routine for a good cause. It certainly encouraged other members of the Squadron to take part in such events to help fundraise for those who are in need. Finally, in hopes to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic, it would be wonderful to see the traditional Trailwalker event organised next year.

247 Gurkha Signal Squadron News

247 Gurkha Sig Sqn has had another eventful, demanding and productive year. In October 2019 King Troop returned from Op CABRIT 4 after a highly successful operational deployment in Estonia and Poland supporting the King's Royal Hussars (KRH) Battle Group. In November 2019 the Squadron took over the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) Theatre Enabling Group (TEG) role from 230 Sig Sqn. The Squadron is now aligned to deliver Information and Communication Services (ICS) support to Headquarters 104 Logistic Support Brigade (Log Sp Bde) as part of JEF TEG commitment; some elements are held at R1 whilst the majority of the Squadron is held at R2 Notice to Move (NTM).

Following the takeover of the JEF TEG role, the Squadron was immediately thrust into the preparation for Ex DEFENDER EUROPE 20, a 6-month exercise from January to June 2020. The exercise itself was one of the biggest NATO exercises since the Cold War that saw involvement of 18 nations, including the UK, with the deployment of more than 35,000 troops. The main aim of the exercise was to test NATO's capacity to rapidly deploy and coordinate movement of forces at large scale in Europe in support of NATO, ensuring its readiness in order to respond to any current or future threats in the area. The UK committed 2,600 personnel deployed from across different units within the British Army. 247 Gurkha Sig Sqn was part of that force, providing resilient ICS support to the TEG Headquarters commanded by Comd 104 Log Sp Bde, operating from Sennelager and Fallingbommel in Germany and Grobbendonk in Belgium.

Ex DEFENDER EUROPE 20 commenced in January 2020 but due to the COVID-19 pandemic was called off in March. Despite this the main objective for the Squadron to deliver resilient ICS support to TEG Headquarters was still achieved. Following the recovery from exercise, members of the Squadron immediately deployed on Op RESCRIPT, supporting the NHS and Public Health England in tackling COVID-19. Squadron officers and soldiers deployed in multiple roles across the Midlands, ranging from transportation of NHS stores and taking swab tests for the public, to deploying as Mobile Testing Units (MTU). As the "preservation of force" shifted to "return to work" as the norm for Defence, the Squadron focused onto conducting Ex DEFENDER EUROPE 20 reconstitution work, ensuring the readiness state of all equipment and manpower prior to summer block leave.

Upon return from a well-deserved leave, the changeover of the Squadron Officer Commanding took place; Maj Murphy, after a hugely successful tenure, handed over the baton to Maj Fitchett. October 2020 then saw the Squadron deploy on Adventurous Training to the Lake District before shifting focus to a CT1 exercise, Squadron KSE training and subsequently build up for a CT2 exercise.

Despite restrictions imposed by COVID-19, members of the Squadron managed to continue contributing significantly towards Regimental and community life. The Squadron has raised charity funds totaling over £1,300 for Royal Signals Charities by taking part in the Royal Signals 100for100 challenge, as well as raising funds for other charity organisations such as the ABF and GWT by undertaking charity runs and charity haircuts.

247 Gurkha Sig Sqn is very much looking forward to 2021 which already promises to offer deployments on high profile multinational overseas exercises such as Ex DEFENDER EUROPE 21, trade and individual development and Adventure Training.

Jai 247 Gurkha Signal Squadron!

EXERCISE DEFENDER EUROPE 2020

By LCpl Arjun Tamang, 247 Gurkha Sig Sqn

In January 2020, 247 Gurkha Sig Sqn of 16 Sig Regt deployed on Ex DEFENDER EUROPE 2020, a US led joint multi-national exercise, delivering Information and Communication Services (ICS) support to 104 Log Sp Bde. The exercise involved more than 35,000 personnel from across 18 nations including the UK. The exercise was led by 2* US formation, 21st Theatre Sustainment Command (TSC). DEFENDER stands for Dynamic Employment of Forces to Europe for NATO Deterrence and Enhanced Readiness. This was the largest Allied forces deployment in Europe in the last 25 years. The main aim of the exercise was to test its capacity to rapidly deploy and coordinate the movement of forces at large scale in Europe in support of NATO ensuring its readiness in order to respond to any current or future threats in the area. The UK committed heavily

with 2,600 personnel deployed from across different units within the British Army. 247 Gurkha Sig Sqn was part of that force providing resilient ICS support to Theatre Enabling Group Headquarters (TEG HQ) commanded by 104 Log Sp Bde, operating from Sennelager and Fallingbostal in Germany, and Grobbendonk in Belgium.

On the morning of the 17 January, 22 members from Borneo Tp, 247 Gurkha Sig Sqn, led by Lt Hynd along with elements from Sqn Ops deployed to Sennelager. It was the first overseas deployment for most of the troop members and the excitement was clearly visible. On arrival at Normandy Barracks in Sennelager, everyone was taken through the standard Real-Life Support (RLS) process. Concentrating all the effort towards establishing an operational G6 environment, the detachment commanders and the crews started setting up their assets under the supervision of Network Equipment Room (NER) IC Sgt Tej Rai. The most challenging and critical network link required was the interoperability between the UK Mission Secret (MS) and US Mission Secret. LCpl Amirkumar Gurung and LCpl Suraj Thapa Magar demonstrated a high level of technical expertise and continued determination for almost 2 weeks by finally achieving the federation, Mission Node Participation (MNP), the first of its kind in the British Army.

Concurrently, the troop was able to meet its Initial Operating Capability (IOC) as the advance party of Staff Officers started arriving from the UK. Official Sensitive (OS) data provided by Housekeeper network, UK Secret (UKS) data from Type Small Node (TSN), Secret voice of Falcon with UK reach back via CCT 120 SATCOM, VTC facility and 24/7 manned Service Desk were the main services laid out for all end-users of the TEG HQ. Additionally, physical security of the HQ building, access control and substitute power plan were all kept in place before declaring Full Operating Capability (FOC) on the 15 February.

Subsequently, the other two troops, Hong Kong and King Tp, deployed to Grobbendonk, Belgium in support of 17 Port and Maritime (17 P&M) and Fallingbostal, Germany in support of 5 Battalion REME respectively. With TEG HQ being fully operational, the normal exercise routine was enforced giving everyone much needed rejuvenating time to get involved in gym sessions, quiz nights and opportunity to explore the nearby Paderborn city. However, the exercise had to be cut short in accordance with the guidance provided by the UK Government in response to the unprecedented outbreak and spread of COVID-19. All ICS networks were brought down on the 18 March and vehicles prepared for the return journey back to the UK. One significant moment before the closure was the awarding of the Comd's Coin by Maj Gen Mohan, Commander 21 TSC's, to Sgt Shankar Gurung, Sgt Tej Rai and Cpl Mohan Gurung for their relentless contribution towards the success of the shortened exercise.



Soldiers siting FEPS generator during build phase



Sgt Shankar and LCpl Prasant setting up PRC117 radio

The Sqn was successful in the safe recovery of all the deployed elements on the 21 March and was commended by the Regiment for accomplishing the set task of providing first class and unfaltering ICS support. Ex DEFENDER 20 is always going to be memorable for most of us because of its humongous scale and real time nature. There will be further challenging exercises and scenarios in the future, and we look forward to it with enthusiasm.

Jai 247 Gurkha Sig Sqn

My Experience on OPERATION RESCRIPT By Signaller Anush Gurung, 247 Gurkha Sig Sqn

With the emerging concern over the COVID-19 outbreak, the health and safety of people has become one of the top priorities in the UK. Having just come off my Phase 2 training in Blandford, I was already gearing up to deploy on an operation. My Troop Sgt called out the list of names and briefed us in detail. I was excited to work for the NHS and help the Nation. Equally, I had a mild concern of having no experience at all working in such settings. The majority of personnel from 247 Gurkha Signal Squadron were deployed on Op RESCRIPT taking on various roles. Our team of 14, led by LCpl Bijay Gurung, also had the opportunity to deploy as COVID-19 Testers to support the NHS to help control the pandemic.

On the 7th April 2020, we arrived at Regional Testing Site (RTS) Edgbaston in Birmingham and were shown our Area of Responsibilities (AOR). Our role was of a tester. We were to take swab samples from the people who booked in for the test. However, while collecting

the swab, none of us had a clue if any of those subjects had the COVID virus or not. So, it was risky and challenging. Hence, we had to be more cautious while approaching them. While the operation continued in the area for more than a month, time and again we were reminded to avoid contact with people and to avoid touching our eyes, ears, and nose without wearing full PPE. Furthermore, communal areas and items used in the field were frequently sanitised. The days were long, hot and hungry but we continued our duties courageously for hours and hours collecting swabs. The never-ending line of cars and the people inside those cars looked worried and anxious. The war with an invisible enemy was not an easy win. On our battle ground, the highest ranked soldier with old and bold nature was Lance Corporal Bijay Gurung guruji who looked after us well on the ground.



Soldiers from 247 Gurkha Sig Sqn collecting swab

Every time I went to bed, I used to quickly surf the news on my mobile phone, and it was mostly the rise of COVID-19 cases in UK and around the world. The rise of the death toll exceeding over thousands was alarming. Nevertheless, our fight was on every day at RTS Edgbaston. Every morning, I was following Bijay guruji's direction and trying my best to help the Nation. Seeing the parents with their kids for the COVID-19 test, it just made me think of my parents back in Nepal. The time has become difficult for everyone but the most important for me at that moment was my duty. No matter how risky it was, we as a team kept on marching forward everyday keeping the highest standard of the British Army's Values and Standards. We were visited by many high-ranking military dignitaries as well as local MPs who highly praised our work. I felt proud of myself and realised how a small team can make a big footprint even in a worst condition.

Jai 247 Gurkha Sig Sqn

248 Gurkha Signal Squadron News

Since my first real exposure to the Paltan some 7 years ago, I aspired to serve with the Queen's Gurkha Signals, so to be writing in my second newsletter as Officer Commanding 248 Gurkha Signal Squadron is a very real and personal honour.

Once again, 248 have enjoyed a now characteristically busy period defined by operational output and evolution. Whether delivering our primary role for ARRC HQ or dynamically re-rolling to meet the needs of the nation on Op RESCRIPT, we have been proactive, enthusiastic and focussed on the challenge at hand.

Defined by our ARRC readiness cycle, at the beginning of the year we wasted no time and seized the opportunity to hone our soldiering skills, deploying on both squadron and regimental level Battle Camps. Building through the year, our soldiers demonstrated the technical skill that has become synonymous with the QG SIGNALS and deployed on the ARRC CT5 validation exercise: LOYAL LEDA 20, where we successfully delivered service excellence to a demanding staff, across two sites: a true "By Your Badge" moment. Shybash! In a year dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic, 248 dynamically re-rolled to become part of Covid Support Force 23. Immediately utilised, we deployed inside tight timelines to assist in the building of the NHS NIGHTINGHALE Hospital in Birmingham. Whether it be installing the complex network of oxygen pipes, moving medical equipment into place or a myriad of other general duty tasks – the Squadron worked tirelessly to build this critical asset in the nation's fight against the pandemic. Further tasks under Op RESCRIPT included training for mobile testing units and the distribution and collection of testing kits throughout the West Midlands' network of residential care homes. This period has tested our resolve, and we

are incredibly proud to have been able to do our bit for the country during this turbulent time.

Within the sporting arena, LCpl Anish Gurung was selected for the Army Basketball Team, winning numerous Most Valuable Player accolades and the Best Sportsman at the Birthday Parade. Squadron cricketers also contributed to the winning team in the Brigade of Gurkhas Inter-Unit Competition.

In this period truncated by lockdown, we deployed on 4 Adventurous Training (AT) exercises, including Ex DRAGON KHUKURI, the Squadron's Level 2 adventurous training package, which saw c.40 personnel deploy to the Peak District to conduct mountain biking and hill walking. This was the first AT package ventured on, following the lockdown restrictions being lifted and proves the Squadron's appetite to pursue all-round excellence.

Recruiting has remained a key priority, committing workforce and equipment to many high-profile recruiting events locally and nationally. Additionally, the Squadron has participated in several community engagement events supporting not only our local community with a raft of activities, but nationally, including providing a piping detail for the VVIP Dinner for the VJ75 celebration, hosted at Lancaster House; it is no wonder Sig Akash Tamang won the best Piper award at the Birthday Parade.

As a Queen's Gurkha Signals Officer, my span of responsibility stretches beyond that of my operational commitments, I also strive to embrace the Gurkha Kaida and uphold the values and traditions of the rich Nepali heritage. To be able to celebrate Dashain, as a squadron deployed in the field, even within COVID restrictions, was a glorious moment for me, and to personally offer Tika, a deep and humbling privilege. Furthermore, I hold dear my obligation to support the growth and prosperity of the wider Paltan, and do so with enthusiasm, willingness and excitement as we move forward for another year in this wonderful regiment.

I close by addressing directly, the soldiers and officers of 248 Gurkha Signal Squadron. My time as your Officer Commanding is relatively brief, I aimed to make the most of it and to lead by way of empowerment, positivity and encouragement. This requires a mutual trust between me and every member of the Squadron; we have it. You have worked tirelessly in pursuit of excellence and I stand proud knowing we delivered it, together. It has been my eternal privilege to command, serve and lead you and one which I will never forget. Hami jasto kohi chaina!

Jai 248. Jai Paltan

Covid Support Force: NHS NIGHTINGALE HOSPITAL BIRMINGHAM - Through my eyes

By Sgt Robin Gurung, Lima Troop

The outbreak of COVID-19 created a global health crisis that has had a deep impact on the way we perceive our world and our everyday lives. Not only the rate of infection and patterns of transmission threaten our sense of agency, but the safety measures put in place to slow the spread of the virus, particularly social distancing, prevent us from doing what is fundamentally human: to find solace in the company of others. On 24 Mar, it was announced that NHS England would establish several temporary critical care hospitals, to create temporary hospital spaces for those in need of treatment and care. They have been named "Nightingale Hospitals", after Florence Nightingale who came to prominence for nursing soldiers during the Crimean War and is regarded as the founder of modern nursing. On 27 Mar, NHS England announced that they would be establishing one such hospital at the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham.

At times of crisis, the Government often calls upon the military to contribute to the national response due to their specialist skill-set and equipment. This is called Military Aid to Civil Authorities or MACA. To fulfil the workforce requirement for MACA, the Covid Support Force (CSF) was established under **Op RESCRIPT**. 248 Gurkha Signal Squadron was attached to 1st Signal Regiment to form CSF 23, held at a varying state of readiness. No sooner had we fully integrated into the CSF, we were warned off for, and deployed to assist contractors at NEC Birmingham to build NHS Nightingale Hospital.

It was a huge project as it would accommodate around 2000 patients when used in full capacity. I was fortunate to be selected to lead a small, initial entry, team of 8 soldiers to assist contractors at NEC Birmingham. The timeline was very tight as the hospital needed to be ready within 10 days to open the doors to its first patients. On 1 April, the team deployed to NEC Birmingham. After initial familiarisation of the area, we were given the work induction to operate on the site. The main task was to provide Engineering and Logistic support to Midland Medical Services who were contracted to lay piping which transports medical gas supply to the patients. Under a tight timeline, we helped move the heavy pipes underground; a laborious and demanding task. Once underground, the contractors could then install the necessary items required to build the fully functional wards. What began as a small presence, grew into a squadron level task, with every soldier and officer from 248 being utilised. Slowly the empty halls began to take the shape of a hospital, ready to welcome patients. The tasks came in thick and fast; our next job was to assist the contractors to move hundreds of beds, tables, trolleys, and several other important items into the wards. Finally the temporary hospital was ready, and on 16 Apr 20 was officially opened by HRH Prince William, The Duke of Cambridge.



Boys in action



Helping to build beds

This has been an over-whelming experience for me, and I am proud to have assisted this great nation during this unprecedented time. The soldiers I led also share in this pride:

"I have been in the Army 18 years. I don't think what is happening here compares with Afghanistan and Iraq. The task here is of a massive scale and I don't think anyone has seen something of this scale done before."
Cpl Kamal Limbu

"It was a great opportunity to help the nation when it needed the most. We have a very flexible capability and the training we receive prepares us for any situation." LCpl Tilak GM

"I personally feel very proud to be one of the first footsteps to help complete this project. This has given me a unique experience to work together with other national agencies in the time of this crisis."
Sig Aakash Tamang

A word from the Officer Commanding.

"To command 248 Gurkha Signal Squadron is the greatest honour I have had in my career to date; but to do so at this

time has elevated that even higher. To see the hard work, dedication, and positivity in which every member of the Squadron approached this task, and the results it yielded on behalf of the nation was simply breath-taking. Dherai Dhanyabad to you all, and Shybash for a job well done!”
 Major TM Collins, OC 248 Gurkha Signal Squadron



Sense of pride

The NHS Nightingale hospital Birmingham will remain a symbol of hope and a nation coming together during this national crisis. It is the foundation for what is such a momentous and incredible achievement. One thing that will remain forever with me is the praise received from the Duke of Cambridge while opening the hospital. He said “The selfless commitment of the people has touched the heart of the nation. The hospital is all about people not just the brick walls. The NHS Nightingale Hospital Birmingham is a wonderful example of Britain pulling together.

100for100: Royal Signals Centenary Challenge
 By Cpl Rohan Limbu, Oscar Troop

2020 marks the centenary of the formation of the Royal Corps of Signals. On the 28 Jun 20 The Right Honourable Winston Churchill as the Secretary of State for War signed the Royal Warrant which gave the Sovereigns approval for the formation of a ‘Corps of Signals’. Six weeks later in August, HRH King George V conferred the title ‘Royal Corps of Signals’. This year is a truly significant one for the Corps to celebrate its glorious 100 years. Several planned events for the centenary celebration and notably Project 204 had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead, the concept of the **100for100** challenge was born.

The 100for100 challenge is to cover 100km from 1 Jun, whether that’s running, tabbing, cycling, walking or any other exercise of their choice until the Corps Birthday on 28 Jun to raise money for the Royal Signals Charity. The charity is crucial to support and assists serving/retired soldiers and their dependant family who are in situations of hardship, need or distress.

30 members of 248 Gurkha Signal Squadron including Maj Thomas Collins, OC 248 took part in the challenge. Few individuals decided to put their own spin on it. Cpl Rohan Limbu was the first one to complete the challenge from the team by running 10km a day for 10 days to mark 100km. Cpl Uday Limbu completed his run whilst deployed out in Op SHADER in the scorching heat. Cpl Anish Gurung doubled the distance and completed his 200km run. Sgt Nabin Shrestha completed his 100km run with his wife and managed to convince his 2 daughters Sheena (aged 9) and Abril (aged 6) to complete 100km of cycling too; an amazing feat achieved by both. SSM WO2 Saraj Rai added 100 Burpees and 100 Squats after each run. Finally, Collins Saheb and the SSM had a particular distance on his mind to represent the Squadron and completed the distance of 248km.



OC Sqn and SSM on completion of their 248 km challenge

On the Anniversary day; 100km, 100 Burpees, 100 Squats and with many fond memories, we 248 Gurkha Signal Squadron team concluded our challenge. As a team, we managed to raise an outstanding amount of £2,092. Finally, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to all the donors and supporters for making 100for100 a success.



Sgt Nabin with his wife completed 253 km, children completed on bikes

249 Gurkha Signal Squadron News

It has been an extremely busy and challenging year for 249 Gurkha Signal Squadron, with the focus at developing x-METS to achieve readiness and deliver CP Refine in support of the HQ 3rd (UK) Division. The CP Refine, historically known as the Main CP, enables the General Officer Commanding and his team of approximately 120 staff to command the Division, with a smaller footprint and be much more rapidly manoeuvrable HQ around battlespace.

After a fully tactical CTC2, Ex KHUKURI LIGHTNING, in Q4/19, the Sqn continued its training trajectory on Ex KIWI PRIMUS, a regimental level deployment in support of Ex IRON PRIMUS, HQ 3rd (UK) Div BCS in Q1/20, where the Sqn first delivered full construction of the CP and fully assured CIS services. Post Ex IRON PRIMUS, the Sqn was stood up as the lead CSF (COVID Support Force) Sqn of the Regt in support of Op RESCRIPT, a military operation to assist the UK's efforts in tackling the COVID-19 pandemic. In May 20, the Sqn deployed a small team to the Centralised Isolation Facility (C-IFAC), in the Defence Academy Shrivenham.

The Sqn has continued to excel in wider military activities. It has successfully defended its champion Sqn title on Kiwi Trophy (inter-Sqn 8-mile march and shoot competition) in Sep 20, and was actively involved in the fund-raising arenas, raising over £10,000 for various charities: QG SIGNALS Association Trust, Royal Signals Charity, Gurkha Welfare Trust and a local charity 'STARS Appeal', Salisbury District Hospital. The event included a relay run of 249 miles in 48 hours by teams of 8 pairs. A successful event which attracted local medias including BBC Wiltshire, local FM and BFBS. On the social and cultural front, the Sqn hosted a Dashain special lunch (socially distanced/FHPI compliant) for serving personnel of the Regt to mark the occasion and uphold Gurkha culture and Kaida within the Regt. Additionally, 7 members of the Sqn have deployed as part of a Regimental team on Op TORAL 11, as the Kabul Communications Unit.

In Q4/20, the Sqn deployed in support of Ex CERBERUS, a CT5 validation exercise led by HQ 3rd (UK) Div, where the Sqn delivered CIS support to HQ 3rd (UK) Div Staff in EXCON and Brigade HQs spread across SPTA. In Q1/21, the two-year build-up of the Sqn's capabilities will culminate in a deployment to Fort Hood, Texas, for Ex WARFIGHTER where we will be playing a critical role to enable HQ 3rd (UK) Div to validate its warfighting capabilities with its US partner.

The Sqn has had a phenomenally successful year and continues to excel and build on success and strong legacy through relentless pursuit of excellence.

Jai 249

Ex KHUKURI IRON PRIMUS 2020

By Lt D Clifton OC Cambrai Troop

From 19 Jan to 7 Feb 20, 249 Gurkha Signal Squadron from 3rd (UK) Division Signal Regiment deployed on Ex KHUKURI PRIMUS and Ex IRON PRIMUS on Salisbury Plain Training Area. This started with CT1/2 training before culminating in Ex IRON PRIMUS, the Squadron's first CT3/4 deployment, delivering services to HQ 3rd (UK) Div staff.

The Squadron (Sqn) spent the first week conducting CT1/2 level training, throughout some of the worst weather Salisbury Plain and the British winter could throw at them. During this challenging training environment, the Sqn established TacCIS, a resilient Tactical Wide Area Network, Reacher connectivity, a Land Deployable Gateway along with other ICS services and provided support to RADCON, SYSCON and A Ech. As a result of many taxing moves and changes of control, movements and establishments of CP's became very slick, with communications established in a timely manner.

This testing phase of the exercise saw the Sqn operating and providing a variety of staff working environments and communications in a degraded and contested environment. The Sqn were then given orders to recover and to re-deploy to establish CP Refine (Main HQ), a smaller and more moveable (if not manoeuvrable) concept. Regimental Controls and Ech were also co-located ready for the start of CT3/4 training. At this point, the weather Gods decided to gift Salisbury Plain with several months' worth of rainfall in the space of 48 hours adding good training value. As the HQs were established, the RLS team from 10 Queen's Own Gurkha Logistics Regiment made a very welcome appearance providing a field kitchen, making some incredible food, appreciated by members of the Sqn and Div Staff alike.



249 Gurkha Sig Sqn during Ex KHUKURI IRON PRIMUS 2020

The Sqn culminated the final week of the exercise by providing a refined CP staff working environment, fully equipped with assured and resilient ICS services, to the exercising staff of 3rd (UK) Div. At the end of the exercise the GOC presented GOC coins to LCpl Davies and Sig Nisaan for their extraordinary performances on exercise. Cpl Gyanendra, LCpl Dilip and LCpl Deepen also received CO's coins for their exceptional hard work, competency and diligence. Overall, the exercise was a great success where Sqn personnel gained a significant amount of individual and collective training experience whilst successfully enabling HQ 3rd (UK) Div BCS.

Jai 249!

250 Gurkha Signal Squadron News

There are not many whom in mid - 2019 would have predicted the state of play in 2020. COVID -19 has disrupted almost every element of service life; cancelled exercises, compromised AT and mandated both pre-operational isolation and extensive force health protection measures. I report with huge pride however that the spirit, drive and innovative energy of 250 remains unchecked. Every challenge has been overmatched by planning skill, every risk mitigated by guile and innovation and every threatened opportunity has been seized by perseverance and an unrelenting determination to succeed. We simply do not permit COVID-19 to dictate our battle-rhythm to us.

My predecessor, Maj Jon Carey, reported that this year would be a year for 'readiness, innovation and fun'; he was characteristically on-point in his words. We all wish him, Laura and the family the absolute best as he embarks on his new role as Chief of Staff, 1 Sig Bde. I know that he will continue to serve the Paltan from afar and leaves a lasting legacy of empowerment, humility and putting the team above the self. I gladly take up that mantle.

Recently, the dying throws of late September warmth were reserved for a gloriously sunny Royal Visit. HRH Princess Anne and her entourage visited Gamecock Barracks on what was the 71st Birthday of the Queen's Gurkha Signals. With support from RHQ QG Signals, 250's SQMS Surendra and his team magnificently orchestrated the safe ingress of 120+ additional members of the Paltan to Gamecock Barracks, all of whom were a truly spectacular sight on parade. With the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas ringing through the air and a packed square in perfect step, HRH spoke to the enduring importance of the Queen's Gurkha Signals, thanking all ranks and their families for their service and support. We also thank Lt Gen Pope CBE for his enduring role as Colonel Commandant of the Brigade of Gurkhas, and for his final Royal duty as the Master of Signals.

On to business! Readiness is 250's core role and despite some of the the capstone SJFHQ exercises falling to

the COVID-19 sword, we have hustled, risk-assessed and driven the Sqn readiness profile in a multitude of ways. OC W Tp, Capt Lalit Thapa, with support from his wizened team of SNCOs, Sgt Sanjoy, Sgt Saroj and Sgt Agnesh, delivered exceptional results on our CT-B, Ex KHUKURI CONNECTION. Every single exercise lesson we learn is testament to the collective intellect, hard work and a thirst for continuous improvement. Across the SUMA, Sgt Brindan has thrived as the acting Tp Comd of V Tp, mentoring and nurturing the bhai haru, supporting SHQ's intent with total loyalty and assisting RHQ QGS on all fronts. The immaculate management of our logistic component sits squarely on the shoulders of Sgt Dilip, his highly motivated team and delivery of effect at all levels adds true value to the team and the mission. This collective drive enriches the maturity of our readiness capability and permits our Commanders' freedom of movement, safe in the knowledge that 250 will deliver.

Operationally we remain committed on a multitude of fronts, with soldiers delivering exceptional results on enduring commitments across Africa. On Op TURUS (Cpl Arjun Kaucha and LCpl Ganesh Chand) and Op TANGHAM (Sgt Avinash Ale, Cpl Jiwan Thapa and LCpl Milan Tamang) the 250 flag is flown with immense professionalism and pride. Under the keen leadership of 2Lt Araminta Stoddart and following an immensely successful MRX with the Light Dragoons BG, we also prepare to take new ground on the Long Range Recce Group to Mali (LRRGM). Her team of 5 (L/Sgt Sanam Ghale, LCpl Santosh Rai, Sig Kiran Rai, Sig Prakash Rai Sig Anurag Gurung) have exceeded their task in all regards; the operation will have challenges, they are more than up to them.

Following the curtailment of TRAILWALKER 2020, Oxfam worked hard to deliver a highly successful TRAILWALKER RELAY event. 250 committed and committed hard; 3 teams contributed to several thousand pounds raised for the GWT, an immense effort in challenging times. Whilst there remains much uncertainty on the sporting and adventurous forecast of events, there is zero uncertainty in 250's resolve to fight for every opportunity. The reigning champions of the Nepal Cup are ready to defend their crown and will do everything possible to make that happen!

It is the people that make 250 what it is - mutually supporting. To those that have promoted and moved on, well done and thank you. To those that are new to 250, welcome to the team! Personal challenges will be met with empathy and understanding, professional challenges with a calm head, technical brilliance and a sense of humour. The community's strength comes from the support of each other and that of the families; a fantastically well delivered Teej event hopefully went some way to demonstrate the gratitude we have for that support. We look forward to the challenges ahead and will continue to put the prosperity of the people at the heart of every decision.

Princess Royal's visit to 30 Signal Regiment

By LCpl Prasant Tamang

Within the army, an official visit by a high-ranking official is something we all are accustomed to. However, when you find out you are hosting the Princess Royal, you get that extra bit of gratitude, pride and sense of belonging. When we were told that Her Royal Highness, Princess Anne, who is also the Colonel-in-Chief of the Corps, would be visiting the regiment on the auspicious occasion of the 71st Birthday Celebration of Queen's Gurkha Signals on 18 Sep 20, the day became a lot more special to us. For members of the regiment, this meant a week of preparation and rehearsals to make sure everything went smoothly as planned.

On Friday morning, everything stood still as we awaited the arrival of the Princess. As she stepped off the helicopter, the Commanding Officer of the Regiment, Lt Col Hannah Stoy welcomed her with a Royal Salute from the members of the regiment. She was then led to the parade square for a photograph with the officers of the Regiment. After this, she was accompanied to an open area behind the parade square where various tents, gazebos and a marquee was set up for presentations. Taking turns, Princess Anne received short briefs on various departments of the regiment from different members, such as 'Regimental Day-to-day Business', 'Current Operational Commitments', 'Future Operational Commitments' and 'Sports and Adventure Training Opportunities'. 30th Signal Regiment takes immense pride in being the only Regiment in the British Army, with a female soldier or officer in every rank. Most of them received the opportunity to have a chat with the Princess as she went around the different ends. Last but probably of the most importance, she visited the marquee, where soldiers were all stood up with their family surrounding them as they awaited being presented their Operational and 'LSGC' medals. Due to various COVID restrictions, the medals were presented differently. The soldiers stood behind their own respective stands where their medals were already pre-placed and the Princess went up to their stands, spent a few minutes talking to them and congratulated them. This was a moment they would all cherish forever.

After finishing off with the presentations, the Princess was then taken to the Officers' Mess where she took a well-deserved break and had lunch with the members of the mess. Shortly after, a few more presentations followed on in the Mess. Notably, one of the presentations included the unveiling of a large-scale painting of the Princess herself. The painting will find its home on the walls of the Officers' Mess marking her visit gloriously.

Meanwhile, Queen's Gurkha Signals had formed up as a Regiment under the command of Lt Col Hannah Stoy the Commander Queen's Gurkha Signals and laid in wait for the Princess to attend the parade.



HRH Princess Anne talking to family of Comd QG SIGNALS



HRH Princess Anne inspecting front rank



HRH Princess Anne cutting the birthday cake

As the Princess marched up to the dais of the parade square, the parade stood to Royal Salute. The parade started with an inspection of the soldiers by Her Royal Highness, followed by the Birthday speeches and the cake cutting. The smile on her face, while she cut the cake with a Khukuri, showed us how proud she was of her soldiers. After this she retreated to the dais, where she stood at the lectern and after a 'Khukuri dance' performance from the members of the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas, she delivered her speech to the huge parade in front of her, offering her sincere gratitude to the soldiers and their families, providing assurance of the belief and trust the Royal Family bestowed upon the Gurkhas. After the speech, the Regiment marched

past the Princess led by Comd QGS, marking the end of a wonderful visit. Before she bid farewell, she also inspected the Band of the Brigade of the Gurkhas after which, she was taken for a photograph with the Officers of QGS. As she walked across the parade square to her vehicle, she was met by the children of some of the members of the Regiment, who offered her a bouquet and a token of remembrance, in the form of Pashmina. The crowd watched on as she got into her vehicle and was driven off to be flown away on her helicopter bringing an end to the visit.

The Regiment then formed up again under their Commander QGS who reported to the Colonel of the Regiment, Maj Gen JJ Cole. He delivered his speech to the parade, relaying the gratitude to the service of the soldiers and offering farewell to the outgoing Master of Signals Lt Gen Sir Nick Pope. This was then followed up by presentations of several awards honouring different roles and fields within the Regiment, to the soldiers who had excelled in their field over the year. The Regiment stood to attention one last time as the Commander asked permission to dismiss the parade and mark the end of the celebrations.

Without any doubt, Her Royal Highness, Princess Royal was the centre of attraction throughout the day. For some soldiers and officers of the Regiment, this was the first time they had seen or talked to a member of the Royal family, so the day marked bigger importance for some than others. Her presence gives meaning to the career that most officers and soldiers live out. For moments like these, soldiers keep giving their complete effort and unparralled selfless commitment. The honour and pride of representing the Crown is what drives a lot of soldiers. The visit went by in a flash, but it will seem a long time for those who had always dreamt of this day. A day of speaking to a Princess or receiving a medal from a Royal member or presenting a portrait of a Royal member in-person or maybe just catching a glimpse of the Princess from afar, we will all have our own moment to cherish forever.

Tow out of Gurkha Major Queen's Gurkha Signals

By LCpl Sajan Rai

On 07 Aug 2020, members of QG SIGNALS orchestrated a programme to bid farewell to the 25th outgoing Gurkha Major, Maj Dhirbahadur Khokaja Pun, and to welcome his successor Maj Amrit Gurung.

On the morning of this significant day, Gamecock Barracks was gifted with warm sunshine and gentle breezes - making it a perfect day for the event. As this day was so important to QG SIGNALS, the organisation proved a tremendous challenge.



Outgoing Gurkha Major ready to get towed out



Comd QG SIGNALS offering maala to Maj Dhir Pun

The preparation for the event had begun days earlier. Adjt QG SIGNALS pushed out the MEL to the members of 250 GSS with tasks and details included. Upon receiving it, Sgt Brindan led the Guard of Honour (GoH) team, SSgt Kumar collected the attendance return, Sgt Dilip and his team decorated the Land Rover for the tow-out, the regimental piper team included Cpl Tshering and Cpl Nanda, SSM 250 prepared the presentation for GM Sahebs and their families, and finally, RSM QG SIGNALS carried out a full Risk Assessment of the event. Due to the ongoing pandemic, we also ensured that we were fully adhering to the government rules and maintaining social distances throughout.

After everything was made ready, the Comd QG SIGNALS led the farewell with a reduced number of soldiers, officers and their families. Our outgoing GM Saheb rode on the Land Rover that was adorned with colourful garlands and ribbons. He was towed out by the attending members of the QG SIGNALS supported by the pipers of the Regiment. Entrancing the whole crowd, this was a memorable moment. After reaching the front gate of the 30th Signal Regiment, the outgoing GM Saheb proudly received the GoH. He then gave his final farewell speech and handed over the responsibility of GM to Maj Amrit Gurung. The programme reached its completion when the new GM Saheb delightfully took over the post and gave his greeting speech to the Regiment.

Blandford Camp Gurkha Community (BCGC) News

2020 has been truly a remarkable year for Blandford Camp Gurkha Community (BGGC). At the dawn of 2020, the British Government imposed the national lockdown due to the unprecedented global outbreak of COVID-19. It resulted in all training coming to halt and forced the Royal School of Signals to evolve and innovate a new way of training delivery. It had to adapt to the new norm and effectively deliver critical training adhering to stringent COVID-19 measures. Our Permanent Staff at 11th (Royal School of Signals) Signal Regiment were at the front of these requirements from re-designing to remotely delivering the first-class technical and Military training for the Corps and wider Defence, likewise, QG SIGNALS soldiers at Blandford Garrison Support Unit (BGSU) have been a key enabler in support of training delivery.

On 23 Mar 20, following the Government and Public Health England (PHE) advice, after the decision to pause all training, followed the dispersion of personnel to home addresses. A notional training Company, SIKAMAT Company, under the leadership of Capt Gopal, was established focusing particularly on Gurkha trainees. To engage Gurkha and other trainees who couldn't go home; a structured training programme was drafted, and training was delivered in a safe environment following strict measures and guidelines. It was a huge success; SIKAMAT Coy has set the benchmark for bespoke training delivery. It was a combined effort of our permanent staff, the Phase 3 JNCOs and our young Officers undergoing their Troop Commanders Course, all of whom displayed utter professionalism.

The COVID-19 pandemic compromised the majority of BCGC's events however key events were observed and celebrated. For the first time; Blandford celebrated 75th regimental birthday on 23 Sep 20. It was hugely admired by invited guests and QG SIGNALS' past and present members, it was a proud moment indeed. Full ten days of Dashain was observed following all the rituals leading to the Tika day. The simple 'Bada Khana' was prepared for 89 officers and soldiers in the evening to remind ourselves of its significance. Tihar was no exception; ladies kicked it off with Traditional Tihar Delicacies Bando for 44 single soldiers who reluctantly were not able to see their families, particularly their sisters due to the second lockdown. The Gurkha ladies exhibited the epitome of empathy, dedication and ingenuity at that difficult times; it was beautiful. Blandford Gurkha ladies have been an integral part of this community. They continued to play a critical role in promoting our culture and tradition across the Garrison and local communities. They provided their unconditional support to maintain cultural ethos, during Tihar was an example. On top of everything, our amazing volunteer ladies have continued to run Nepali Class for 20 children.

Although not a formed unit, our soldiers remain at the centre of the Regimental Life. They continue to

participate and perform at the highest standards. During the lockdown, our soldiers opted in to do the #100for100 challenge raising over £1000 for R SIGNALS Charity. 2 teams completed virtual Trailwalker raising over £1500 for Gurkha Welfare Trust and Oxfam UK. BCGC bid farewell and welcome key personalities this year including; the Gurkha Focus Lt Col C L Jardine and the SGC, Capt Gopal Saru and welcomed Lt Col B Jacques Grey as the Gurkha Focus, Capt Sanjeev Rai as the Senior Gurkha Captain and WO2 Bishnu Gurung SSM (Gurkha) Blandford Camp. The new team looks forward to challenges and we are truly honoured to get this opportunity to do more for our soldiers and families.

The community is growing significantly, and it has been a very comfortable place for all Nepalese soldiers and families. The number comes with a considerable amount of welfare-related issue therefore a Gurkha welfare WO/SNCO is the must in Blandford Camp. On the other side, community facilities continue to develop; funds have been allocated for future improvements. Funding for the QG SIGNALS heritage project have been made available from HQBG and RHQ has also been agreed in principle. The project will be focused on making QG SIGNALS part in the museum accurate and current. The community continues to set high standards within the Garrison. The community is thriving and with it, our people are succeeding across the spectrum of their endeavours.

2020 has been a fruitful year for BCGC. The community is flourishing; fostering our tradition and 'Kaida' across the Garrison and local communities. Fully focusing on its mission, BCGC looks forward to tackling new challenges that lie ahead ensuring the reputation of PALTAN remains as high as ever.

Jai BCGC!

Sikamat Company

By Sgt (SI) Ramesh Pun

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit the UK, it impacted our normal routine, forcing us to live and work differently. As the UK went into lockdown, all training delivery at the Defence School of Communication and Information Systems (DSCIS) was paused. All non-essential Phase 2/3 and permanent staff were sent home, less the 71 QG SIGNALS trainees who had nowhere to go. The Commanding Officer (CO) 11 (Royal School of Signals) Signal Regiment, Lt Col Jacques-Grey therefore, gave direction to deliver bespoke training to the 71 QG SIGNALS trainees during the lockdown and form a company strength for potential Military Aid to the Civil Authorities (MACA) tasking.

A team of Blandford based Gurkhas led by Senior Gurkha Captain (SGC) Capt Gopal, assisted by SSM(G) WO2 Saindra and Sgt (SI) Ramesh formed a Gurkha Company; named "SIKAMAT". The two missions

bestowed upon were to be prepared for any MACA tasking and to deliver compelling training to all QG SIGNALS trainees in accordance with the government, Public Health England (PHE) and Regimental COVID-19 policy and guidelines.



Cpl Rajen delivering Rifle lesson to Phase 2s during lockdown

With all the risks identified and strict mitigation measure in place, the training started under Sikamat coy. The company delivered valuable training to the QG SIGNALS and R SIGNALS Phase 2 trainees, who stayed behind. Some of the training delivered were Dismounted Close Combat Training (DCCT) shoot, military knowledge, Bowman lesson consisting of man-pack and vehicle mount. Furthermore, all MATTs less SCR, AFT and ACMT were conducted in a controlled manner due to the restriction in place. They conducted numerous online training for personal development such as literacy, numeracy, driving theory and university short courses. Numerous Continuous Personal Development (CPD) were also conducted where they receive and deliver a presentation on various topic, which provided them with insights to the wider Army employability and opportunities. It was essential to maintain the physical standard, therefore the company delivered 3 Physical Training (PT) sessions per week with Social Distance (SD) in consideration. The company at its peak, which ran for 14 weeks, delivered training to 120 trainees (R SIGNALS and QG SIGNALS), whilst employing 3 Troop commanders, 3 SNCOs and 9 JNCOs.



Sikamat O Group to discuss the training programme to ensure troops are highly prepared

The company successfully delivered training with safety in place, with no report of COVID-19 infection. It was very important for these trainees to be occupied for their mental wellness; safeguarding them from any mental illness, loneliness and depression at this uncertain time. Moreover, this assisted immensely in achieving readiness and improved the operational effectiveness of the Corps.

Jai Paltan

**Dashain 2077 in Blandford Camp
Sgt Sul Bahadur Pun, 4 (Mil Trg) Sqn**

COVID-19 has affected human livelihood all over the world in 2020. Adapting to the new norm, Blandford Camp Gurkha Community (BCGC) celebrated Dashain in a different way without compromising its authenticity. All the traditional rituals were observed behind closed doors by nominated Pujari and key personalities. However, BCGC decided to mark the occasion of Tika by having 'Bada-Khana' strictly following COVID-19 measures.

We must endeavour to maintain our tradition and culture. Most importantly educating our future generations of its importance, this event served both purposes. It was attended by 89 members of the community including guests, 45 of them were Phase 2 trainees. Outstanding traditional Dashain Bada Khana was laid out, prepared by our Gurkha chefs. Food was first class and enjoyed by all in the spirit of Dashain, big thanks and well done to our amazing chefs.

The whole event would not have been possible if it wasn't for a meticulous planning. The man behind the master plan was SSgt (SSI) CK Rai who planned and executed Dashain 2077 celebration in its entirety. The whole 10 days of Bada Dashain were carefully accomplished in such a manner, adhering to all COVID-19 measures. It was well received and complimented by a surprising turn out and support from the community, a true testament to uphold the tradition and culture.



Gurkha Focus, Lt Col R Jacques-Grey addressing BCGC during Dashain 'Bada Khana' 2077



Maj Bilney (OC 5 SQN) with WO2 (FofS) Ishwor Gurung having Bada Khana

Overall, the Blandford Dashain 2077 was a huge success. Gurkha Focus, Lt Col R Jacques-Grey also took an opportunity to deliver her Dashain message to the Community during the Bada-Khana. This event has sent a positive message to the community and enhanced community's cohesiveness at this difficult time. The biggest festival in the Nepali calendar, Dashain 2077 provided BCGC an opportunity to showcase our traditional ethos, community's shared values and the most importantly introduction of kaida to our Phase 2 trainees, the future of QG SIGNALS.

Jai BCGC!

Fishmongers' Gold Medal Award

Staff Sergeant Kishan Ale from the Queen's Gurkha Signals currently serving with the Blandford Garrison Support Unit was awarded this year's Fishmongers' Gold Medal Award. This award is presented to an officer or a soldier who has contributed significantly to enhance tradition, kaida and reputation of the Brigade of Gurkhas in the preceding year.

The award ceremony took place on 12 March 2020 in the Fishmongers' Company Hall, central London. The Fishmongers' Company is one of the oldest City Guilds, with a rich history that expands over 700 years. The gold medals were presented by the Prime Warden, Mr David Jones DL to the outstanding performers from various Arms and Services affiliated with the Fishmongers' Company; the Brigade of Gurkhas, the Royal Navy, the RAF and the The Parachute Regiment. The Prime Present Warden presented 5 gold medals to this years winners.

The event commenced with a guided tour of the Hall followed by pre-lunch drinks, medal presentations and then lunch. The presence of the Princess Royal, HRH Princess Anne, made the event a once in a lifetime opportunity for the medal recipients.



SSgt Kishan Ale receiving Fishmongers' Gold Medal Award from the Prime Warden, Mr David Jones DL

Brunei Signal Troop News

Brunei Signal Troop (BST) continues to deliver robust and resilient Communication Information System (CIS) support to British Forces Brunei (BFB) as well as maintaining the Garrison Military Telecommunication Network and Exchange. Besides its primary role, the Troop has been highly visible in all Garrison activities and has maintained its prominence in the Garrison, representing QG SIGNALS on every front.

The last 12 months have been very busy for the Troop due to prolonged outages and frequent intermittent problems with its primary link, engineered through an International Private Leased Circuit (IPLC), facilitated by various national and international telecommunication partners. Our personnel have worked relentlessly, maintaining and troubleshooting the network issues. Despite various fluctuations in the timelines, there has been a major effort in bringing Integrated User Services (IUS), a replacement to current Alcatel Lucent Exchange, and an upgraded bandwidth of 50 MB for the Global Connectivity Network and MOD Net. BST played a pivotal role in providing unceasing CIS support to the G6 team in the process of changeover of DII service to MODNET across BFB. Also, our personnel have been delivering a high standard of service across the Garrison, whether that be handling of sensitive messages, managing cryptographic materials for the resident Infantry Battalion or providing field power through generators.

Marking the QG SIGNALS 71st birthday, troop members actively participated in the Virtual Trail Walker Relay 2020 event and managed to raise significant amount of fund for GWT & Oxfam.

BST continues to punch above its weight, thriving to be a strong and decisive force across the Garrison. Despite many challenges, a high standard of professionalism from our soldiers and strong support from their families have gained the troop a great deal of success. The BST ladies have been an integral part throughout adding more value to the BFB Ladies Community participating in various community engagement programmes, which were greatly appreciated in the wider community.

Overall, the year 2020 has been a significantly successful year for the members of BST and their families and it looks forward to the challenges that may lie ahead in the next year.

Jai QG SIGNALS! Jai BST!

ATV Adventure Tour

By Pte Genuine Rai

On Wednesday 8th July 2020, ten members of Brunei Signal Troop attended a guided ATV adventure tour package at Katimahar Agri Park, about 20 km away from the city of Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam. This was a great opportunity for BST members to come together outside of the working environment and involve in team cohesion activities.

After an hour drive, we arrived at Katimahar ATV rental service, where we met our instructor for the day. He then delivered an initial brief and a quick familiarisation of the Quad bikes. Full of excitement and enthusiasm, we started our adventure. The first few kilometres of trail were easy and enjoyable as it was a gravelled road through a wide variety of flora, faunas and agricultural farmland. Soon, the trail started to turn into trickier and more challenging muddy track following up and down steep hills. Despite getting stuck multiple times along the route with demanding weather (hot and humid around 31° Celsius), everyone was savouring the moments. After three hours of arduous riding, we came to an end of the tour that was tough but enjoyed by all. On the way back to camp, we stopped at Lugu Lake where some of the members jumped into the lake for a swim and the remainder just sat by the lake admiring the peaceful environment. Overall, the event was highly successful in achieving its aim.

Jai QG SIGNALS! Jai BST!



ATV Quad Bike Group picture

71st QG Signals Regimental Birthday Brunei Signal Troop

By LCpl Dou Gurung

On 19 September 2020, all serving and retired members including families based in Brunei Darussalam, gathered at the Garrison Support Troops WOs' and Sgts' mess in Medicina Lines to celebrate the 71st QG SIGNALS Regimental birthday. Commander British Forces Brunei (BFB), Lt Col Andrew Todd MBE kindly took the salute on the parade to mark and celebrate a historic day in QG SIGNALS' calendar.

This year, SSgt Ganesh Khamcha, Tp SSgt BST led the parade. The tune of the bagpipe marked the arrival of the Commander BFB which was then followed by reporting permission to proceed with the celebration. The birthday speeches were read by OC BST, Capt Laxman Rana and SO3 G6, Capt Adam Hopkins in Nepali and in English respectively. This was immediately followed by the cake cutting ceremony by Commander's Memsahib, OC BST Memsahib and SO3 G6 Memsahib. Then Commander BFB addressed the parade, where he extended his congratulations and best wishes to all QG SIGNALS members. He also took the opportunity to highlight the importance of information, technology and communications within the British Army. He praised the technical ability of BST members and outstanding achievements of the QG Signals as a Paltan. With these beautiful messages, the parade was concluded.

This years' birthday celebration also included: a charity stall in support of Oxfam and the Gurkha Welfare Trust; a short presentation on the history of QG SIGNALS and a video message from Commander and Gurkha Major QG SIGNALS. On top of everything, the absolute highlight was the short cultural programme performed by the BST SPs and families. It was highly acclaimed by

the spectators. Overall, it was a hugely successful and distinctive birthday celebration.

On top of everything, the absolute highlight was the short Welfare Trust; a short presentation on the history of QG SIGNALS and a video message from the cultural programme performed by the BST SPs and families. It was highly acclaimed by the spectators. Overall, it was a hugely successful and distinctive birthday celebration.

Jai QG SIGNALS! Jai BST!

Nepal Signal Troop News

Mission - *“To provide robust and resilient strategic and contingency operational CIS/ICS capabilities 24/7 throughout the year in support of British Gurkhas Nepal (BGN) and GWT (N) in order to enable Commander BGN and his Staff to accomplish their missions. In addition, NST are to provide ICS support to Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO) as and when called upon”.*

The year 2020 opened its curtain on NST with lots of opportunities and challenges in the G1/2/3/6 domains. The 1st Qtr presented the NST with an opportunity to be part of a historic milestone on the Gurkha Recruiting front where the British Army recruited the highest number of Gurkha recruits in three decades. Towards the end of the 1st Qtr, NST were paid a visit by the Cyber Vulnerability Investigation (CVI) team to test our protocols on people, processes and technology associated with the 4 main missions of BGN, the Target of Interest (TOI). They intrinsically looked at Gurkha recruiting, The Gurkha Records Office, the Pension Payments Office (FENAS), the civilian HR office (PPMS and PIE), the Med Centre, MT and the Gurkha Settlement Office and how these all tie into



Group Birthday photo

the use of BGNLAN. They predominantly focused on architecture of BGNLAN and The Gurkha Recruiting System and conducted a Cyber Capability Maturity Model assessment and ISO 27001 assessment of BGNLAN, which will allow them to develop possible cyber-attack paths, risks and recommendations in the next stage of the CVI (pending approval). This remains one of the MEs for NST but the COVID 19 pandemic has inadvertently pushed this project further to the right.

The impact of COVID 19 has been felt very heavily by the NST, as this has severely hindered our ability to complete the few projects such as the delivery of Integrated Users Services to enhance the current digital voice exchange capability, Global Connectivity to upgrade the current 4MB link to 10MB to enable better QoS post MoDNet migration via LoAp solution, Communication Planning Office's visit to provide sound structured cabling to support MoDNet and BGNLAN systems, lifting DII/F (S) footprints within the BGN. However, NST have been able to achieve one of the milestones in G6 domain; MoDNet migration at both BGP and BGK over the period 25 - 27 Jul 20 and 27 Aug - 1 Sep 20 respectively. Risk of poor QoS of MoDNet over the 4MB pipeline, of which only less than 2MB is available for MoDNet traffic due to SLI and Voice services utilising the same pipeline was identified as a major concern. Therefore, to mitigate this issue/risk, NST actively engaged with Defence Digital and Regional Command for the provision of MoDNet laptops and the upgrade of Wi-Fi links so that at least principal staffs in HQ BGN can access the network via Wi-Fi to balance data loads. The other notable achievements despite the constraints imposed by the pandemic are the replacement of obsolete Thuraya Sat Phones with Iridium Sat Phone, augmentation of additional MoDNet iPhones and MoDNet laptops; to enable WfH, and to set the condition for more efficient operational output during Regional Recruiting Selection.

Further down the line, an early phase of 2nd Qtr of 2020 saw BGN families (9 from NST) repatriated to the UK under the FCDO's direction. This called for a need for BGN to form a Rear Operation Group to look after families' welfare and wellbeing during their stay in the UK and this is where NST stepped up to provide 6 SP to be an integral part of the ROG. Out of which Cpls Khagendra and Amrit and LCpl Dinesh found themselves at the forefront in providing outstanding support to the families until mid Nov 20. Those who remained in Nepal were deployed to as far as Solukhumbu in the East and Manang in the North West in an effort to rescue stranded British Citizens and Eligible People. The back end of the 2nd Qtr witnessed a significant rise in the tempo in both the ROG and BGN as NST engaged a higher gear to mark the Royal Corps of Signals' Centenary celebration. The 100 for 100 challenge initiative during the month of June was probably taken a step too far by two LE Officers (Capt R Murray and Capt Khagendra) who embarked on a 'Doko Challenge' covering 100miles with 25kg on their backs from 9 - 29 Jun 20 and to match this utter madness,

Cpl Sunil challenged the troop to cycle from 'Mechi to Mahakali'; a distance of just under 800km on 29 Jun 20. Other notable activities were LCpl Samir swimming 2020m distance, Cpl Nishan completing 100km cycling and Cpls Sunil and Amrit and LCpls Pujan, Dinesh and Prakash completing 100km run. Most notably, NST brought down the curtain on the 2nd Qtr of 2020 with a grand Centenary Celebration which was immaculately planned and impeccably executed under the leadership of Cpl Sunil. On the day, we had the privilege of hosting Col R Goodman, MBE (COMD BGN) and bade farewell to Lt Col P Wettenhal (DCOMD BGN), Capt R Murray (SO3 G2/3/6) and LCpl Ghan Pun. The day was celebrated with a BBQ in the afternoon and cycling effort 'Mechi to Mahakali' followed by the reading of the Corps' history by LCpl Samir, cake cutting ceremony to the bagpipe tune of 'Scotland the brave' before culminating the event with traditional Gurkha messing.

The 4th Qtr of 2020 presented us with a glimpse of hope for a better tomorrow as BGN started to recover families back from the UK in dribs and drabs. The 2nd resilience flight provided us with an opportunity to welcome a few new members to our pariwaar; Capt (TOT) Sundar Sherchan as SO3 G2/3/6, Capt H Karas as Ops Coord in BGP, SSgt Judbir Gurung as Tp SSgt NST and LCpl Resham Pun as Service Desk Operator. Along with the arrival of SP, early November witnessed high volume of families returning back to Nepal, and Capt Bijay, SO Admin/OIC ROG and Cpl Khagendra from NST finally could bring the curtain down on BGN's repatriation effort on 12 Nov 20. SSgt Judbir with his able 2nd lieutenant (Cpl Nishan) tackled the post migration issues very efficiently and also planned and executed DIO (N)'s office move seamlessly, where NST provided both voice and data capabilities through BGNLAN, MoDNet and DFTS systems. In addition, NST have been successful in acquiring CONDITIONAL accreditation for BGNLAN until May 21. Now that the installation of AC units in the temporary NER for BGNLAN has been completed, ITSA and his team have now firmly shifted their focus to the Server build to facilitate Central Management.

Despite the COVID 19 pandemic and all the constraints and restrictions imposed upon us, morale remained high throughout. The VEng (F) offer to Cpls Surya and Nishan and LCpl Prakash, coupled with promotion from Cpl - Sgt (Cpl Nishan) and LCpl - Cpl (LCpl Pujan) including tour extension for Cpls Sunil, Khagendra and Amrit have been the most satisfying aspects for NST and we remain ever so grateful to RHQ QG SIGNALS for their D&G and unwavering support. COVID 19 may have introduced the new norm and changed the landscape of the Army's approach to training, but NST have been equally up for the challenge to adapt to change and both OC NST and Cpl Nishan completed their career courses; virtual MA and SCLM respectively.

Looking ahead, NST are preparing for the completion of IUS and GC projects, BGNLAN upgrade to acquire

full accreditation to process OFFICIAL information, implementation of networked Digital Signage through Raspberry pie for enhanced SSA within BGN, upgrade of VHF capability, increment of DII/F (S) point of presence in BGN and eventually migrating to MoDNet, test and trial of new bearer of opportunities for Contingency Operation, support CPO's project for sound structured cabling to support the technical/network architecture of MoDNet and BGNLAN, deploy to AWCs to maintain HF communication system and train AWCs' staff etc. In a nutshell, 2021 will be as challenging as 2020, if not the most challenging year in the history of NST and we are all very much looking forward to everything that 2021 has to throw at us.

Jai QG SIGNALS!

Life in Larkhill as Rear Operation Group (ROG) By LCpl Pujan Rai

Eckhart Tolle, a spiritual teacher and writer, once quoted - "If uncertainty is unacceptable to you, it turns into fear. If it is perfectly acceptable, it turns into increased aliveness, alertness and creativity". As soon as we realised life was going to be somewhat different to what we were used to, we had to adapt to the abilities of survival, resources and harness what we have around us. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has been characterized as a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO), which means the health of the human being around the world is at risk, this prompted the repatriation all the families of British Gurkhas Nepal back to the UK.

After arrival in Larkhill, BGN families were gradually settling down in the different environment from Nepal. On the first week, our task was to go to each allocated house to arrange all the appliances, utensils and grocery items. As the part of the ROG team, we were engaged in helping families to make them feel comfortable in this dire situation. The daily tasks, which would come from OIC ROG, included shopping trips to local supermarket, pick up and drop up off the children from Boarding schools, disposal of garden waste, collection of mail from BFPO London and so on.

The initial days were spent with virtual sessions with friends and families and not forgetting numberies, playing quizzes and other games over Zoom. It was not just the games, but we also used to share our experiences of the lockdown and discuss new ideas. There used to be weekly Zoom session amongst the Nepal Signal Troop members to update about BGN business and current affairs. We were fortunate enough to take walks around Durrington village and visit the famous Stonehenge, every now and then when time and unpredictable weather permitted. One of my best achievements during this period was the decision to enrol on the Art of Living course which taught me about breathing techniques, meditation and yoga;

very helpful during lockdown to maintain mental and physical health. This course really helped me to look into myself and sooth my impatient nature. Various online courses such as English courses, CCNA, Web Security Fundamentals, Introduction to Cyber Security, Stock Market Investing for personal development were signposted by the Chain of Command to enhance our skills. I am sure it's fruition will come soon.



Family welfare boxes ready to load at Brize Norton to send BGN

Members of the ROG team contributed to the Royal Corps of Signals the 100th Birthday, 100 for 100 challenge by completing a 100km run. A small cake cutting ceremony was also held to celebrate the centenary.

Personally, I believe and always try to learn something good from the worst situation in my life, the current situation has taught me a lot about perseverance and the value of people close to me. Like the inseparable light and dark, we do have both optimist and pessimist the values. My optimism looks at the brighter days of a post pandemic situation and my pessimism makes me ready for the worst situation. Economically, it might take a while to recover after the end of the pandemic, but we shall not let our guard's down. Let us take it positively, help each other in need and learn that life is full of uncertainty. So make the most out of this time and prepare our self for the post pandemic period to come.

British Gurkhas Nepal DART 501 competition, May 2020

By LCpl Prakash Tamang, NST

COVID 19 has proven to be the worst enemy of the century for humankind. This pandemic has set the criteria opposite of what we humans love, by introducing a new norm; working from home, wearing PPE whilst not being able to maintain social distancing, washing and sanitizing hands frequently, minimising travel and completely giving up team sports etc. It is apparent that COVID-19 is indiscriminate of developed or underdeveloped countries, rich or poor and young or old people. Anyone can catch it and those who did, the possibility of recovery was dependent on the immunity power of the victim.

BGN was no exception; hence it adopted PROTECT posture as soon as the Nepal government enforced a lock-down indefinitely throughout the country. As the situation started deteriorating, all family members of Service Personnel serving in BGN were repatriated back to the UK and all Civilian Staff were encouraged to stay home. All BGN was left with was SP staying back and times were difficult without family and the workplace was lonely without CS counterparts, as the place once used to be filled with BGN members felt empty and the workplace was filled with emptiness. However, even in those difficult and challenging times, SPs did have considerably busy times; more output less resources. But we embraced the challenge and adapted quickly with the belief that nothing is permanent in this world; no matter how good or bad it may be. As we started settling down with the new norm, the mental health of SP and their wellbeing became of paramount importance.

With a mental health and wellbeing of SP at the core of the decision-making process, DCOMD BGN directed RSM BGN to create an environment within in BGN, where SP could socialise to escape from boredom and take part in competitions to keep soldiers' competitive spirit alive during the pandemic. With this initiative of tackling boredom and loneliness, RSM BGN directed JNCOs to organise some form of competition and challenges with prizes for the winners. Pool, badminton, gym challenges, tennis, etc. were conducted and DART 501 was one organised by LCpl Prakash Tamang. The aim of the competition was to entertain SP in a competitive environment. The number of participants, 17 in total, and their eagerness to win the prize was overwhelming. Every player in and during the competition assumed darts to be an easy game. It was easy, but not easy to win and there could only be one winner. I believe the winner could only be the one who took it seriously and in a scientific way. I, as an organiser I had a belief that only expert who concentrated more on optimal and precise utilisation of the projection speed of the dart, amount of power needed from the hand muscle, the effect of weight of the dart and fin style and not forgetting to follow through the shots, would be the definite victor of the game in scientific perspective.

The game was initiated with a knock-out concept. This made the matches more inclusive and fiercely competitive. Players were really engaged, calculating the scores in their head with only the winners proceeding further in the competition. I must tell you that many players scratched their head for not winning the easy game. It was apparent that those who underestimated "the easy game", could not make it to the next stage. Of the 17 players, GM BGN Major Muktirashad Gurung saheb and QM BGN Major Paul Cooper saheb made it to the final. The final "best of 5 matches" took place on the night of 5 June 2020. The match between two very fine darts players was enjoyed by all spectators maintaining social distance. The match was phenomenal; QM saheb had great grouping

consistency whereas GM saheb had precise hits on the target. QM saheb was more of a cautious player whereas GM saheb was the 'fire and forget' type. It was that match where GM saheb was victorious over QM saheb by winning 3 matches in a row. Was that just a luck or was the GM saheb a legendary darts player? I personally enjoyed the match, and would say it was a jaw dropping match enjoyed by everyone.



Major Cooper (QM BGN) focusing on winning the BGN Dart competition



Major Muktiprasad Gurung (BGN GM) receiving his Dart competition winning cup from Major Cooper (QM BGN)

QG SIGNALS Detachment - Gurkha Company ITC Catterick

Gurkha Company Mission - "To deliver trained Gurkha Soldiers in order to meet the operational requirements of the Brigade of Gurkhas"

A place where some of the finest soldiers from all units of the Brigade of Gurkhas work together to instruct, teach, mentor and coach the Gurkha Recruits through their 39 weeks CIC (G) in order to achieve the mission of Gurkha Coy. The Coy's role is - to mould a Nepalese youth into a Gurkha Soldier trained to the standards of the British Army, who retains his Nepalese identity and will live up to the tradition of the Brigade. Our instructors' effort to promote the inclusive learning environment has been exemplary and highly regarded by everyone within the ITC.



RHQ QG SIGNALS with Coy Staffs

The year 2020 has been an another challenging yet fulfilling year for the QG Signals' Team at Gurkha Company Infantry Training Centre. Today's trends demand more agility and change, more leadership from more people, and not just the top management. It is with great pride that I can look back at the many achievements of our Guruji Haru. They have worked so hard and with every changing demand made on us by the challenging Combat Infantryman's Course (CIC(G)), particularly with COVID-19.

Many *Values* and *Kaida* have been on display throughout from our Guruji haru - resilience when tackling in-house resources or training in the fields, courage in coping with changes, loyalty and honesty towards all teams, respect for others and appreciation and all the opportunities they are given within the Company - which all strengthen our character and our ability to make the most of every aspect of training life. The extraordinary commitment made by all our Training Teams means that we have continued to succeed and flourish as a learning community. The role requires them to be 90% Infantryman, yet they are undeterred by the extra responsibility and they have

risen to the challenges magnificently. Huge gratitude to our families too; they have to bear their heavily committed husband and they are our strength and support when we are being tested the most.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all Guruji haru for their hard work this year, it has been the year of changes and the Gurujis have embraced this with goodwill and continued to provide the best training for the Recruit Intake 20.

Recruit Intake 2020 (RI 20)

On 1 Sept 20, the Cap Badge Ceremony for Recruit Intake 20 (RI 20) was held at Gurkha Company, ITC. Lt Col H Stoy (Comd QG SIGNALS), Maj Amrit Gurung (Gurkha Major QG SIGNALS) and WO1 (RSM) Pandu Tamang along with QG SIGNALS Representative Capt Sekendra Gurung (4 Pl Comd, Gurkha Coy) handed the new cap badge to the 96 Trainees (Total 432) selected to join the QG SIGNALS. The Trainees have successfully completed training and they have now joined the QG Signals as of 7 Dec 20.



RI 20 and Coy Staffs with RHQ QG SIGNALS

A Section Commander's Perspective

By Cpl Arjun Limbu (Section Commander - 6 Platoon)

The last two years have been a rollercoaster moment and it brought a real mix of emotions. These range from 'when will the new recruits arrive?' to 'Wahoo, their training is finally over!'. From wanting your trainees to leave the ITC gate, to not wanting to admit you're a bit nervous about leaving your trainees, which has been my life for 78 weeks (2 x Recruit Intakes).

"Intelligence is the ability to adapt to change"- With a positive mindset and enthusiasm, I had a smooth transition as a class-3 Infantry Instructor from a Communication System Operator in QG Signals. As an Infantry Phase 1 instructor, my responsibility to mould young Nepalese youth into a professional Gurkha soldier remains significant. Working in a diverse establishment has enhanced my instructor's vision and conceptual thought process. Working in the Gurkha Company will make your teachings and principle immortal and it will put a significant contribution to the Brigade's future. It is equally challenging to compete with highly motivated and talented staff of different cap badges from within the Brigade of Gurkhas.

I, for one, am hugely honoured to be a part of the Gurkha Company cohort. I can proudly say that my two-year tour in Gurkha Company has been the best tour of my career.



Cpl Arjun describing model pit



Cpl Arjun with his section on Exercise

2ITB Poppy Appeal

By Cpl Niraj Subba

The Poppy is the symbol of remembrance born every November to commemorate members of the Armed forces who gave their lives in war. Its origin goes back to the First World War. Amongst the churned up soil and shells holes of battlefields of the western front poppies would grow even when nothing else could. After the inspirational poem by Lt Col John McCrae "In Flanders Fields", the poppy became the symbol of remembrance.

In 1921 A.D, after the formation of The Royal British Legion (RBL), the legion ordered millions of poppies and sold them on 11 November in support of Ex-Servicemen and families of those who had served and died in the conflict. The funds generated were used to help First World War veterans with employment and housing. Since then RBL launches the poppy appeal every year. However, this year has been different. Due to the restriction from COVID-19, there were fewer street sellers and this gave the Appeal a problem to raise funds. Therefore, a team from Gurkha Company answered the call and made an effort to support the legion and our veterans by doing an 11/11 Km charity run and cake sale.

On the 18th of November 2020, eleven diverse members from all across the Company took part in an 11 Km run across Catterick training area. 2IC Gurkha Coy, Capt Kiran Pun MVO officially inaugurated the run early that morning. The participants consisted of 'C' Wing Comd, religious teacher Chewang Lama guru, CSM Gurkha Coy, Platoon Commander, Platoon Sergeant and other training teams. On the same note, the meticulous set up for 2ITB cake sale was concurrently carried out in the Coy foyer area and Battallion brew area. The cake sale event would not have been possible without the generous delicious cakes and cupcakes donation from good ladies, Gurkha corner shop and Julie community (Tesco).

The event was hugely successful and managed to raise the amount of Eight Hundred and Twenty One Pound (£821) for the Royal British Legion in aid of the Poppy

appeal. Moreover, through this charity Gurkha Company managed to build a lasting relationship with local community and also raised our profile within the Garrison. A special thanks goes to all member of 2ITB who displayed their tremendous support by contributing money or by participating on charity cake sale to make this event a huge successful.

Seremban Troop, SSU, RMA Sandhurst News

It has been another hugely demanding, yet successful year for Seremban Troop providing unparalleled support to the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. Seremban Tp has continued to maintain its high reputation in RMA Sandhurst, constantly delivering reliable and resilient Bowman Tactical Communications and power support to the Academy (Ac) for circa 50 exercises per year, including overseas from Company to Battle Group level.

Seremban Troop is yet again facing greater challenges each term. A shortfall of manpower coupled with increasing demands due to COVID-19, has put added pressure on the Troop. Regardless of this, we have continued to display a high level of technical proficiency, effectiveness, and total professionalism whilst mitigating the COVID-19 risks. We have been proactive in remaining flexible to cope with the growing changes in the training modules within RMA Sandhurst, while also improving the efficiency and effectiveness of our service.

Besides our professional commitment, Seremban Troop has remained active in all aspects of Ac life. Despite a busy schedule, Seremban Troop members delivered Squadron level military exercises for Squadron personnel and continued to maintain team cohesion whilst upholding the Gurkha kaida and tradition during this difficult time. We have also been involved in charity events raising £1715 for NHS to fight against COVID-19 by conducting a 24 hrs charity cycle and



Charity Run led by Cpl Niraj Subba

the PARAS 10 TAB. In addition, we have raised £584 for the British Heart Foundation. As a result of these extremely effective and reliable outputs, throughout the year, Troop members have received awards, commendations and outstanding promotion results.

Overall, it has been another tremendously busy yet rewarding year for Seremban Troop. We have continued to stamp our mark as a highly professional Troop within RMA Sandhurst and delivered a first class service to the Ac. We are also mindful to ensure our strong Regimental ethos, kaida and tradition are maintained while continuing to integrate with the diverse community within the Ac and Squadron.

EXERCISE ALLENBY'S ADVANCE **By Signaller Vicky Gurung**

Ex ALLENBY'S ADVANCE is an exercise conducted by Officer Cadets halfway through their training at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS). The exercise takes place on the Sennybridge Training Area (SENTA) in the Brecon Beacons, Wales. This exercise is designed to teach and test the principles

of offensive operations, such as advance to contact, deliberate attack, raids, and ambush. As a Tactical Communications Enablers, Seremban Troop's mission was to establish and support EXCON and Command Posts (CP) by providing resilient communications interlinking Battle Group (BG) Headquarters and dispersed Companies within the training area. Although our primary role remains provision of tactical communications for the Academy; we are also needed to handle multiple nets on tactical scenarios as the information we passed plays a critical role to the Officer Cadets exercise objectives.

The latest Ex ALLENBY'S ADVANCE kicked off with Officer Cadets dropped off at the DOP on the chilly morning of 3rd Oct 20. Right after occupation of the harbour, the Officer Cadets were set on their missions with different Warning Orders and Fragmentation Orders from the Directing Staff (DS). The exercise scenario builds up from Section to Company level. With continuous operations at day and night, the exercise concluded with a Company Deliberate Attack on the very final morning of the exercise. No doubt this exercise tests their basic close combat skills, whilst equally developing their command and leadership skills in the austere condition posed by demanding terrain and perpetually miserable weather of the Brecon Beacons.

Although the exercise teaches principles of offensive operations for the Officer Cadets, it also improves and enhance their voice procedures and interpersonal skills, along with those of Seremban Troop working either in the Company Command Post or in the simulated Battle Group Headquarters.

Jai Seremban Troop!!!

24hrs Cycling Charity Event to support the NHS

By L/LCpl Hemanta Gurung

As the whole world was struggling to fight against the turmoil inflicted by COVID-19, I took the initiative to organise a 24 hr cycling charity event to support Frimley Park Hospital.



Signaller Vicky showing OCdt how to use radio logbook



Cycling in Barossa Training Area

The event was scheduled to take place on 12 May 20. Every Troop member was very keen to take part in the event as it was an opportunity to support the NHS, who are at the forefront of the current pandemic. The event started early in the morning at 8 am from Scovell Lines, Sandhurst. To start with, the weather was very pleasant and favorable but with every passing hour; the temperature rose. The hot and humid weather didn't deter the Troop however, and after numerous loops of the Barossa training area during daylight and Sandhurst Camp at night, the team covered 987km in 24hrs.

The total amount raised for the Hospital was £1,000. I would like to thank all for your kind support to make this charity event a huge success. Please keep on supporting our NHS.

Signaller Saugat's experience in Seremban Troop

By L/LCpl Saugat Rai

Seremban Troop is part of 44 Support Squadron, Sandhurst Support Unit, Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS). I have now served with Seremban Troop for more than 2 years. The Troop differs to a normal Field Unit as it does not support a formed Brigade or a Division. Instead it delivers tactical communications to all the exercises run at the Academy throughout the year. This 16-man troop led by a SSgt remains extremely busy and occupied throughout the year due to the nature of our work and the frequency of exercises. The Troop supports roughly about 45 exercises a year of varied types and levels.

At the beginning of my time in Seremban Troop, I was appointed as Detachment Commander of two Bowman

FFRs. My primary task was to provide a robust Company Command Post (CP) as a real-time signaller to aid Officer Cadets during their field exercises. Whilst in barracks, I maintain my detachments to the highest possible standard making them readily available for short notice deployment. After gaining some experience in a CP, I got a chance to work in Exercise Control (EXCON). As I was teaching, mentoring and coaching Officer Cadets, I was also learning and developing my liaison and management skills. With a year of experience under my belt, I was given the responsibility of Exercise 2IC. This role meant I lead a small team on minor exercises, developing my CLM skills.

Currently, I am working as the Transport Manager Assistant (TMA). This is completely new and unique position to my previous roles that sees me responsible for the effective and efficient management of 18 vehicle, documents, logbooks, handbooks and other associated literature within the Troop. Not only that, it is also my responsibility to closely monitor all the vehicle servicing and inspections, ensuring that the fleet is prepared and well presented on time. This role has developed my computing and interpersonal skills. I am also the focal point for LAD, SQMS and the rest of the Squadron when it comes to Seremban Troop's vehicle documentation.

It has been a great pleasure to work in Seremban Troop. With a heavy heart, I must leave this Troop very soon as I move on promotion. No doubt, the skills that I have learned, and memories gained here will be cherished for the rest of my life. I am very hopeful to come back to this place again with greater responsibility and new challenges in the future.

Jai Seremban Troop!!



Signaller Saugat briefing future Officer Cadets about the tactical communications

THE QUEEN'S OWN GURKHA LOGISTIC REGIMENT



Current Organisation

RHQ 10 QOGLR
 HQ QOGLR
 1 Supply Squadron 10 QOGLR
 28 Fuel & General Transport Squadron 10 QOGLR
 36 (Headquarters) Squadron 10 QOGLR
 10 QOGLR LAD REME
 60 Close Support Squadron QOGLR, 4 Regt RLC
 94 Squadron QOGLR, 9 Regt RLC

QOGLR Officers Staff List - 2020

Brigadier P S Reehal MBE	Colonel of the Regiment	
Lieutenant Colonel G Sugdon RLC	Commander	RHQ
Major H Hewins RLC	Senior Major	RHQ
Major Indrabahadur Tamang	Gurkha Major	RHQ
Captain Z Young RLC	Adjutant	RHQ
Captain Rambahadur Rai	Gurkha Adjutant	RHQ
Captain D Alexander RLC	Operations Officer	RHQ
Captain Dhungana Rai	Regimental Career Management Officer	RHQ
Captain Dawanuri Sherpa	Regimental Welfare Officer	RHQ
Captain K McLeod RLC	Regimental Technical Officer	RHQ
Captain R Melhuish RLC	Regimental Intelligence/Signal Officer	RHQ
Captain Anil Gurung GSPS	Regimental Administrative Officer	RHQ
Lieutenant J Clarke SPS	Detachment Commander	RHQ
Major J Sutton RLC	Officer Commanding	1 Sqn
Captain Bhimbahadur Shreesh	Second-in-Command	1 Sqn
Captain H Christiansen RLC	Operations Officer	1 Sqn
Captain Pawan Sherchan	Troop Commander	1 Sqn
Lieutenant C Anderson RLC	Troop Commander	1 Sqn
Lieutenant T Hare RLC	Troop Commander	1 Sqn
Second Lieutenant F Dickson	Troop Commander	1 Sqn
Major A Brazier RLC	Officer Commanding	28 Sqn
Captain Vivekjung Shah	Second in Command	28 Sqn
Captain T Christopher RLC	Operations Officer	28 Sqn
Captain Nirmalkumar Ingnam	Troop Commander	28 Sqn
Captain Z Marsden RLC	Troop Commander	28 Sqn
Lieutenant C Reedman RLC	Troop Commander	28 Sqn
Lieutenant S Davies RLC	Troop Commander	28 Sqn
Major G Power RLC	Officer Commanding	36 Sqn
Major K Roberts RLC	Regimental Quartermaster	36 Sqn
Captain Uttam Limbu	Second-in-Command	36 Sqn
Captain Prakash Rai	Regimental Quartermaster (Technical)	36 Sqn
Captain G Pryor MBE RLC	Regimental Training Officer	36 Sqn
Captain M Rodgers RLC	Regimental Contracts Officer	36 Sqn
Captain A English RLC	Operations Officer	36 Sqn
Captain Ganeshbahadur Gurung		36 Sqn
Captain D Webb REME	Officer Commanding	LAD

Major A Wilson RLC	Officer Commanding	60 Sqn QOGLR
Captain Todhan Ghale	Second-in-Command	60 Sqn QOGLR
Captain W Moore RLC	Operations Officer	60 Sqn QOGLR
Captain Lalkaji Gurung	Troop Commander	60 Sqn QOGLR
Lieutenant M Walker RLC	Troop Commander	60 Sqn QOGLR
Second Lieutenant T Jenner RLC	Troop Commander	60 Sqn QOGLR
Major J Kedge RLC	Officer Commanding	94 Sqn QOGLR
Captain Dipendra Rai	Second-in-Command	94 Sqn QOGLR
Captain N Watkins RLC	Operations Officer	94 Sqn QOGLR
Captain Giriraj Limbu	Troop Commander	94 Sqn QOGLR
Lieutenant S West RLC	Troop Commander	94 Sqn QOGLR
Lieutenant C Langridge RLC	Troop Commander	94 Sqn QOGLR
Second Lieutenant D Harrison RLC	Troop Commander	94 Sqn QOGLR
Major M Hearth RLC	Officer Commanding	14 Sqn, ARRC Sp Bn
Captain Surendra Purja	Second-in-Command	14 Sqn, ARRC Sp Bn
Lieutenant C Norris RLC	Troop Commander	14 Sqn, ARRC Sp Bn
Lieutenant R Dock RLC	Troop Commander	14 Sqn, ARRC Sp Bn
Second Lieutenant O Dyer RLC	Troop Commander	14 Sqn, ARRC Sp Bn
Extra Regimentally Employed		
Lieutenant Colonel Devendra Ale MVO MBE	CI Supply Training Wing	DLS
Major Baldeep Tamang	Quartermaster	ARRC Sp Bn
Major Chakra Khatri	Officer Commanding	90 Sqn, 9 Regt RLC
Major Ganeshkumar Tamang MVO	SO2 ES Mat	3 UK Div
Captain Basantadhoj Shahi	SO3 Family Support	HQ Regional Comd
Captain Deny Gurung MVO	Quartermaster (Technical)	ARRC Sp Bn
Captain Safin Magar	Second-in-Command	MDTS, DST Leconfield
Captain Prakash Gurung	OC QOGLR Detachment	Brunei Garrison

Commander's Notes

Lieutenant Colonel G R Sugdon RLC



Lieutenant Colonel Sugdon was educated at Sherborne School in Dorset, after which he read Turkish and Classical Arabic at Pembroke College, Oxford, where he was sponsored on an Army Cadetship.

He commissioned into the Royal Logistic Corps in 2004 and was assigned to 2 Close Support Regiment RLC (later 2 Logistic Support Regiment RLC) from 2004 to 2006. During this time, he deployed to Iraq on Operation TELIC 5 as the Logistic Support Detachment Commander to the Welsh Guards Battle Group in Al Amarah and on Operation TELIC 7 as the UK Logistic Battalion's Intelligence officer. On promotion to Captain in 2006 he was posted to 7 Transport Regiment RLC in Bielefeld, Germany, as Second-in-Command of 9 Squadron. In 2007, he undertook Public Duties and in 2008 deployed with the Regiment to Cyprus on Operation TOSCA as a Military Observer Liaison Officer.

In 2008, Lieutenant Colonel Sugdon was assigned to 10 The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment as Adjutant and deployed with the Regiment to Afghanistan on Operation HERRICK 11. In 2010, he was selected to be Aide de Camp to the then General Sir David Richards who was Chief of the General Staff and later Chief of the Defence Staff.

On promotion to Major in 2012, Lieutenant Colonel Sugdon attended the Intermediate Command and Staff Course at the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom in Shrivenham. In November 2012, he graduated from the University of St Andrews with an MLitt in Terrorism Studies having undertaken a four-year distance learning programme. His Initial Grade 2 staff appointment was in the Operations Directorate in the Ministry of Defence in London where he was SO2 Counter Terrorism and Emerging Operations for North and West Africa. In 2015, he returned to 10 The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment as Officer Commanding 28 Squadron and Pipe President. In 2017, he was appointed as Military Assistant to Director Capability in Army Headquarters.

Selected for promotion to Lieutenant Colonel in 2018, he attended the Advanced Command and Staff Course at Shrivenham where he also undertook the King's College London MA in Defence Studies. Following Staff College, he returned to the Ministry of Defence to be SO1 Commitments in International Policy and Strategy focusing on the Gulf and Iran. He assumed command of The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment in September 2020.

Lieutenant Colonel Sugdon is currently one of the Army Fellows on the Forward Institute Programme. A former rugby and Corps hockey player, he now focuses more on general fitness, hill walking, property renovation and keeping a classic car on the road.

Gurkha Major's Notes

Major Indrabahadur Tamang QOGLR



Yet again, I am delighted and honoured to write this note for the Khukuri Journal in the second year in a row as the Gurkha Major QOGLR, and this will be my last note before transition to civilian life. This year, I dreamed of a lot to achieve on my final year but due to the pandemic and uncertainty, even the best laid plans came grinding to a halt. However, I would like to highlight a few activities which we have achieved over the year.

In the beginning of the year, I visited outstations within the UK to meet and greet our serving members and their families who are serving away from the Regiment. Despite a busy schedule, the Commander, myself and the RSM also managed to visit BGN and met our serving members and their families. We received very positive feedback from their chain of command. They were doing a marvellous job delivering an excellent G1 and G4 outputs within their employing unit. I personally would like to thank them all for being our brand ambassadors and flying the QOGLR flag high. I also had an opportunity to meet some of the RAN members in Kathmandu and Pokhara during my visit to BGN. My heartfelt gratitude to WO2 Yogendra Limbu who coordinated our visit flawlessly.

Prior to the first lockdown the Regiment bade farewell to outgoing Corps Colonel, Colonel Colin Francis, but also we welcomed the new Colonel of the Brigade of Gurkhas, Colonel J P Davies MBE. The Regiment planned to celebrate the 62nd Regimental Birthday and Kasam Khane Parade but due to the pandemic situation we had to cancel the entire celebration. However, we managed to conduct the Council, Trust and Associations meetings virtually. During lockdown, virtual means became very useful, connecting our people such as ladies' coffee evening, outstations' meetings, Commander's PT and day to day communicating information. Over the summer period, COVID restrictions significantly affected the Regimental participation in all activities including Brigade of Gurkhas Week, Nepal Cup and Trailwalker.

At present, Regimental strength stands at 721 across the BG units and wider Army organisations and we are aiming to bring these figures to 885 by July 2023. Despite COVID, our growth plan has been continually progressing and we successfully managed to deliver the Tranche 3 slots to 60, 94 Sqns and 3 RGR. We have also offered 100% Versatile Engagement (Full) to those who were on Open Engagement. We have received the Implementation Order for Project SHERPA which will oversee further 65 posts growth in Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC) Support Battalion by July 2023 and we are now working to complete the first Tranche in July 2021. In order to support our growth, we have welcomed 92 new members from Intake 2019 last year and a further 99 new members from Intake 2020 will be joining the Regiment in December 2020.

On the social aspect, again we had to cancel Dashain celebrations despite the initial preparation. However, Gurkha Major, Pandit Ji and a small team of pujari conducted all religious and ritual services in the Regimental temple following the UK government's strict guidelines. On the day of Vijaya Dashami, 'Tika', 'Prasad' and 'Jamara' were made available to all our members and their families. Unfortunately, due to the second phase of lockdown, the Tihar celebration was also disrupted which was really frustrating to all. On a poignant note, the Regiment bade farewell to outgoing Commander Lieutenant Colonel Alex West, while at the same time in a separate vein, we welcomed new Commander Lieutenant Colonel Giles Sugdon in a fitting manner.

During the initial lockdown 1 Sqn personnel deployed on Op RESCRIPT to support the NHS, providing Logistic Framework and supplying PPE. Furthermore, 60 Sqn played a massive role in delivering essential stores to the NHS. At a later date, 28 Sqn deployed on Ex NOBLE PARTNER in Georgia for an infantry exercise and everyone returned safely. 36 Sqn have deployed on Ex CERBERUS to provide Real Life Support to 3 Div. Some members of 94 Sqn have deployed to Op CATTALO in Afghanistan and they will return to UK in May 2021.

As I mentioned earlier, the Regiment will be welcoming 99 new trainees and they will go through a 2 week induction package including their trade selections prior to attending their phase two training after the New Year. On 14 Dec 2020 the Regiment stood down for a well-deserved Christmas break, due to COVID, this year we were relatively quiet on the social front, unable to achieve what was anticipated. Nevertheless once everything returns to normal, I am adamant the Regiment will continue in our pursuit of excellence and achievement, and our personnel will continue to be exemplary.

Hami Jasto Kohi Chaina

Jai QOGLR

Farewell and Tow Out to the Commander QOGLR

By Cpl Santosh Rai, 1 Supply Squadron

On 22nd September 2020 the QOGLR bade a farewell to the Commander QOGLR, Lt Col A F West. The day for the Commander started with a walk around to all Squadron and departments to pay a last visit to his soldiers in small groups due to COVID-19. After that he was hosted by the officers' cohort for the farewell lunch in the Officers' Mess.

Later, in the afternoon, he visited the Temple to pray for the wellbeing and prosperity of the regiment and all the wider members of the QOGLR serving around the globe. After taking a blessing from the Pandit ji and Lama guru; he was escorted by the Gurkha Major and Regimental Sergeant Major to a Land Rover and towed out by officers towards the Guard room as per the tradition and Kaida of the Brigade of Gurkhas.

Finally, a Guard of honour marked his departure from the Regiment. He is assigned to the Permanent Joint Headquarters and will be deploying to Iraq on Operation SHADER.



Lieutenant Colonel A F West is being towed out



Lt Col A F West RLC receives the final Guard of Honour

Appointment of the New Colonel of the Regiment



Colonel of The QOGLR, Brigadier P S Reehal, MBE

On Apr 20, Her Majesty The Queen approved the appointment of Brigadier P S Reehal MBE as Colonel The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment in succession to Major General A S J Fay CB. This appointment took effect on 1 August 2020.

Brigadier Patch Reehal commissioned into the Royal Logistic Corps in August 1996. He spent his first five years of service initially with the Commando Logistic Regiment RM, before moving to a Combat Arms attachment as the Battle Group Intelligence Officer with The Queen's Royal Lancers on Op PALATINE (Bosnia). A period with the Army Training Regiment, Pirbright, followed ahead of a move to 13 Air Assault Support Regiment RLC that included a deployment on Op BESSEMER (Macedonia).

In 2003, he returned to Commando Forces as the Logistic Support Squadron Second-in-Command prior to, and during, Op TELIC (Iraq) before, in 2004, being appointed as Operations Officer, 10 The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment. He promoted to Major in 2005, learnt Arabic and deployed on Op TELIC 7/8 as the SO2 J3 Operations Support in the Headquarters Multi-National Division (South East).

His initial SO2 appointment was in the Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ), Northwood, as the SO2 Contractor Support to Operations in J1/4. He returned to 10 The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment in 2009 as Officer Commanding 28 Transport Squadron, which included a six-month tour as a Combat Logistic Patrol (CLP) commander on Op HERRICK 11 (Afghanistan) for which he was awarded an MBE. His subsequent SO2 appointment was in the Capability Directorate Combat Service Support (CD CSS) as the A/SO1 for A2020 (RLC).

He promoted to Lieutenant Colonel in 2013, attended Advanced Command and Staff Course (ACSC) 17 and returned to PJHQ as the SO1 J4 Op HERRICK (Redeployment and Transition) until that operation's conclusion in December 2014 and later established the Africa-facing team as SO1 J4 Africa (Op/ Plans). He returned for a third tour of 10 The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment as Commander from October 2015

to October 2017 departing on promotion to Colonel spending two years serving as the Deputy Chief of Staff 3rd (United Kingdom) Division. He was promoted in October 2019 to Brigadier and he is currently the Head of Personnel Strategy for the British Army.

Brigadier Reehal is married to Jen who is a nurse and they have two sons Patch (17) and Charlie (16). He splits his spare time between membership of the QOGLR Koshi Fly Fishing Club, a family charity in Nepal and a passion for historical battlefields. He will assume the appointment of Colonel The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment in August 2020.

QOGLR Trust Annual Update

By Maj J Sutton RLC, Secretary, QOGLR Trust

The Trust was formally founded through a number of charitable donations on 2 April 1992. It is supported by a professional financial advisor, who seeks to ensure that the fund continues to grow and produces adequate income to meet the increasing demands as the QOGLR grows. The Trust has four main aims:

- The promotion of the efficiency of the Regiment and the maintenance of its history, traditions and esprit de corps.
- The purchase and maintenance of property on behalf of the Trust.
- The provision of funding to support all ranks serving within the Regiment.
- The relief of hardship, distress or poverty amongst serving or former members of the Brigade of Gurkhas or their dependents.

The Colonel of the Regiment is the Chairman and the Trust is managed by a board of Trustees with many of the members currently serving in appointments across the Regiment; three retired Regimental Officers two of which commanded the regiment also sit on the board to provide continuity. In order to ensure a comprehensive approach is taken, the Trust works closely with the QOGLR Regimental Association Nepal, the QOGLR Association and the Gilham Innes Farlow Trust (GIFT).

The non-public nature of the Trust's grants means that the range of activities it can be used for is much broader than almost all other sources of funding available in the Army. In practice, the Trust's activity today supports virtually every aspect of the Regiment and all members have benefited over the last year from the Trust's generosity in one way or another. Over previous years the Trust has given grants exceeding £40,000. These donations have been used to support cultural and educational events, sports tours, adventurous training and the purchase of Regimental property that will ensure the legacy of the Regiment.

Due to COVID 19 Cultural Educational and Welfare Grants were not applied for this year, however normally

the Trust would support the Dashain festival and the Regimental Birthday Celebration.

The Trust also support numerous sports and AT expeditions. Unfortunately, this year it has not be possible to conduct any such events however, as the situation improves the Trust will look forward to receiving grant applications to support these events once again.

Property

The QOGLR Trust's heritage property consists of circa 1100 items and is valued in excess of £500,000; it is stored and displayed within the Regt's messes and working lines in Aldershot, Abingdon and Hullavington. Capt Prakash Rai and SSgt Yogendra Singh Thakuri are thanked for their hard work in managing this over the last 18 months, having now handed over to Capt Vivek Shah and Sgt Saugat Subba.

The Property Sub-Committee (Lt Col (Retd) Paul Gilham (Founding Trustee) and Maj Tony Brazier, OC 28 Sqn) have overseen the commission of property items for forming squadrons, namely 60 and 94 Sqn QOGLR. This saw the QOGLR Trust present each forming Squadron a silver kothimora kukri and two prints of QOGLR paintings. The officers of these two forming Sqns also presented silver Slim statuettes to the Trust for display in their Sqn Lines. In addition, following precedent set by the refurbishment of the Chaturman Cup for golf, the Trust has supported the commission of the Indra Trophy. To be awarded for cricket, the refurbished sterling silver cup is in remembrance of Private Indra Rai who died on operations in Bosnia in 1995. The QOGLR Association also provided financial support to the Indra Trophy, and the project was led by Capt Lalkaji Gurung (60 Sqn).

The Trust and GIFT also presented:

- The Slim Trophy award to SSgt Chakra Rai, 10 QOGLR



SSgt Chakra Rai with his trophy

- The Gurkha Soldier of the Great War award to Cpl Milan 4 RLC, 60 Sqn QOGLR



Cpl Milan Rai with his trophy

Training Log IS Infrastructure Business Improvement Project Delivery

By Capt K McLeod, Regimental Technical Officer

During Ex IRON VIPER 19, 10 QOGLR could not complete all Collective Training objectives due to known deficiencies with the training servers' functionality. A test of requirement exercise was conducted by 10 QOGLR and both Supply Training Facilities (STF), which confirmed the sub-optimal nature of Management of the Joint Deployed Inventory (MJDI) being connected to a training server.



WO2 Subas Tembe (STWO) walking the Bde Comd, Comd QOGLR and RSM from one logistic node

These deficiencies were further demonstrated in a trial 10 QOGLR conducted on Eelmoor Training area 9 Sept 20; Army HQ, 3 (UK) Division, Commander 101 Logistic Brigade and many other key stakeholders were in attendance. The first part of the trial demonstrated the inefficiencies using the training server and highlighted how it does not mirror the MJDI live system. The second part of the trial was the Global NATO stock numbers (G0 NSNs) used on live UINs on the central server. This demonstrated full MJDI functionality and confirmed stock visibility for higher formation. The trial, and therefore the system functionality, was tested against the following criteria: the visibility of demands submitted on the system from end-to-end; assurance that the use of the live MJDI system would not result in a financial cost from industry; and ensure that the revised process could be locked into future training. The results confirmed MJDI central should be used for logistic CT rather than the training server.

When demands or issues are made on MJDI, the consignor/consignee will have visibility of dues in/out within their own account. To aid visibility, each exercising unit from Battlegroup A2 Echelon to the Divisional Support Group (DSG) at 3rd Line, should be attributed an easily identifiable UIN. The creation of UINs for training requires the submission of MOD F942, with UINs subsequently removed from the system at the completion of training in accordance with Army HQ Closed Stores Accounts Team policy.



The RTO explains how the current training model is suboptimal and how the new suggested concept will ensure our Logistic Specialist (Supply) will train as they would fight; the new concept provides 100% MJDI capability compared to the 30% capability the current model provides. It also provides end-to-end (E2E) stock visibility to the chain of command (CoC).

The use of live MJDI NSNs normally results in a financial charge to the associated UIN once the materiel expenditure is logged on the MIRANDA system. In order to avoid this charge, G0 NSNs can be created with nil cost as confirmed by Army HQ. The trial on 9 Sep 20 found no issues with using G0 NSNs.

All processes that deviate from tri-service policy within the Defence Logistics Framework are included within the Supply Chain Supplementary Instruction (SCSI). To assure future training uses a reviewed and established procedure, the end-to-end process including UINs and G0 numbers for CT should be included within the SCSI. The RTO Dept within 10 QOGLR is ready to assist with the drafting of this instruction if required.



The Bde Comd (Brig. Phillip Prosser) thanks 10 QOGLR for demonstrating the inefficiencies on the current training model and how the new concept would significantly improve the training experience for LS(S) during Collective Training (CT). The Bde Comd supports the suggested change and looks forward to it being authorised by Army HQ and implemented soonest.

1 Sqn conducted a CT CHARLIE exercise in Nov 20 and used the new concept with authority from Army HQ. As predicted, full MJDI capability and visibility was available throughout the Ex which resulted in 1 Sqn achieving all CT objectives and more importantly, ensured our soldiers trained as they would fight! Army HQ and all key stakeholders are fully supportive to get this new process signed off.

Jai QOGLR!

Gurkha Team at Defence School of Transport, Leconfield

By Capt Safin Magar

Five Permanent staff from QOGLR are currently working at Defence School of Transport (DST) to support Initial and Subsequent Trade Training for Tri-Service personnel including RAF, RLC and Royal Marines. When the Combat Logistician Course started, RLC Soldiers (including Gurkha Soldiers within QOGLR) who completed phase 1 training were required to complete the course under 25 Training Regt, RLC at DST as the Combat Logistician 19 (CL19) course is mandatory before being assigned to the Field Army. It includes Licence Acquisition, GS (General Service) MOD1 (Module) and GS MOD2, which will take 3 to 4 months to complete. Due to COVID-19, so far only 50% of Gurkha trainees from RI (Recruit Intake) 19 have completed the course, and 100 trainees from RI20 are due to arrive in Jan 21. Therefore, the unit may struggle with the workforce this year, as it will take the whole year to train the remaining 150 Gurkha soldiers.

Despite the hectic schedule the team still managed to conduct social functions and organise various events. Notably, Adventure Training organised by Sgt Komal Bikram Singh Thakuri for DST serving personnel. It was a week-long affair with 15 people involved, including the Chief Instructor Lt Col S L Johnson.



Welcome to Commandant DST Col Henson (QGM) and OC Maj Holmes to the Nepalese community



Col BG visit at Defence School of Transport on March 2020

Dashain 2020

2020 has been a challenging year for everyone in the QOGLR due to the impact of COVID 19, with many planned social and cultural events within Brigade of Gurkhas cancelled in accordance with UK HMG guidance. Despite COVID 19, QOGLR observed the traditional Dashain ritual service in the Gurkha temple on Zoom, covering the period from 17 – 26 Oct 20. The virtual service allowed our soldiers and families to observe this tradition from Pandit Ji, delivering his wise speeches and messages of good fortune to all members of the Regiment. Nevertheless, we look forward to celebrating a grand Kalatratri next year if the COVID pandemic will allow us to.



QOGLR pujari team preparing for PHULPATI. The nine plants represent Health, Wealth and Prosperity. 'Bringing PHULPATI', brings all the nine goddesses into your home.



GM saheb and Pandit Ji praying to Goddess Durga on KALARATRI for the wellbeing of the regiment and the members serving around the world. Goddess Durga is believed to be the destroyer of all demon entities, ghosts, spirits and negative energies, who flee upon knowing of her arrival.



GM saheb praying on GHATASTHAPANA, the flag and the pole is a symbol of power

MAHANAWAMI is the day of sacrifice. After prayers multiple goats (representative animals) are sacrificed using a large ceremonial Khukuri. This day is also known as the 'demon-hunting day' because members of the defeated demon army are striven to save themselves by hiding in the bodies of animals and fowls.

DCLPA Supply Training Wing

By *Sgt Sagar Limbu*

The Defence College of Logistics, Policing, and Administration (DCLPA) is based at Worthy Down near Winchester in Hampshire. It was formed in 2002 and provides a high-quality Tri-Service training facility for initial trade training (ITT) and subsequent trade training (STT) personnel across the logistics, policing, and administration trades. The Defence School of Logistics (DSL) is one of 4 schools that are under the command of DCLPA. DSL delivers the majority of tri-service logistics training and military training (ALDP, formally CLM) to multi-cap badge personnel within the Army TLB. The School is organised into 4 Wings namely: Command Wing (CW), Food Services Training Wing (FSTW), Logistics Specialists Training Wing (LSTW), and Supply Training Wing (STW). The school specialises in delivering training to logisticians and commanders to meet the operational requirements of Defence.



QOGLR personnel assigned to DCLPA
 Rear - *Sgt Mukesh Rai (FSTW)*
 Middle L to R - *Cpl Rabin Limbu (CW),*
Sgt Sagar Limbu (STW)
 Front - *Lt Col Devendra Ale, Chief*
Instructor (CI), Supply Training Wing

Supply Chain Division is one of five key divisions within Supply Training Wing (STW) where logistics training is delivered to both ITT and STT soldiers from the Royal Logistics Corps and Queen Own Gurkha Logistics Regiment spanning across the Regular and Reserve Army. The training delivered by SCD is broken down into Career courses such as LSS Class 1 Supply Chain Supervisor and Specialist courses such as the 1ST Line Optimisation Junior Non-Commissioned Officers (1LO JNCO) course.

In Oct 2019, I was assigned to SCD (then Supply Operations Division (SOD)) as an instructor delivering predominantly the 1LO JNCO course. Then based at Princess Royal Barracks (PRB) – Deepcut, I soon found myself learning about my new role, shadowing courses, and attended the ASLS accredited DTTT ph1/3 course to qualify as an instructor. After 25 years of delivering training at PRB, Deepcut, STW relocated to Worthy Down on Apr 2020 to reunite with DSL and all the remaining Wings under the command of the School.



Sgt Sagar Limbu delivering a residential part of the course to Logistics Specialist (Supply) junior ranks who were selected for employment within 1st Line Optimisation (1 LO) appointment

The pandemic brought many challenges to the move in the form of handing over the Deepcut Barracks itself as well as delivering pieces of training in classrooms in Worthy Down. We had to re-evaluate and re-design the whole course structure to meet the challenges brought by the pandemic but on the other hand, making sure that there's continuity in training. The team adapted to the necessity of this difficult time and evolved into a robust team fuelled by the latest IT system. During the 2020/2021 training period, the school pushed out 120 instances which varied from a week to 3-week period per instance. This changed from traditional classroom teaching to distance learning and voice-over lessons is what I believe, is the way forward.

As Gurkha soldiers, we get a fewer opportunities to post out to work and experience the wider British Army culture beyond our Regiment. I feel privileged to be a part of this organisation, working for the Tri-service is a bonus on its own. I have not only been an instructor but at the same time have learned a lot myself because of the exposure to a wide horizon of knowledge and culture. There are other QOGLR personnel working in other departments at the school, and we are making headway.

1 Supply Squadron QOGLR

By Maj J Sutton RLC



2020 has been a busy year for 1 Squadron, it has seen the Squadron and 10 QOGLR transition into readiness and soldiers from 1 Squadron deployed in the UK to Support MACA tasks during COVID 19.

Despite this, 1 Squadron has maintained its support to the Brigade and wider Army. Soldiers have represented the QOGLR on a plethora of commitments throughout the UK and overseas. Standing commitments to the Falklands and BATUS have ensured that 1 Squadron LSS soldiers have put their trade skills to excellent use. A young LCpl Bishal deployed on Op BLANKER, (support to UK SF in Iraq), during this tour he stood up from Storeman to cover the gapped CQMS for a considerable period, receiving exceptional feedback from his CoC, in doing so he represented 10 QOGLR to the highest of standards. His exceptional work earned him a recommendation for a Brigade Commanders Commendation.

2020 unfortunately saw the outbreak of COVID 19 sweep the nation and 1 Squadron was called to aid the NHS supply chain. RV Troop, deployed to Bury St Edmonds to operate a Forward Supply Node, there the troops managed vital parts of the supply chain ensuring the correct type and quantities of PPE went to the correct hospitals. Their modest and selfless approach to this complex task during this difficult time ensured the QOGLR reputation of professionalism and adaptability shone through. The Troops were honoured to be able to assist the country in its time of need and the Squadron is proud of their achievements.



Soldiers from RV Tp on Ex GURKHA YODDHA

Under COVID 19 conditions the Squadron worked hard to ensure daily routine was as normal as possible. The Troop Commanders took this opportunity of a reduced FOE to deploy their Troops on individual Basic Close Combat Skills exercises to refresh and revise their infantry skills. These well organised exercises enabled each Troop to hone their field skills in some testing serials including recce patrols, ambushes, section attacks and challenging CASEVAC's. RV Troop led by Lt Charles Anderson began their final attack at dawn in spectacular QOGLR style, led from the Line of Departure by a Regimental Piper while Support Weapons covered their advance.



Pte Bishal moving prepared cages to the loading area



Cpl Bhim Bahadur Pun with his trainees on Mechanical Handling Equipment Training



Cpl Nabin Limbu and his team protecting stock that could not fit inside the warehouse from the weather



At trade, 1 Squadron has made some big changes both in and out of camp. In camp the Squadron has developed a Custodian Account and a Distribution Outlet both of which enable the soldiers to deliver support to the wider Army and maintain vital trade skills. Both the Custodian Account and Distribution Outlet proved their worth during COVID 19 when 1 Squadron was selected to receive, sort and distribute 270,000 facemasks to over 300 Army units. This task was requested by DCGS and found MAT Tp's, Lt Alex Ellitsgaard-McNaughtan, SSgt Constantine and Sgt Vakaloloma liaising directly with Army HQ to ensure this task was completed in under 3 weeks; a fantastic achievement.



Soldiers carrying out stock visibility in transit during the exercise AMALGAM KHUKURI

Excellent work by Capt Kevin Mcleod, the Regimental Technical Officer (RTO) and WO2 Subash the Squadron Technical Warrant Officer (STWO), prompted the opportunity to introduce more realistic training serials when deployed on exercise using MJDI. The aim was to enable the Squadron Logistic Specialists (Supply) to train as they would fight using MJDI central. This created a realism and also provided visibility of stockholdings to higher echelons who could use Management Information Systems. This concept was tested on the Squadron CT CHARLIE training. Exercise AMALGAM KHUKURI (Squadron CT CHARLIE), saw the Squadron deploy complete to Bramley Training Area focusing on the Divisional Supply Chain. The new training serials on MJDI were a huge success, enabling visibility at all levels of demands and the ability to track notional stock throughout the supply chain, something which was previously impossible.

Making the most of any spare time available the Squadron has delivered a number of adventure training and education packages this has enabled the young soldiers to develop and learn about the UK. SSgt Dinesh organised a multi activity Adventure Training week to the Lake District, taking 30 young soldiers to experience mountain biking, kayaking and climbing. Sgt Jeevan and Cpl Netralal led a mountain biking Adventure Training package and Cpl Bijay ran an educational day to the National Memorial Arboretum in Burton-On-Trent. All these packages provided a sound base from which the soldiers of the Squadron could develop and push their physical and mental limits.



Soldiers from Ammo Tp on adventure training

In support of the QOGLR Trust, 1 Squadron organised a charity run, the idea was to run the distance between Nee Soon (the founding location of QOGLR) to Aldershot, a total distance of 10,896 km. This distance seemed a mammoth task for the Regiment to cover however, the wider QOGLR family stepped up to assist, in total amassing an amazing 29,000 km. This raised a total of £3200 for the QOGLR Trust.

This year 1 Squadron has worked hard developing relationships with civilian companies to learn from each other and to develop our junior soldiers. Lt Charles Anderson and SSgt Dhurba ran a Civilian Training Day inviting Veolia who specialise in water distribution. Veolia were hosted in excellent QOGLR fashion, beginning with piping the guests into the mess for a history lesson of the Squadron and our proud QOGLR heritage. A logistic planning exercise followed, teaching and focusing on the 7 questions estimate, this also allowed us to learn from their experience in supply chain management. In the afternoon the Sqn hosted Veolia for Messing in the Messing Hut which went down a treat. The event culminated with a pistol shoot on the 25-meter range. The day was thoroughly enjoyed by all our guests who have requested the opportunity to return the favour and host us in the new year. This will be a great opportunity for our soldiers to learn in a civilian supply environment.

This has been a busy year which has kept the Squadron on its toes but proven our flexibility and adaptability. The Squadron is now looking forward to welcoming in 20 new naya bhaiharu into the family from intake 20.

28 Fuel & General Support Squadron QOGLR

By Maj A Brazier RLC



Unprecedented? Rewarding? Challenging? Reflecting back on the last 12 months, it's hard to find the right word to describe 28 Squadron's experience in 2020. As will be a theme throughout this year's journal, the COVID pandemic defined and shaped much of the year for the Squadron. However, 2020 really did require the Squadron to perform both at home and abroad, providing unique experiences that will live long in the memory.

On the home front, we began the year training to re-role as an Infantry Company for an overseas exercise that summer. As we approached the end of the two week exercise, we gathered on the training area in Scotland on 11 March (social distancing wasn't yet a thing!) to explain that whilst we had been deployed, COVID-19 cases were increasing and that this would require a period of enhanced readiness for 28 Squadron.



Ex KHUKURI VANGUARD in Scotland

The lockdown period presented challenges, but our soldiers really rose to them. Unlike many Regiments which dispersed their soldiers across the UK, for 28 Squadron, of 158 predominately Gurkha soldiers, 142 remained in the Aldershot area throughout, and of these 97 were in the single living accommodation. Section Commanders and 2ICs managed the new requirements brilliantly, ensuring every soldier not required on the vehicle park had a weekly programme and undertook periods of meaningful remote training each day via Zoom or Skype. As Pipe President, I was particularly pleased to see Private Sujit Thapa complete the first ever virtual piping course, and I thank the other soldiers

in his accommodation block for their perseverance during the early stages!



C Tp in CR-Quarantine Facility



When called upon, the Squadron's soldiers were ready and eager to help support the country. This saw them assist with the transfer of civilians to isolation areas following FCDO repatriation flights; undertake the onward movement of Service Personnel repatriated from overseas bases; provide transport and general duties support to NHS distribution depots and hospitals, including in London. More recently, the Squadron is now running a Defence Quarantine Facility at Crowborough, isolating and testing Service Personnel and contractors prior to them deploying overseas; this task will endure into 2021 and again shows the flexible skillset of the QOGLR soldier.

Abroad, 28 Squadron were one of very few subunits allowed to deploy to an overseas training exercise in summer 2020. Exercise NOBLE PARTNER 20 saw 2,800 troops from Georgia, USA, UK, Poland and France exercise in Georgia, close to the Russian border. The security and stability of the Black Sea Region is of strategic importance for the UK and Exercise NOBLE PARTNER allowed the UK to continue to consolidate the strong relationship which the UK enjoys with Georgia and its Defence Force.

Previously undertaken by 1 Rifles, 3 Rifles and 3 Para, 28 Squadron became the 130 strong '28 Infantry Company Group', a composite infantry company which expanded to include 12 separate trade groups, from 7 capbadges (The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps, Royal Gurkha Rifles, Gurkha Staff and Personnel Support, The Corps of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, Royal Army Medical Corps and The Small Arms School Corps). All personnel deploying on Exercise NOBLE PARTNER isolated for two weeks prior to the exercise and a strict testing regime was undertaken and results shared with the Host Nation.



Joint Plans Team, Ex NOBEL PARTNER

In Georgia we led several joint training events with Allied nations, integrating multinational troops down to the platoon level, with each Platoon having a Georgian infantry section attached to it, and the Company having US and Georgian forces under command, providing Engineer, Anti-Tank and Military Police capabilities. Feedback from soldiers indicated that operating so closely with Allies allowed them to explore new perspectives and new professional challenges. Due to the isolation requirements, the Squadron was deployed for almost five weeks, performing superbly in the most challenging of scenarios and environment. The experience was hugely rewarding for our Gurkha logisticians, with junior soldiers considering it a career highlight, and more senior soldiers relishing the opportunity to return to their Class 3 infanteer roots, whilst also drawing on operational experiences. I couldn't have been prouder.

Rewards have come in the form of a number of awards and promotions. Private Abhinavan Rai was awarded the The Wallace-Dutton Trophy, Corporal Suraj Rai the QOGLR Gold Medal and Staff Sergeant Fiakegbe Commander Field Army's Commendation. 11 promoted to Lance Corporal, 7 to Corporal, 5 to Sergeant, and 2 to Staff Sergeant. There were of many other achievements too numerous to list here, including 11 medals and commendations from Ex NOBLE PARTNER alone!

All this of course would not have been possible without the support of our families, who my biggest thank you must go to. Many took on home schooling, or as key workers were themselves on 'the front line', whilst also providing unwavering support whilst their loved ones deployed across the UK or to Georgia. Thank you.

2021 will initially see support to the COVID-19 effort continue in the form of providing testing and an assured quarantine facility for those deploying on operations. Concurrently, a trade exercise in January will set the conditions for our return to Readiness and be a great opportunity to fully test the new EPLS fleet, which has now fully replaced our DROPS. We have a lot to look forward to.

J'ai QOGLR. J'ai 28 Squadron!

Jai QOGLR!

36 (Headquarters) Squadron QOGLR

By Capt Marcus Rodgers

During October 2020, 36(HQ) Squadron with elements from the Light Aid Detachment (LAD), 1 and 28 Squadron deployed on Ex CEREBRUS and provided the real-life support (RLS) to 101 Logistic Brigade Head Quarters at Netheravon Camp. Ex CEREBRUS is a 3(UK) Divisional level exercise seeing all units deploying both on the exercise and in support of it. This is the lead up to Ex WARFIGHTER held next year in Fort Hood, Texas.



Cpl Bibek and LCpl Rajan, MPGS, conduct temperature checks on SP entering the exercising area, in order to mitigate against Covid-19

This large and complex task was made even more difficult with COVID-19 and the implied restrictions. None the less the deployed elements of QOGLR worked tirelessly providing for in excess of 150 deployed troops, this included 101 Log Brigade Commander (Brig Prosser), Commander Log (Col Howard) and Commander ES.

The Regiment constructed a large, tented camp to facilitate all the arriving force elements from 101 Brigade HQ. This was to ensure that the exercise adhered to the Governments strict social distancing and household "bubble" restrictions. Inclusive to the tented camp was the highly renowned QOGLR field kitchen. Through the diligence and hard work of the catering team they were able to maintain the social distancing required to protect the deployed troops. Whilst maintaining the highest quality output of food, a huge morale boost for all who attended regardless of the elements outside.

Always looking to develop further some of the deployed QOGLR elements completed a team medic course which was organised and executed by the RAMC contingent co-located with QOGLR. Highlighting the dedication of the soldiers to personal and professional development. In addition to this the LAD delivered both familiarisation and ES training on a multitude of different platforms further enabling the Regiment to progress further.



Cpl Bhimraj Rai, 36 (HQ) Sqn, delivers Driver Training

During the exercise the deployed elements of QOGLR celebrated both Dashain and Tihar. The celebrations were led by Pte Sandesh. This included an evening of entertainment ranging from live music and dance performances, all performed by the deployed QOGLR soldiers. All celebrations kept in line with the Government’s COVID-19 restrictions.

All the soldiers deployed cemented the immaculate reputation of QOGLR. The Regiment are exceptionally proud of all who deployed on the exercise. It will prove an important training experience before the next deployment on Ex WARFIGHTER again providing RLS for deployed troops in Fort Hood, Texas in 2021.

10 QOGLR Readiness Activation Exercise

10 QOGLR have been busy, preparing for future Readiness in 2021 by deploying to Ordnance Barracks, simulating a large-scale deployment to support UK Defence. The Exercise saw all three Sqns muster their soldiers and vehicles on 20th Nov 20, performing checks and pre-deployment admin, before driving over to Ordnance Barracks, where they were received by 36 Sqn in packets, before recovering back to Gale Barracks.



Comd QOGLR and the RSM 10 QOGLR visiting the exercising Sqn

2021 will see the Regiment take on an extended period of Readiness as a Divisional Logistic Regiment within 101 Log Bde - for which the Regiment is ready. A superb rehearsal!

60 Close Support Squadron QOGLR

By 2Lt Max Walker

2020 was a year full of opportunities for 60 CS Squadron. Whilst continuing to test themselves in training, 60 CS Squadron have been heavily involved in deploying on Op RESCRIPT as part of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In March, the first set of tasks for Op RESCRIPT came in thick and fast, seeing the majority of the Squadron being deployed across the country. Collecting PPE from arriving flights at Brize Norton airport, distributing ventilators to hospitals across London and providing vital logistic support to civilian companies were some of the many ways that 60 CS Squadron contributed to the COVID-19 response. In November, 60 CS Squadron were yet again called on to provide support for Op RESCRIPT, this time with the mass testing project that took place in Liverpool. Throughout these operations, all members of 60 CS Squadron were outstanding. The soldiers’ enthusiasm and positivity prevailed during this unpredictable period and they were wholeheartedly committed to achieving the mission.

Maintaining a readiness state throughout much of lockdown has meant that our soldiers and officers alike have been mentally and physically prepared to step out the door at short notice. All have remained professional and eager to deploy on what is a fantastic opportunity to contribute to the response to COVID-19.



Cpl Cash and Craftsman Walker, LAD, deliver ES training to soldiers during their downtime



QOGLR chefs hard at work under the watchful eyes of SSgt Bimal Rai, 36 (HQ) Sqn and Cpl Gharti Magar, 16 Sig Regt



60 CS SQN in the shape of its logo (LX)



Vehicle loaded with Testing Site kit

Despite the demands of Op RESCRIPT, 60 CS Squadron has continued to train hard. They deployed to Salisbury Plain in support of Troop Commander’s Course (TCC) 83. The TCC Command Wing commended the resources and work ethic that 60 CS Squadron offered, lauding it as the best it had ever witnessed and setting the bar high for future squadrons. The Corps Colonel visited the exercise to see 60 CS Squadron testing both its soldiers and its equipment, with an impressive 96 personnel and 44 vehicles deployed.

60 CS squadron conducted a MATTs camp at Longmoor training camp, culminating in a night attack and CASEVAC. Colonel of the Regiment, Brigadier Reehal, observed the action and caught up with many old friends over some messing.



60 CS Sqn on Ex TIMBER TRUSS



The squadron has also been preparing for next year’s Ex MUSHROOM ADVANCE, which will achieve many of the required CT1 and CT2 level training objectives. Specifically, there will be a focus on FIBUA and clearing buildings and this has been reflected in 60

CS Squadron’s build up training for the exercise. Ex MUSHROOM SHAKE provided the soldiers with the basics of fighting in buildings and urban areas. Using MTRS paint simmunition allowed the soldiers and instructors to monitor the accuracy and precision of the soldiers shooting in built up areas at close proximity.

Not only has the squadron impressed on operations and exercises, but it has remained active elsewhere. Sporting success has been challenging during a time where many events have been cancelled, however, the squadron is clearly not short on talent. LCpl Ram Gurung has proven his footballing ability by representing the Corps. 2Lt Walker completed the doko race in Pokhara, setting a new course record. He also represented the U25 Army Squash team and won the Army Duathlon Championships. Members of 60 CS Squadron also hit the ski slopes in Austria, competed in the Army XC Champs and all have remained physically active on virtual Strava groups in what has been a year for getting out and enjoying the fresh air instead of breathing through a facemask in the gym!



60 CS Sqn personnel with Maj Brannigan lined up for the charity Doko race

60 CS Sqn have also contributed hugely to a variety of charities. Cpl Vijaysingh Gurung held a doko run in aid of Hope for Hasti. 2Lt Jenner raised money for the same cause by running a half-marathon carrying 15kg, barefoot! Ten boys took on a slightly altered Trailwalker, collectively completing 100 km across the South Downs Way in a rapid 9 hours and 25 minutes, raising money for Oxfam and the Gurkha Welfare Trust. 60 CS Squadron have been just as active on two wheels as they have been on two legs. Pte Sunil Tulachan smashed his cycling challenge supporting the NHS, whilst WO2 (SSM) Lama and Cpl Bird led the Royal British Legion Pedal for Poppies cycling challenge, topping off a year of a charitable success for 60 CS Squadron.

New messing huts were opened at Dalton Barracks allowing the boys to treat everyone to some famous Gurkha Messing. Additionally, the only Hindu and Buddhist temple in Oxfordshire has been established on camp. After a huge effort by many of the soldiers to renovate the temple in time, it was declared open by Colonel QOGLR at the time, Major General Fay. This has provided the Gurkhas with a place of worship to observe festivals such as Dashain and Tihar.

Her Royal Highness, Princess Anne was welcomed to the temple where she commended the squadron on

its commitment to Op RESCRIPT. Princess Anne was further welcomed by Pte Chetan Gurung and LCpl Ashish Thami performing a khukuri dance in the temple, a preferable alternative, having watched the Troop Commanders attempt the dance a few weeks earlier.



Sgt Debindra Limbu receiving his Op RESCRIPT plaque

Returning from Christmas leave, 60 CS Squadron have continued their training through virtual means. Troops are making the most of the opportunity to develop themselves personally, professionally and physically. 60 CS Squadron are especially proud of Cpl Milan who has been awarded the GOC's commendation for his sterling efforts throughout 2020.

The squadron now looks forward to 2021, with overseas deployments to Cyprus and Germany on the Forecast of Events. The soldiers of 60 CS Squadron should be extremely proud of their efforts this year and I have no doubt that they will meet and surpass the challenges of 2021.

94 Supply Squadron QOGLR from its reformation in 9 Regiment RLC

By Cpl Ajip Rai, 94 Squadron

Since 94 Squadron's historical reformation on 23 April 2020, the Sqn has accomplished a myriad of commitments. This has included the generation and subsequent deployment of a troop to Afghanistan, the successful completion of the Nee Soon Messing Hut and experimentation, as part of 104 Brigade Primary Equipment Pack custodians. Taken with the backdrop of COVID-19, the Sqn has also refined its working practices, providing personnel with the opportunity to conduct education and training to enhance conceptual development. A snapshot of some of the Sqns activity throughout this turbulent period is captured in the ensuing article.

Watt Bike Charity Ride

Cpl Roshan (IC), Cpl Bardan (2IC), LCpl Bimal and Pte Jones successfully completed the Watt Bike Charity Ride for the Local Chippenham Community Hospital and NHS on 17th October 2020.

The team organised and completed the event covering a total distance of 900 km within 12 hrs at Morrisons

Superstore in Chippenham. The event aimed to raise money for the Local Hospital and NHS. The team successfully managed to raise a total of £1950 where £1175 was presented to NHS and £775 presented to Chippenham Community Hospital.



Participants adding the distance at Morrisons superstore in Chippenham

Bench Press Challenge

On 17th September 2020 volunteers from 9 Regiment, including organisers Sgt Krishnasen (IC), Cpl Dipak (2IC) and Pte Daniel bench pressed for 9 hours to raise awareness surrounding the benefits of weightlifting as part of health and wellbeing. The activity also sought to raise money for the Gurkha Welfare Trust Charity (GWT).



Bench press challenge 9 Regt led by Sgt Krishnasen Limbu Subba (RLC) and 2IC was Cpl Dipak Rai 94 Sqn, QOGLR

The event was conducted in the STF hangar in 9 Regiment. The total bench-pressed weight was 273,970 kg with volunteers lifting 118,470 kg, while Sgt Krishnasen lifted a total of 155,000 kg. The team managed to raise a total of £376 for the Gurkha Welfare Trust.

Buckley Day - Buckley Barracks to Delhi and Back

The officers and soldiers from Buckley Barracks celebrated Buckley Day in an unprecedented way this year, by covering 8510 miles, the distance between Buckley Barracks and Delhi. The event started on 13th May 2020 and the total distance was covered either by running, walking, or cycling. This event was hugely successful and promoted physical and mental resilience but maybe more importantly esprit de corps. Furthermore, 94 Squadron QOGLR covered the distance from Kathmandu to Chippenham to mark the 94 Sqn re-formation.

Portrait Painting Fundraiser Auction for GWT and QOGLR Trust

For the first time in QOGLR's history, Cpl Ajip Rai from 94 Squadron came up with a fantastic idea of painting five portraits in order to raise funds for the Gurkha Welfare Trust (GWT) and the QOGLR Trust.

The GWT mainly provides financial, medical and development aid to Gurkha veterans, their families and their communities. The QOGLR Trust gives welfare and benevolence grants to QOGLR personnel, ex-QOGLR personnel (in UK and Nepal) and their families in times of need, as well as helping to preserve The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment's esprit de corps and ethos.

The auction started on 1 Sept 20 and was open for 10 days. All paintings were exhibited in the 94 Squadron HQ and on social media (for online bidders). Cpl Ajip successfully managed to raise £620 for both charities and presented half to Commander QOGLR, with the other half being donated online to the Gurkha Welfare Trust.



Cpl Ajip Rai handing the cheque to Comd QOGLR



Cpl Ajip Rai with his 5 portrait paintings ready for an auction for the QOGLR Trust and GWT

The opening of the Nee-Soon Messing Hut in Hullavington

The Nee-Soon Messing Hut in 94 Supply Sqn, 9 Regt RLC, Hullavington was officially opened by Commander 104 Logistic Support Brigade, Brigadier J Chestnutt. For the Gurkhas, team cohesion and bonding are strengthened during messing and these relationships have a positive impact on a unit's operational effectiveness.



94 Sqn personnel constructing the messing hut area

On Thursday 10 September 2020, 94 Supply Sqn were honoured to host Brigadier J Chestnutt who officially opened the Nee Soon Messing Hut. The self-help messing hut was constructed by 94 Sqn personnel with the help of a few additional tradesmen. The project was predominantly overseen by Captain Dipendra Rai (94 Sqn 2IC) the project manager.

Commander (Comd) 104 Logistic Support Brigade (Bde) was welcomed to the hut by Major Kedge (94 Sqn OC) and WO2 Simpson (94 Sqn SSM) with the presentation of a traditional "Khada". Capt Dipendra highlighted the importance of the messing hut and BG Kaida, in his own words, "The hut will help to build team cohesion, a sense of belonging and most pertinent of all, it enhances the esprit de corps within our Sqn".



Captain Dipendra Rai presenting khada to the 104 Bde Comd

Cooking with firewood is fun and creates unique and delicious aromas and flavours that enhance the meals created. There is something primitive about fire cooking in present days. Nothing is better than eating delicious food around a messing fire with friends and family, this is the Gurkha Kaida which has been a tradition since the first Gurkhas enlistment in the British Army Order of Battle.

The Bde Comd opened the fire pit (Chulo) with the assistance of Cpl Dil Bikram, whilst the rest of the attendees sang ritual hymns. Subsequently, the unveiling of the plaque took place as an appreciation to all personnel. The event was wrapped up with the Bde Comd interacting with the Sqn's Officers and SNCOs.

14 SQN, ARRC SP BN on EXERCISE LOYAL LEDA 20

By LCpl Surendra Limbu

In Autumn, ARRC Support Battalion deployed on Ex LOYAL LEDA 20, the annual training exercise for the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC). The exercise is in place to assess HQ ARRC staff in a NATO Article 5 conflict against a peer adversary. This was set to take

place in Germany and Poland this year, however, due to COVID-19, the exercise was conducted within the UK.



TDA construction for centralised feeding during Ex LOYAL LEDA 20 at South Cerney

The ARRC Support Battalion is designed to provide the much-needed support to HQ ARRC, in order to allow them to deploy anywhere in the world, if required. The Support Battalion deployed to 2 sites this year, creating a Main headquarters at South Cerney and creating a FORWARD and REAR command posts in Fairford. This required a great deal of quick planning and adaptation by the command team in order to set the conditions for the exercise. The layout of the sites and delivery of stores and equipment was predominantly led by the ARRC Support Battalion.

The Battalion is made up of 2 Squadrons, HQ Squadron and 14 Squadron. 14 Squadron provides the majority of the manpower required to deliver the mission and is made up of 4 troops; Transport troop, Close Support Troop, Forward Support Troop and Power Troop. Each of these troops deliver a different area of expertise and ultimately come together to achieve the same goal.



Prince Charles accompanied by Lt Gen Smyth Osbourne meeting a member of CST during the visit

Transport Troop is an RLC/QOGLR troop, who are responsible for the Inload and Outload of stores and equipment to wherever is required. Once this task is complete the troop will then assist in construction and maintenance on site. During the Exercise they are on standby for any urgent transport of equipment or personnel. This year the troop has fully converted its vehicle fleet to EPLS from DROPS. The exercise has provided a fantastic training opportunity for all within the troop to continue their familiarisation with the new vehicle, which has been a great asset and is highly valued by Transport Troop.

Close Support Troop (CST) provides force protection to each of the sites and deploys to create the defence wiring throughout each area. The Troop comprises of personnel from the QGE and RGR, introducing different experiences and abilities in order to deliver their role. It is a unique troop that is incredibly flexible and hardworking. Its main responsibility is the delivery of force protection at each of the sites. The Troop accounts itself to the highest standard.

Forward Support Troop (FST) provides force mobility protection to TAC, which includes COMMARRC, is its main role. It allows the TAC group to move safely to key command areas whenever required. FST is comprised of 3 different cap badges; RLC (QOGLR), QGE and RGR. In addition to their force protection role the troop conduct various tasks over the course of the Exercise, which included; Site Laydown on the ground, construction and maintenance. The Troop received Mastiffs in January this year in preparation to delivering their new role and despite the onset of COVID-19, the troop has been busy in ensuring that they were ready to deliver their role to the highest of standards. They attended various courses to qualify drivers and commanders, followed by a pintle shoot to qualify individuals as top gunners with the GPMG.

Power Troop is the only troop to have one assigned cap badge, being fully comprised of Royal Engineers. Their main role is the delivery of power to elements of the Staff Working Environment, Dining facilities and accommodation, in order to allow the Staff to conduct critical work in relation to the exercise. The Troop was immensely busy over the course of the exercise as they were required to continuously supply power from day one and were on call 24/7 in case of emergency. The Troop has had a very successful exercise this year, receiving many compliments for their hard work and effort from HQ ARRC.

Despite the onset of COVID-19, Exercise Loyal Leda 20 was a success for the ARRC Support Battalion. It provided a fantastic opportunity to test and evaluate how to best carry out the support to HQ ARRC. It also provided us the opportunity to understand the Royal Signals role in the exercise and to see how we can deliver the rapid deployment required for HQ ARRC together as one unique group. With many learning objectives obtained the Battalion looks on to the new year and will begin the preparation for next year's exercise.



FST at Lulworth ranges conducting the Pintle Shoot in preparation for the tactical phase of Ex LOYAL LEDA 20

GURKHA COMPANY (SITTANG) GC(S) ROYAL MILITARY ACADEMY SANDHURST (RMAS)



Staff List

Lieutenant Colonel S Clare Hull
Major Shureshkumar Thapa MVO RGR
Captain Dipakraj Ghale RGR
Capt Mahendra Phagami RGR
Capt Tarjan Gurung RGR

Commanding Office SSU
Officer Commanding
Second in Command
Platoon Commander
Platoon Commander



New CO SSU - Lt Col Samantha Clare Hull



New OC GC(S) - Maj Shureshkumar Thapa MVO

support ranging from small field exercises to a large overseas exercise in Germany, which offers an astonishing training value, complex terrain, extreme weather conditions and variety of different scenarios that includes both rural and urban environment, range safety, ceremonial guards, CE events, security and temporarily filling the gapped posts across the Academy.

COVID-19 has dramatically changed the way we live, operate and execute our commitments. We ensured all activities and commitments are COVID compliant, risks are factored and mitigated enough to operate safely and FHP guidelines followed whilst achieving the Training Objectives. Our NCOs and soldiers are frequently on routine Academy events and duties too. Apart from these routine support activities for the Academy, there are many other high-profile activities running concurrently throughout the year including; the GC(S) Conference, Army level Sports Competitions and Community Engagement events. GC(S), known as the engine room, provides manpower and other resources to support these activities.

Despite the tempo of commitments at RMAS, GC(S) always finds time to develop our Rfn and JNCO for the future, organising family events, maintain Coy's traditions, culture and battle honour, running variety of events within GC(S) and across Sandhurst Support Unit (SSU) throughout the year taking part in Bde events including Bde Golf.

Routine Support to The Academy

This year has been very different in many aspects but equally very successful and challenging. Gurkha Company Sittang GC(S) has continued to demonstrate a high degree of professionalism, commitment, resilience and held in high regard within the high-profile environment of the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS) despite COVID pandemic. The GC(S) has a pivotal role to play within RMAS. With a total of 74 personnel, GC(S) has configured itself to support three regular commissioning courses (intakes) that run concurrently throughout the year. This is broken into three 14-week terms. The training and support programme are designed to ensure GC(S) can support every single requirement. GC(S) provides a raft of

Exercises: There are five major field exercises in each term for all three Intakes that run concurrently; Ex DYNAMIC VICTORY and Ex TEMPLAR'S TRIUMPH (Seniors), Ex ALLENBY'S ADVANCE and Ex SLIM'S STAND (Intermediates) and Ex MONTGOMERY MARKS (Juniors). Moreover, there are 13 small to medium range field exercises that GC(S) provides manpower for. All these exercises are manpower intensive; which means a rapid deployment in the field for the soldiers. On average, a soldier spends 37 nights in the field in a term. GC(S) is far more committed and busier delivering training support now than in the past.

Ceremonial Guards: One of the standing key tasks at the Academy is the 'Guard of Honour' for Her Majesty's representative at Sovereign's Parade. This is more commonly known as the 'Street Lining' and takes place along the Queen's Walk, in front of Old Collage during each Sovereign's Parade.

Security: The RMAS, due to its nature and history, is a highly sensitive place and in turn could attract groups or individuals with terrorist intent. The threat to the RMAS is a top priority in the RMAS's battle rhythm. Although routine security responsibility lies with MPGS, GC(S) provides extra security during Sovereign's Parade at the end of each term and during an annual RMAS Heritage Day when thousands of people are expected to attend the event.

Additional Activities

26th RGR Birthday Celebration



GC(S) staff observing the cake cutting

This year, Gurkha Company Sittang (GC(S)) celebrated the 26th anniversary of the formation of the Royal Gurkha Rifles (RGR) with great zeal in recognition of this unique milestone, ensuring all FHP measures are in place to protect against COVID. The event was a huge success in the presence of Colonel Brigade of Gurkhas (BG) Col Jody Davies MBE RGR, HQBG, Lt Col C Boryer MBE RGR and all RGR serving members within the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS) hosted by GC(S).

This year's RGR anniversary was delivered in a unique way; organised by HQBG, combining all RGR personnel across the Globe, and Officer Commanding (OC) GC(S) Maj Shureshkumar Thapa MVO who delivered the Birthday message on behalf of GC(S) via the virtual platform.

In the evening, GC(S) organised a family virtual event to build family cohesion and sense of belonging, community resilience and an opportunity to bring families together by organising family BINGO and an inter Platoon RGR orientated Quiz competition.

Sittang Battle Honour Day



Lt Col C Boryer MBE and Maj and Maj Gajendrakumar Angdembe lay wreaths at the Sittang memorial



GC(S) wives after the Sittang Day ceremony

The Battle of Sittang was a part of the Burma Campaign during the Second World War (WWII). It was fought between 19 - 23 Feb 1942. Thus, to commemorate the historical battle which was fought 77 years ago; all serving members and families from Gurkha Company Sittang (GC(S)) gathered on 21st Feb 2020 to witness 'Sittang Day'.

Commanding Officer, Sandhurst Support Unit (SSU), Lieutenant Colonel C Boryer MBE (RGR) and Officer Commanding GC(S), Maj Gajendrakumar Angdembe laid wreath at the memorial of those fallen heroes who fought and sacrificed their lives in the Battle of Sittang.

EX DYNAMIC VICTORY (CC193 - Summer Term) 16 - 26 July 2020

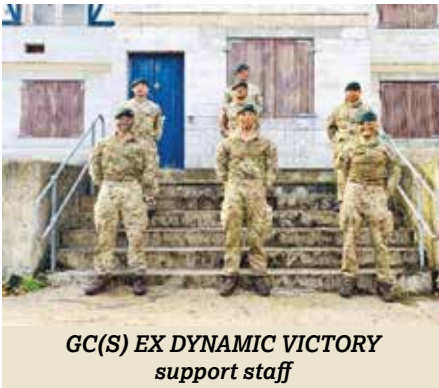
EX DYNAMIC VICTORY CC193 (Summer Term 2020) is the final field exercise of the British Army Officer Cadets (OCdts) which usually takes place in Germany but this time, it was held in Stanford Training Area (STANTA) from 16 - 26 July 2020.

As always, 32 members from GC(S) played a vital role under the command of Capt Tarjan Gurung (PC2) to support the summer term Ex DV. GC(S) fulfilled enemy role (Red Force), three Gun groups attached to the Coys (Blue Force) and two teams to the Police team (Green Force). Gun group attached to a Coy provide pivotal fire support to troops in contact, ambushes, raid, camp

attacks, massive suppressive fire power during A2C and enable OCdts in command appointment to suppress, neutralize and destroy enemy forces (EFs) and practice manoeuvrest approach in close combat battle.



GC(S) personnel on EX DYNAMIC VICTORY



GC(S) EX DYNAMIC VICTORY support staff

**Exercise SITTANG WARRIOR
04 - 28 May 20**

Ex SITTANG WARRIOR primarily focused on conceptual development, field exercises and test phase. Gurkha Company (Sittang) (GC(S)) provides military field training and contingency real-life support to the RMAS. Therefore, the training and support programme MUST be designed to ensure GC(S) is competent, current and confident as the Field Marshal Montgomery once said, ‘Man is still the first weapon of war’. It is imperative to have continuity of training or exercises to ensure we do not lose our Light Infantry excellence and remain able to deliver first class Infantry support to Officers Commissioning courses in Sandhurst. This requires a high level of Battle discipline and knowledge of Offensive, Defensive, Enabling and Stability actions as part of Battle craft Syllabus (BCS - B2B).

The following objectives as part of BCS (B2B) were considered and applied throughout; prepare potential JLC candidates for their forthcoming JLC, prepare potential SCBC & PSBC candidates, continue to enhance our light Infantry excellence, enforce critical thinking, plan, execute and be able to act/make decisions under intense pressure, command and admin in the field, exercise mission command during

their command appointment and, finally promote and foster our winning mentality by conducting Sect level competitions as part of our Gurkha Ethos and kaida.



Students on EX SITTANG WARRIOR



Battle Craft lessons in the field

Sittang Gladiator Challenge Summer 2020

Sittang Gladiator was a company physical training (PT) competition lasting for 7 weeks. The final assessment was held on Tue, 11 Aug 20 at The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS). The events consist of 4 workouts in order to promote operational effectiveness, fitness, healthy living and wining mentality during this pandemic time. The main event was initiated by the Commander Sandhurst Group (CSG) Brigadier James Carr- Smith by waving the flag of Gurkha company Sittang (GC(S)).

Wining Categories

- Most sit ups - Maj Shureshkumar Thapa MVO
- Most pull ups - Pte Uday Rai
- Most Tyre flip - Rfn Prabin Tamang
- Best 2 miles run - Rfn Nirmal Kumar Khadka



Sittang Gladiator Challenge participants

Annual Operational Shooting Competition Marksman of the year 2020



CO SSU, Lt Col Clare Hull presenting the "Marksman of the Year 2020" to Rfn Diwash Subba



Marksman of the Year 2020 competitors

Orienteering Competition



Commander Sandhurst Group (CSG) Brigadier James Carr-Smith presenting prizes



Charity Events



Oxfam Trail Walker



BLESMA charity event



PARAS' 10

Official Visits

General Officer Commanding (GOC) and Commandant Sandhurst Major General D F Capps CBE first visit on 16 Jun 20 to GC(S).



Major General D F Capps CBE arriving at GC(S)



Major General D F Capps CBE speaking to GC(S) staff

Family and Religious Events



Holi festival in GC(S) Temple



Dashain and Tihar



Temple and ritual service

Summary

Another busy period but very different to last year during which GC(S) reputation has remained high. We successfully delivered our output on all fronts in an exceptional way and it is widely acknowledged that we are an essential part of the set up here and play a significant role in the success of the RMAS. At the same time, we are a very good and effective front for the Brigade to a very wide and influential audience. We endeavour to continue our total professional support and maintain our culture & kaida and our high standards in the coming year.

Jai Gurkha Company Sittang, GC(S)

GURKHA COMPANY (CATTERICK)



Gurkha Company Mission
“To deliver trained Gurkha Soldiers in order to meet the operational requirements of the Brigade of Gurkhas”

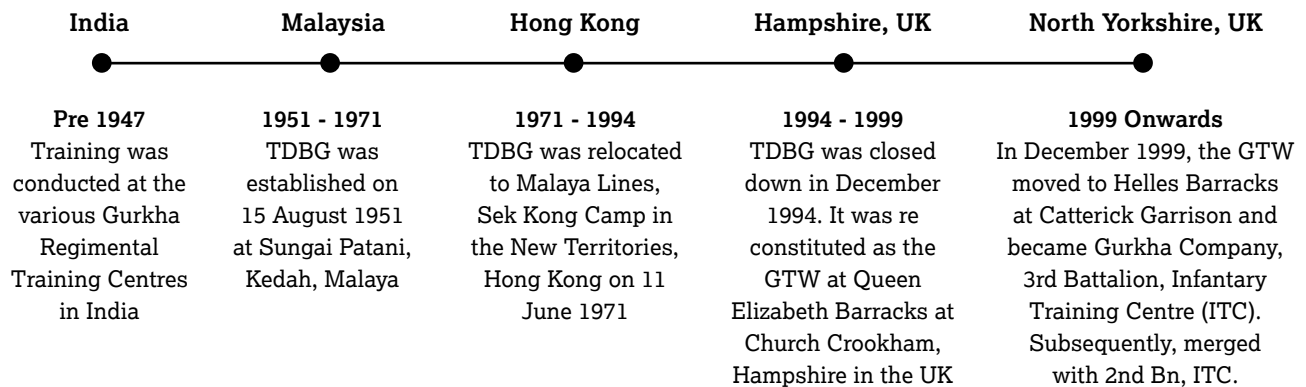
History

The British Army has recruited Gurkha Soldiers from Nepal since the 19th century. However, no effort was made to develop a centralised recruit-training system in the Brigade of Gurkhas pre-Second World War. As a result, they conducted recruit training at the various Gurkha regimental training centres in Nepal.

The need for such centralised training establishments became apparent in the late 1940s following India’s national independence. Subsequently, the Training Depot Brigade of Gurkhas (TDBG) was established at Sungai Petani, Kedah, Malaya. With Malaya’s independence, the TDBG was moved to Hong Kong. Because of Hong Kong’s handover from the UK to China, the TDBG was reconstituted as the Gurkha Training Wing (GTW) at Queen Elizabeth Barracks at Church Crookham, Hampshire in the UK. In December 1999, the GTW moved to Helles Barracks at Catterick Garrison and became Gurkha Company, Catterick (GCC), 3rd Battalion, Infantry Training Centre (ITC).

Gurkha Company is currently part of the 2nd Infantry Training Battalion along with the Guards, PARA, P Coy and ANZIO training companies in Helles Barracks - a place where some of the finest soldiers from all units of the Brigade of Gurkhas work together to coach and mentor the Gurkha Recruits through their 39 weeks Combat Infantry Course to achieve the mission of the Coy. The Coy’s role is to ‘mould a Nepalese youth into a Gurkha Soldier, trained to the standards of the British Army who retains his Nepalese identity and will live up to the tradition of the Brigade’. The instructors, therefore, must be professional, competent, and experienced role models who exhibit the Gurkha’s ethos and Kaida. The year 2020 saw the biggest intake of recruits since 1985; organised in to three wings (A, B, and C), the Coy maintained 104 Permanent Staff of all ranks and 432 recruits.

Through the Years



Battle Honour	Date	Platoon
SOBRAON	10 February	1
KANDAHAR	01 September	2
TOBRUK	21 May	3
IRAQ	21 March	4
HELLES	25 April	5
ASSAYE	23 September	6
KABUL	23 December	7
ARAKAN	11 May	8
MEIKTILA	03 March	9

Staff List

Major	Rajeshkumar Gurung	1 RGR	OC
Captain	Kiran Pun MVO	1 RGR	2IC
Captain	Kailash Khebang Limbu	2 RGR	A Wing Comd
Captain	Ashok Gurung	GGE	B Wing Comd
Captain	Belbahadur Gurung	1 RGR	C Wing Comd
Warrant Officer Class 2	Sajan Limbu	2 RGR	CSM
Warrant Officer Class 2	Suresh Sherma	QGE	Trg WO
Colour Sergeant	Biken Rana Magar	1 RGR	CQMS
Staff Sergeant	Bhisma Jabegu	GSPS	Chief Clerk
Captain	Santoshkumar Rai	2 RGR	1 Pl Comd
Captain	Santosh Rai	2 RGR	2 Pl Comd
Captain	Ramkumar Rai	QGE	3 Pl Comd
Captain	Sekendra Gurung	QG SIGNALS	4 Pl Comd
Captain	Bikash Gurung	1 RGR	5 Pl Comd
Warrant Officer Class 2	Bishnu Thapa	1 RGR	6 Pl Comd
Captain	Basanta Rai	2 RGR	7 Pl Comd
Warrant Officer Class 2	Rajkumar Gurung	QOGLR	8 Pl Comd
Captain	Narbir Galami	1 RGR	9 Pl Comd

Recruit Intake 2020 - Statistics

Total Enlisted	432
Total Pass	431 (1 x Rtn'd to Nepal)

Fitness Assessment (Individual Assessment)

Percentage of trainees who completed Role Fitness Test Entry (RFT E):	100%
Percentage of trainees who completed Role Fitness Test Basic Training (RFT BT):	100%
Percentage of trainees who completed Role Fitness Test Soldier (RFT S):	100%
Percentage of trainees to attempt and pass the ACMT:	100%
(27.15% Recruit Intake 2020 achieved Marksman)	

Language Assessment

Functional Skills (FS) Level 1 (L1) passed	67.9%
FS Entry Level 3 passed	100%

100% of recruits passed the Trade Selection Test. Average TST score is 37.16 out of 55.

Recruit Intake 2020 Presentation

Fittest Trainee Rifleman

30338311 Trainee Rifleman Dipak Kiran Rai - 6 (Assaye) Platoon, 1 Section

Trainee Rifleman with the most improved English

30337536 Trainee Rifleman Roshan Chhantyal - 5 (Helles) Platoon

Champion Shot

30338251 Trainee Rifleman Bishal Gurung - 3 (Tobruk) Platoon

Overall Champion Trainee Rifleman

30333859 Trainee Rifleman Mousam Tamang - 8 (Arakan) Platoon

Champion Section

9 (Meiktila) Platoon, 4 Section led by Corporal Ashok Thapa 1 RGR

Champion Platoon

8 (Arakan) Platoon, led by Warrant Officer II Rajkumar Gurung QOGLR

Year Round Up

COVID and its implications on Gurkha Company

This year has been a little challenging, but we have realised how equally extraordinary it has been. 2020 has provided the Coy with many opportunities for learning and growth. We have all had to be more resilient than ever before. We have had to show compassion and care for those around us and most of all, we have had to be seriously innovative, to continue to thrive.

The Coy's reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdown that resulted has been impressive. Whilst the whole of ITC was locked down, the Coy celebrated excellent teaching, learning, and training - despite the social lockdown measures profoundly changing the way training took place and presenting unusual challenges, the way colleagues have adapted their practice has been inspirational. Whilst the rest of the Army paused training, Gurkha Trainees were unable to go home due to the lack of international flights, GCC proved the way and showed to the rest of the Army how to train in COVID environment. Creating a small bubble, maintaining social distance and blending into virtual training, GCC successfully completed the training. Thanks to OC Saheb who independently led and managed the training of RI20 CIC continuation during the COVID pandemic. Despite facing resistance - he created a thorough and credible plan outlining the potential concerns and gaps between extant and future functions. He transformed this by delivering strategic and tactical direction, which was ideal and implemented throughout the ITC and ARITC.

Also, inspiration has been drawn from how the instructors at all levels and the RI20 Bhai Haru have swung into action to help combat some of the problems the pandemic has presented. *Values and Kaida* - We are united by a common culture of discipline, flexibility,



Swearing of allegiance - Witnessed by General Sir Mark Carleton-Smith KCB CBE ADC Gen and Maj Mukti Prasad Gurung MVO, GM BGN

and cooperation that makes us unbeatable in the face of events like this, setting an extraordinary example of commitment, professionalism, and solidarity. The extraordinary commitment, including support to many charities and a helping hand to the local authorities, made by all our Training Teams means that we have continued to succeed and flourish as a learning community. We must sustain the present efforts to be able, as fast as possible, to return to the path of prosperity and development that we have temporarily had to leave in the background.

Recruit Intake 2020 Pre-ITC Induction Training and Attestation Parade

Pre-ITC Induction Training provides the framework to build up to the CIC, which will serve recruits as a good foundation for training at ITC. It also delivers a vital platform for the transition of Potential Recruits into



RI20 Marching with pride being witnessed by their family members



General Sir Mark Carleton-Smith KCB CBE ADC Gen inspecting the Trainees, escorted by Maj Sandy Nightingale OC BGP

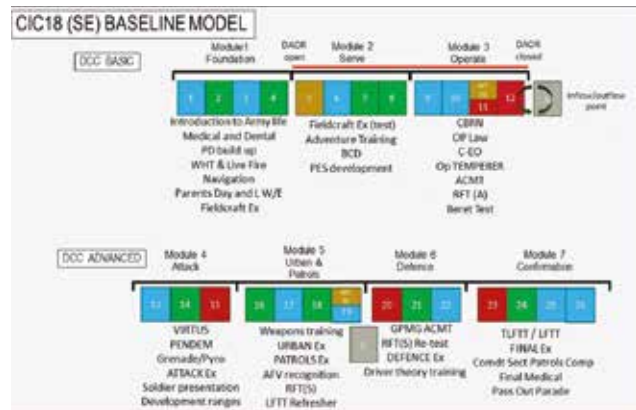
Trainee Rifleman and UK life. It lays the foundation for the moulding process of Nepalese youth into Gurkha Soldiers. A formal handover of the recruits from OC BGP marks a distinct shift from Central Selection into the pre-ITC Induction Training of OC GCC on the last days of selection. Aply led by Capt Dirgha KC, the team deployed in mid-January 2020 and delivered the highest standards throughout, inspiring the recruits on all fronts. The training package comprises lessons on drills, Brigade ethos, Values and Standards and its unique traditions and culture.

The culmination of the Pre-ITC induction training was the RI20 Attestation Parade, Tuesday 18th February 2020. The Brigade of Gurkhas saw 432 recruits being attested in British Gurkhas Pokhara. The occasion marked the successful completion of a long gruelling selection process to select the best 432 out of 12,000 applicants. It was a grand event as 432 new men vowed to the Queen to serve a nation thousands of miles away and carry a rich history of bravery and sacrifices. For the men marching on the parade, it was the best day of their lives.

The parade at which General Sir Mark Carleton-Smith KCB CBE ADC Gen was the inspecting officer marks the culmination of a year's recruiting and induction training. Amongst the principal guests were Province Ministers and high-ranking Nepal Army and Police Officers. Joining them in the audience were serving members from Headquarters British Gurkhas Kathmandu and Pokhara and the immediate families of the recruits.

The Combat Infantry Course (CIC) - At a Glance

The CIC is the current framework upon which all current regular infantry training is based, and it will equip the Recruits with the Infantry Special to Arms skills needed to operate in a Rifle Platoon. The CIC builds up skills and fitness at a gradual pace. This involves learning individual skills first, followed by section and then platoon skills, ending with an assessment in all subjects of which you must be able to pass. The training comprises a Dismounted Close Combat (Basic) module equating to Basic Training and a Dismounted Close Combat (Advanced) module that allows an increased focus on infantry Initial Trade Training.



The CIC - Gurkha lasts for 37 weeks; it runs from February to November. It addresses a range of areas; Brigade ethos, language training, cultural training, career management and trade selection, in addition to the same 26-week Combat Infantry's Course that the Line Infantry receive. The RGR Trainees are offered 3-weeks driver training at the end of course.

The Gurkha Recruits go through an 8-week English education package (split to fit within the training programme). RI 20 achieved a 100% pass on the Entry Level 3 whilst 67.9% attained the English Functional Skills Level 1; further accreditation will continue as the recruit passes into the Field Army. Although cultural education forms a vital part of their education, the training this year missed the visits because of the COVID.

Lifestyle, Training and Assessment

The first twelve weeks of the DCC Basic phase is a busy time for trainees and staff. These formative weeks comprise rigorous room inspections, Drill, Physical Development Training, many Skill at Arms lessons (including Shooting up to ACMT) and Introductory Exercises (1-3).

Introduction Exercises form the foundation of the trainees' soldiering skills. The training starts with personal administration, weapon skills, individual fire, and movement before progressing into a Fire Team attack. Introduction Exercise 3 forms a critical output assessment, as it tests their camouflage and concealment skills, ability to give a fire control order and judging distance.



Learning Fieldcraft during Intro Exercise 3

The pinnacle of this DCC phase is Passing Off the Square (POS). On 28th May 2020, Recruit Intake 20 concluded POS and wrapped up their 13 weeks of strenuous CIC. The event concluded with a series of inspections and foot drills. As per Gurkha Kaida, trainees received a Khukuri from OC Gurkha Coy. Each platoon is assigned with a Platoon Duty Trainee (PDT) and a respective Section Duty Trainees (SDT) responsibility. Certain restrictions are then lifted; for example, the Platoon can march under the PDT or SDT. They can go out and visit the local shops and amenities.



Platoon Drill during the RI20 POS

DCC Advanced Phase

The DCC Advanced Phase follows quickly and comprises lessons on fundamental tactics of offensive and defensive elements. Because of the availability of resources, different Wings performed the exercises on varying dates.

Attack Ex, as the topic suggests, focuses on Offensive Operations. The teaching includes the mechanisms of the attack and the roles of the different Sections within it. The culmination is a Platoon attack which is the first one executed as the Platoon.



WO2 Bishnu Thapa (Pl Comd 6 Pl) delivering Orders during Patrol Exercise

Pass Off the Square - Trainee's Reflection

No 5 (Helles) Platoon became the best Platoon during the POS 2020 whilst T/Rfn Ashal Tulachan was declared the Best Trainee. The result is the culmination of average individual dress, turnout, inspection, and Foot drill scores. T/Rfn Ashal Tulachan was the overall POS Champion. He said, "This is the moment to be proud, a day to remember with memories to cherish. We feel like our hard work has paid off. We set the standard, we embraced the winning mentality and desire to push to the limit."



Platoon Drill during the RI20 POS

Patrol Ex is a five-day exercise, and it develops on the knowledge and skills from the previous teachings. It required the trainees to put their classroom learning into practice. Upon deployment, they conduct several Section level recces and standing patrols and culminate their training by conducting the Pl level ambush. As this exercise involves a lot of patrolling on foot, it demands both physical and mental strength.



Sgt Sunil Gurung (1Pl Sgt) delivering Ambush lesson during Patrol Exercise

It is almost inevitable that future operations will include the need to operate within the urban environment. Knowing how to fight in the urban context will be essential in any future conflict. BUCS and LLUST, a three-day package focuses on teaching the recruits about operating in an Urban Environment. The use of simunition provides realistic training. Recruits are taught how to break into buildings (including windows) and clear through rooms.

Defence Ex was conducted in the Otterburn training area; this is the first exercise away from Catterick.



Learning Urban Skills during BUCS & LLUST



Lt Col Ed Oldfield CO 1 RGR, handing over RGR Beret in a COVID safe manner



Defence Exercise - Digging 4-man trench in Otterburn Trg Area

It encompasses CBRN serials. The scenarios incorporate all the teaching from previous exercises where trainees will have the opportunity to recap their learning. The extraction to a Coy RV in full CBRN kit remains particularly memorable for the trainees.

RI20 Unit Cap badging Ceremony

The Cap Badging Ceremony is a unique occasion that holds a special place in the Company and the Brigade calendar. Unlike previous years, the COVID guidelines meant the attendance was capped to a very minimum; only the Commanding Officers and Gurkha Majors attended the ceremony.

This year, the event was held on 01 Sep 2020. 100% of the trainees received one of their three choices - a staggering 91% receiving their first choice. The trainees were given their respective Unit's Beret and Cap Badge by their Unit Representatives.

Live Firing Tactical Training (LFTT)

The RI20 LFTT was a week-long extensive and mandatory training period, taking the trainees from individual close quarter battle to a live platoon attack. The trainees had the opportunity to demonstrate their skills and learned procedures in a realistic tactical setting. It was great to see their enthusiasm and overall situational awareness. The training was progressive from individual training through to platoon level. It involved setting up fire support positions, assaulting enemy positions, throwing live grenades, and fighting with bayonets fixed.

Gurkha Coy added Wet-Gap Crossing (WGC) to the training program during LFTT this year. For the first time, the Coy delivered the package as a trial for CIC 21, a potential new element of CIC. Our own QGE SNCO, Sgt Bikram Gurung led the WGC and delivered it superbly. The WGC will be added as a part of training in the future.

RI 19 Final Exercise

The Final Exercise, commonly known as Ex SAMJHANA BIRSANA forms the final test of the tactical drills, skills and discipline learnt during the nine months of CIC. It was one of the most awaited exercises in the Otterburn Training Area for 02-06 Nov 20.

Deployment of the whole Coy during the pandemic was a challenge. However, all 431 T/Rfn along with 100 Permanent Staff deployed to Otterburn. The final exercise was perfectly organised and delivered at its best. Besides being thrashed by the tempo, the trainees were exposed to battlegroup level operations and processes. They were tested on their tactical drills, skills and field discipline and yet again reminding them of the critical importance of personal field admin. Section level recce and standing patrols, platoon ambushes, FIWAF, vehicle searches and route clearances were all conducted to confirm the trainees' understanding. Thanks to the piper Sgt Samir (QG SIGNALS), the tune before the final insertion added significantly to the atmosphere. Complex terrain and the night move proved challenging and at dawn, the assault began. As the Platoons began echeloning through one another; all the enemy posts were captured effortlessly.



Happy Trainees with their Sect Comd post FTX ENDEX

Throughout the course, the Recruits have received regular assessments and advice on their progress from their Platoon and Section Commanders. The ultimate aim has been to help them pass the CIC successfully at the first attempt and to maximise their potential as Infantrymen. Where needed, they have received additional training to help them master those aspects of the CIC that they may have had difficulty with. On completion of training, a written report on their performance is produced that will remain in their P File; this will assist their new commanders in recognising individuals' strengths and weaknesses so that any continuation training requirements can be addressed appropriately.

interest in small arms shooting for the new trainees and promote the 'competition', which leads to overall operational effectiveness.

This year there were a total of 36 Sections comprising 431 recruit firers. The competition had two phases - a 2K run with 25 KGs within 15 minutes and the Shooting Match 44 Advance to Contact Assessment. 4 Platoon 4 Section led by Cpl Bishwas Rai scored 584 points and managed to come first overall whilst T/Rfn Bishal Gurung from 3 Platoon was the overall Champion Shot.

RI Army Operational Shooting Competition

Gurkha Company Recruit Intake 2020 Army Operational Shooting Competition was held on 11 Nov 20 at Wathgill Ranges. The competition aimed to promote



Cpl Bishwas receiving Shooting Competition 2020 Champion Section Trophy from Col Andy Hadfield, Commandant SCHINF



RI20 Champion Shot – 30333859 T/Rfn Bishal Gurung, 3 Platoon

RI20 Pass Off Parade

This year saw the highest intake of Gurkha Recruits (431) to the Catterick Garrison-based ITC, which moulds prospective soldiers into future frontline infantry. The parade marked the end of the recruits' nine-month training programme. They will now each join their chosen regiment in the Brigade of Gurkhas.



Inspecting RI20 during Passing Out Parade by the Rt Honourable Ben Wallace Secretary of State for Defence of the UK, escorted by Lt Col Gary Robertson MBE CO 2ITB and Maj Rajeshkumar Gurung OC GCC



The Council of Gurkha Colonels, Lt Gen Richard Wardlaw OBE MSc BEng MinstRE and Col BG Jody Davies MBE inspecting RI20 during POP

The Secretary of State for Defence, Rt Hon. Ben Wallace, attended as the reviewing officer of the Pass Off Parade, giving his support to the Recruits of Gurkha Company upon their appointment as fully-fledged soldiers of the British Army. Amongst the principal guests were the Colonel Commandant Brigade of Gurkhas (BG) Lieutenant General Richard Wardlaw OBE MSc BEng MinstRE Chief of Defence Logistics and Support and the Deputy Colonel Commandant BG Brig Mark Lancaster TD, Col A Hadfield Comd SHINF and Col Davies MBE Col Brigade of Gurkhas. The parade was accompanied by music from the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas but sadly not families and friends this year.

Gurkha Coy Other Activities

2020 has forced us all to do things a little differently. The biggest challenge has been and still is, to make sure that we retain our culture and a sense of community. Yet, Gurkha Coy, having taken steps with many initiatives, celebrated various religious and social events

such as the Nepalese New Year, Gurkha Coy Birthday, Dashain and Tihar. These events seek to encompass and educate the trainees with the Ethos and Kaida that exists in the Brigade, contributing towards the moral component of our fighting power.

Gurkha Coy celebrated its 69th birthday in a slightly different way due to COVID this year. The Team led by Cpl Gokul ran 69 Kms to mark the birthday whilst raising an astonishing £4700 for the Gurkha Welfare Trust. Many other charity events occurred to support St Teresa's Hospice in Darlington, the Poppy Appeal, Movember and a Charity Football match organised and delivered by our outstanding Guruji haru. Additionally, the Coy had an opportunity to provide a special welcome and honour guard to Maj Chris Brannigan during his Hope for Hasti barefoot walk. All aided significantly to build relationships within the community and contribute to supporting others in the community.

Similarly, the Punditji and Lama Guru have been instrumental in performing religious rites, conducting worship services, providing confidential counselling, and advising commanders on religious, spiritual, and moral matters.

As we look back on a challenging 2020 and plan for continued challenges in the year 2021, we are confident of the resilience of the Coy we have built. We remain steadfast in our commitment to generating long-term value and positive outcomes for all our stakeholders (the Brigade of Gurkhas, 2ITB and ITC) and are thankful for your trust.



Help for Hasti – Maj Chris Brannigan transiting through GCC during his 700-mile barefoot journey



Punditji and Pujari Group during Dashain Maar Ceremony



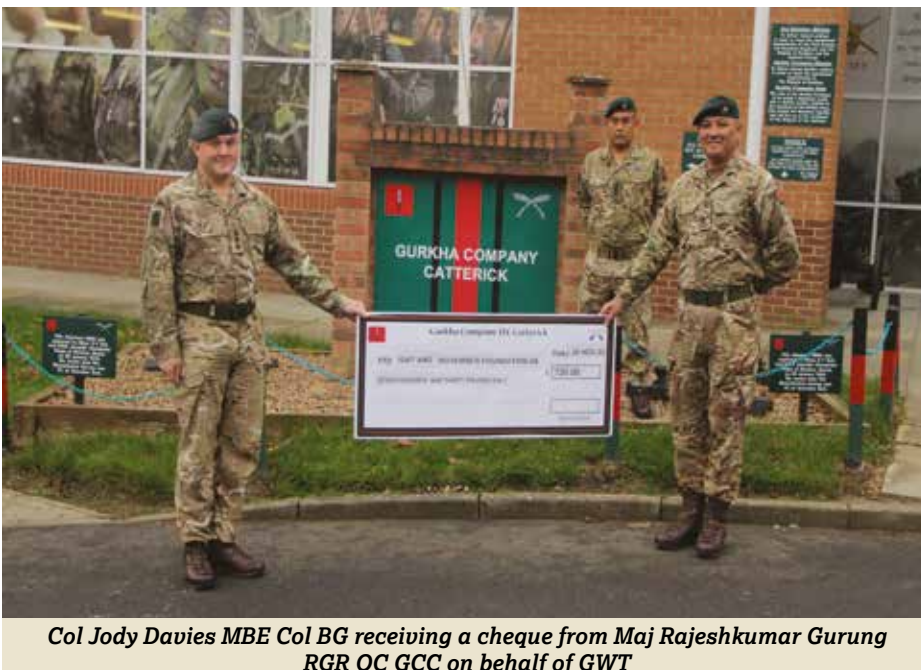
Marking the start of 69 Km Run to celebrate GCC 69th Birthday



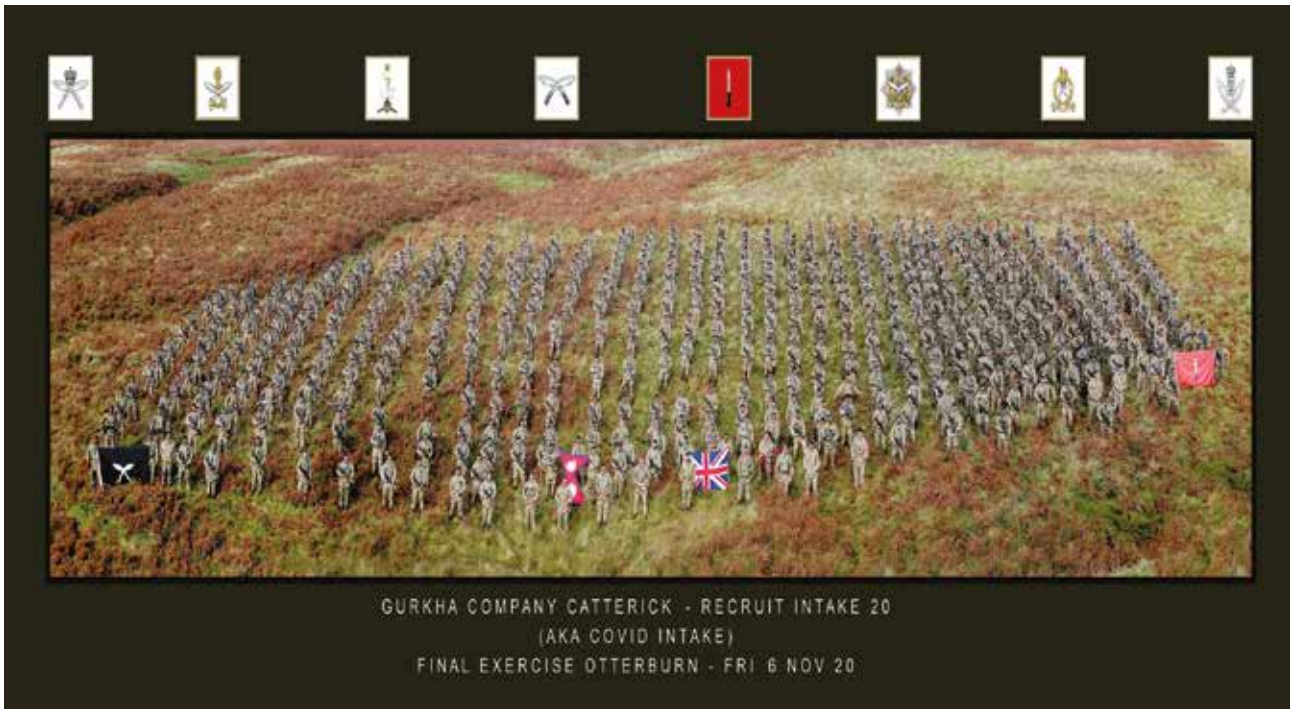
Cpl Balbahadur Gurung presenting a Charity Cheque to Help For Heroes



Maintaining the KAIDA - RI20 Champion Shot T/Rfn Bikash Gurung being carried by all the Officers of GCC



Col Jody Davies MBE Col BG receiving a cheque from Maj Rajeshkumar Gurung RGR OC GCC on behalf of GWT



Farewell to RI20

Babaji Company (Catterick)

Staff List

Major Gyanbahdur Dhenga	1 RGR	OC
Sgt Sanjib Sherchan	1 RGR	Pl Comd/TSC CQMS

History

On the 19 September 2018, a parade was held at Infantry Training Centre, Catterick Garrison to exult the official renaming of Support Battalion, Headquarter Company as Training Support (Babaji) Company and unveil the Company Flag.

The parade was led by Officer Commanding, Major Gyanbahadur Dhenga and the reviewing officer was COS ARITC and Col GSPS, Col A D Griffiths OBE who was escorted by Commanding Officer Support Battalion, Lt Col W Colquhoun.

The Company has been honoured with the battle honour of “**Babaji**”. As a part of “**Op PANTHERS CLAW**”, the battle of Babaji took place in the North-West part of the provincial capital Lashkar Gah in Helmand province, Afghanistan. More than 3,000 British troops took part in the operation over the period 19 June - 20 August 2009. Despite the multiple attacks from Taliban fighters, the British forces secured three key crossing points and established several checkpoints to restrict Taliban movement. More than 200 insurgents and 10 British soldiers were killed during the operation which was later dubbed the “Battle of Babaji”.



Col A D Griffiths OBE, Chief Of Staff Army Recruiting Initial Training Command (COS ARITC) handing over the BABAJI Company flag to Maj Gyanbahadur Dhenga RGR, OC BABAJI Company during formation parade



Lt Col W Colquhoun escorting Reviewing Officer, Col A D Griffiths OBE COS ARITC during BABAJI Coy formation parade



Maj Gyanbahadur Dhenga RGR OC BABAJI Coy and permanent staff of BABAJI Coy in action during RUN 6690 KM TO BABAJI to celebrate 2nd BABAJI Coy birthday

The Team

Training Support (Babaji) Company comprises a wide spectrum of the supporting elements essential to the delivery of the Combat Infantry Course (CIC). The multi-cap badge Company includes Royal Logistics Corps (RLC) soldiers, civilian drivers, infantry soldiers from the RGR and the Security Platoon with Regimental Provost Staff and Military Provost Guard Service (MPGS) from across the Catterick Garrison. The primary role of the Coy is to support CIC outputs in a professional manner, manage Op Sy in the ITC Catterick.

Activities

Despite the pandemic, with the direction of OC Babaji Coy Maj Gyanbahadur Dhenga, Cpl Mahendra Rai (1 RGR) organised **RUN 6690 KM TO BABAJI** in ten days challenge to celebrate the second Babaji Coy Birthday.

The aim of the event was to raise funds for the NHS and keep mental stress away. The event was remarkably successful and raised more than £2100 which was donated to the NHS (The Friarage Hospital, Northallerton). Members of the Coy were also involved with **Ex TARTAN BAYONET** completing 174 miles in 9 days along the West Highland Way and Great Glen Way with a 20 kg backpack. The team successfully raised more than £1000 for the ABF The Soldier's Charity and the Gurkha Welfare Trust.



Members of BABAJI Coy arriving at the finish line of RUN 6690 KM TO BABAJI



“EX TARTAN BAYONET” - A long walk covering over 175 miles in 9 Days



Lt Col W A Colquhoun, Commanding Officer ITC Support Bn and his wife (Mrs Franscesca) during the Gurkha Welfare Office and Kulbir Thapa Residential Home Visit in Pokhara



BABAJI Coy Team photo during the Brigade Golf Annual Championship on Wed 02 Sep 20



Along with their primary roles, Babaji Coy is equally involved with other commitments for the betterment of the wider British Army and engaging with the public. The Company has a bright future ahead.

Training Support (BABAJI) Company remains focused on providing operational outputs to the Infantry Training Centre (ITC) Catterick while maintaining the COVID-19 protocols and Govt guidance. Beyond this, the Coy successfully organised a training visit for Lt Col W A Colquhoun SCOTS (CO Sp Bn) to Nepal. The BABAJI Coy members have also participated in Ex TARTAN BAYONET in Scotland, covering 175 miles in arduous weather conditions whilst carrying full Combat Fighting Gear to raise money for the Gurkha Welfare Trust (GWT) and ABF, The Soldiers’ Charity. The virtual “Run to BABAJI” challenge was also organised and covered 6,690KM collectively in 10 days and succeeded in raising £2100 for the NHS Trust.

Jay Babaji Company!!



Rfn Pradip Gurung (2RGR) receiving SCHINF Commandant Coin of Excellence from Colonel Andy Hadfield



“Run to BABAJI” challenge to mark the Company Birthday (2nd Birthday) on 19 September 2020

GURKHA WING (MANDALAY) INFANTRY BATTLE SCHOOL BRECON



GW(M) Staff list

Major	Prembahadur Gurung MBE	RGR	OC TSD
Captain	Buddhibahadur Gurung	RGR	2IC TSD
Captain	Madankumar Jimi	RGR	Sp Pl Comd
Warrant Officer Class 2	Rajesh Pun	RGR	DSM TSD
Warrant Officer Class 2	Lalbahadur Rana	QGE	QMSI Aslt Pnr
Colour Sergeant	Dipesh Rai	RGR	CQMS TSD
Sergeant	Bibi Limbu	RGR	Pl Sgt Sp Pl
Sergeant	Sangharsha Rai	QGE	Det Comd Aslt Pnr
Sergeant	Tikaraj Limbu	RGR	Det Comd Aslt Pnr
Sergeant	Gaurab Gurung	QGE	Det Comd Aslt Pnr
Sergeant	Hombahadur Wonem	GSPS	SSA/GWM Chf Clk

IBS Staff list

Captain	Toby Eddings	RGR	CAPT Instructor
Colour Sergeant	Manbahadur Gurung	RGR	SD Instructor
Colour Sergeant	Pralon Kulung Rai	RGR	JD Instructor
Colour Sergeant	Prithilal Ghale	RGR	CQMS IWD

NCOs and below

Corporal	21 Service personnel
Lance Corporal	18 Service Personnel
Rifleman/Private	31 Service Personnel
Total Strength	85 Service Personnel

Newsletter

One way or another COVID-19 has affected all of us. Like everyone the Infantry Battle School (IBS) and Gurkha Wing Mandalay (GWM) were not immune to this novel virus. The journey thus far has been incredibly difficult; to adjust life to the new normal and to support IBS continuously throughout the pandemic has tested the nerves of many. The environment in which we operate has continued to change adding unexpected challenges each day. We stayed together as a family and adapted the challenges thrown at us with great determination to succeed.

GWM has continued to exude its utility and effectiveness by delivering timely and effective capability support to the Battle School in a COVID-19 environment. Against all odds, GWM has managed to conduct many different events such as Mortar ACMT, Wet Gap Crossing, Remote Platoon Vehicle (RPV) trial, RGR birthday celebration, hosting a visit from His Excellency the ambassador of Nepal and few charity events. More importantly, GWM did not let the pandemic get in the way of our biggest festivals - Dashain and Tihar. The highlights of the few events held by GWM through the year have been summarised in the paragraphs below.

There has been a huge change in the working environment ever since the start of the COVID-19 Pandemic and has carried on to the year 2021 and perhaps will continue down the years. Therefore, it is important that we remain versatile and adapt to new changes as the world does not revolve around us.

Remote Platoon Vehicle, Multi Utility Tactical Transort (MUTT) Trail

With the introduction of Fight Light/Right initiative the IBS is currently using a quad bike in Platoon level exercise. The quad bike has been a great servant for the British Army, but it is fair to say that it has seen its good days. Different types of RPV are in the final phase of trialling. The MUTT is one of those vehicles. The future of the Infantry Pl looks truly promising.

The MUTT is a fully electrical unmanned all-terrain vehicle, designed to be a rugged and reliable providing increased battlefield capabilities, such as lightening the load for ground troops by acting as a controller-less robotic follower. It also provides stand-off from threats or increased projection of combat power. Furthermore,



MUTT transporting equipment in a rough terrain

it can be used to transport casualties in the battlefield. Thus, a very useful asset suitable for all kinds of operational environment.

Few individuals from GWM, had the opportunity to gain experience in operating the MUTT during the trial phase. With this in place, the future courses look much more appealing for IBS. With the help of the MUTT, the capabilities of a supporting team would also be stretched to its maximum potential. That said, the MUTT is not a finished article some teething problems were identified but the trail team were hopeful that they would be able to upgrade to meet the demand of Infantry Pl.

First ever wet gap crossing at SENTA by the Infantry Battle School

The Wet Gap Crossing is more of a water obstacle crossing. The Army has identified the needs of maintaining this capability within its structure. The introduction of WGC to the IBS courses was discussed three years ago. After a comprehensive review of doctrine and months of preparation the IBS had trailed its first WGC for the Section Commander Battle Course (SCBC) in Nov 20 at Llyn (lake) in Senny Bridge Training Area (SENTA).

It came to realisation that none of the course students had done it before. In the freezing cold winter of Nov on SENTA noticeable nervousness were seen cropping up in the faces of students as they approached the home bank cautiously with their 4 man bergen raft led by an instructor. The water level was significantly increased from the recent rain. Soon after receiving the signal from the Water Safety Officer (WSO) they launched the raft and began their crossing one team at a time. After 10 min in the freezing water the first team safely completed the crossing and landed on the far bank. A sense of relief was projected in their exhausted yet smiling face as they completed the crossing. The event was successfully completed with no issues and was described as a successful day for IBS.



SCBC students swimming across the river



SCBC students finally reaching the far bank

The benefits that the training brought, was widely acknowledged by both instructors and students, and the school has begun adding the WGC in SCBC training module. Other divisions (PSBC and PCD) are also discussing it's inclusion on their courses. This means more WGC in IBS in the future. It certainly highlights the strength and utility of the Assault Pioneer Pl. It is sure that their diverse capability would be used more regularly than its conventional and primary role of providing Battle Noise Simulation to IBS Divisions.

EX GURKHA STRIKE 2

The Support Platoon, Training Support Division from Infantry Battle School (IBS) deployed on Ex GURKHA STRIKE 2, the PARAs joined the Gurkhas for the special MFC training in Jungle and Urban warfare. These skills were pioneered during Vietnam and the Malayan emergency.

The skills and ability to adjust indirect fire by Sound and Survey is called the Aural Adjustment. It is particularly useful in the jungle and urban environments to engage obscured targets.

The exercise was held between 28 - 30 Mar 21 at SENTA. It was led by the Subject Matter Expertise Capt Jimi.

On Day-1, the aural adjustment theory and Black-Board Fire Control (BBFC) lesson were delivered to aural MFCs/observers in camp. Day 2 began in slow motion on A range, SENTA as it was the first time for all. The Mission 1 "Mark Mission", followed by Mission 2 "Pressel Method" was where the real experience and

training of the aural adjustment began. The exercise area was set up very carefully to bring the real feel of the aural adjustment, siting the OP in the dead ground or re-entrant and positioning the MFCs in a subsurface OP was a clever way to achieve all Training Objectives (TO) of the exercise. The final day was focused on supporting PSBC 2101 by providing indirect fire support to Ex GREEN DRAGON followed by practice of the remaining Mission 3 “Triangulation or Hot Contact”. The exercise ended with adjusting targets at night using night optics in TI mode.

The PARA team were grateful to IBS for creating this opportunity to practise such a rare but substantial MFC skills. Capt Jimi also highlighted that it is important to transfer these skills to the next generation and they should be put into practice more often.

Experience on a Team Bonding Activity

By LCpl Susan Innam



Gurkha and Para MFC training

The prolonged COVID pandemic had without a doubt caused stress and depression amongst many individuals. I was in desperate need for a “ray of light” into my dull life and thankfully, as soon as the COVID restrictions were uplifted for a short period, Assault Pioneer Platoon grasped the opportunity to organise a Mountain Biking team bonding activity at Bike Park Wales.

On 27th Aug 20, a team of 11 headed off towards our destination filled with excitement and even the “typical UK bad weather” felt like a less concerning issue compared to what I had endured during the lockdown. As soon as the initial safety brief was done, without wasting much time we headed towards the uplift trail and straight down the course routes. A fresh breath of freedom rushed through my emotions as I went down the tracks. I could immediately tell how much I had missed the adrenaline rush and the feeling of being alive. It was then that I truly understood the importance of an adventure in one’s life.

Furthermore, the activity creates an environment to foster creativity and innovation in the workplace. Thus, building better team cohesion.



Cycling in Bike Park Wales



A welcome break from a day’s cycling

With just a small change in my daily lifestyle, it was enough to refresh my mindset and emotions which enabled me to resume my routine work in a much healthier mentality. Therefore, I am grateful towards the platoon for organising the event and would encourage others to take part in such activities.

His Excellency The Ambassador of Nepal visiting Infantry Battle School

On the 5th Sep 20, IBS had the honour to host the Ambassador of Nepal, Dr Durga Bahadur Subedi. On his arrival, he was escorted straight to the temple for “puja” before commencing his official welcome event in Iraq Hall where the rest of the soldiers and their family members were eagerly waiting. Due to the COVID-19 safety restrictions, only a few selected individuals from each department were invited to attend the event as we had to adhere to the COVID-19 safety rules.

Once the official welcoming part was completed, the soldiers and family members had the opportunity to chat with the ambassador in Mandalay Hall along with refreshments provided by our own Gurkha Chefs. There was some interesting information exchanged between the soldiers and some members from the Embassy, for instance how the embassy would operate and the importance of having an Embassy in the UK.



His Excellency the Ambassador of Nepal visiting IBS

After listening to an historical speech from the Ambassador, it embedded a sense of responsibility in every Gurkha soldier of the important role we play in representing our country Nepal. The visit came to an end with a delicious Gurkha curry meal.

An Experience that had never been experienced before

During the COVID-19 lockdown period, Training Support Division came up with an initiative to organise an essay writing competition for all the soldiers and their family members to keep everyone engaged. There were many exceptionally well written essays, but the one that caught the most attention was from Mrs Susmita Gurung, wife of Sgt Gaurab Gurung.

“A young mother coping to keep it together”

The lockdown due to COVID-19 was the longest lockdown in human history. As every coin has two sides, same goes with lockdown. The most pronounced impact of lockdown is that it has resulted in clearer skies, clean water, clean air and cleaner roads. It has taught us the importance of cleanliness by washing hands several times a day, covering mouth while coughing, properly washing fruits and vegetables, keeping house and furniture clean and more. Whereas one of the adverse impacts of lockdown is seen on the academic of the student who are not able to attend classroom learning sessions. As all business like film industry, tourism industry, aviation industry, railway, IT companies, etc except utility business are closed, the capacity of people has substantially reduced. This has resulted in a drastic reduction in the global economy. Where it has positively impacted environment and controlled contamination to a considerable extent, it has also badly affected economies of the world. However, if lockdown has not been implemented, the condition of the world would have been severe. So, we should support the initiative of the government and stay socially distant but emotionally connected to cope with coronavirus.

During the lockdown, the things that mark our days—commuting to work, sending our kids to school, having a drink with friend had vanished and time spent at home, seamless quality. Everything changed but one thing that hasn't changed much is parenting, it still remains a fun challenge spending 24 hrs a day, 7 days a week taking care of my munchkins. As a mom of two boys, it is hard labour to keep both children entertained and happy every day during lockdown as well as keeping on top the housework and home-schooling and everything else you can imagine. Regardless I strived to become a perfect parent. I know we are all struggling to some degree. So, my advice to all parents is “doing our best is enough, don't try to be perfect. One of my friends posted on Facebook, “For those who have lost track, today is Blurs day, the fourteenth of April.” Giving shape to time is especially important now, when the future is so shapeless. As we are in the prison of fear – everything invisible to us. We fear leaving the house and spreading the disease. I fear what this time of fear is doing to my children, their imaginations and their souls. We do not know whether the virus will continue to rage for weeks or months or lord help us, on and off for years. Slowly coronavirus lockdown regulations will loosen up, but we are still not sure how safe it is to go back to living as usual. But we may stay this way if we do not create at least the illusion of movement in our lives, our long days spent with ourselves and families.

We are so thankful and grateful to all amazing individuals who has dedicated the front liners (doctors, nurses, hospital staff, technicians and all those under direct exposure to the virus) for showing up every day and risking their lives to save others. Each pandemic has left its mark. This one has given us an important lesson that the human is mere prey in front of nature's fury. The human cannot take the earth for granted and do whatever we want. Because the storm is coming, and it might change everything. But we human beings have been fighter and survivor throughout generation which is our beauty to adopt, evolve and innovate ourselves which is why we are still surviving and I am sure we will survive this if not will learn from it, adapt and survive this for generations to come.



Sgt Gaurab and his wife Susmita with their children

Late Mrs Catherine Sheldon

“On being asked for a wish on her 100th birthday she simply replied, ‘A Gurkha’”.

A group of Gurkhas serving in Gurkha Wing Mandalay had an honour to sing a birthday song led by a Gurkha piper to mark the 100th birthday of Mrs Catherine Sheldon on 15th Jul 2020, a longstanding supporter of the Gurkha Welfare Trust (GWT). It was a surprise gift to her organised by Pembrokeshire SSAFA live over ZOOM.



Mrs Catherine Sheldon

Late Mr Peter Sheldon, husband of late Mrs Catherine Sheldon, was posted out to North East India in 1941, where he remained until the end of the war, training troops - some of whom would go on to Burma. A number of the soldiers that he trained were Nepalese Gurkhas. He had the very highest regard for them and rated them as some of the very best and bravest of soldiers. After the war, on his return from India, he and Catherine became great supporter of the GWT for the rest of their lives.

She decided that for her 100th birthday she would hold an all-day coffee 'morning' with all donations to go towards the GWT but sadly the coffee morning did not go as planned due to COVID-19 restrictions. She had asked for no presents, but for donations to the GWT from her village friends, church congregation and her close family (including 15 great grandchildren and 3 great-great- grandchildren) and raised £1,000 for the GWT.

Regrettably, she passed away peacefully in her bed, in her own house on Thu 11 Feb 21. Gurkhas have lost a true friend and a family member. Her friendship, kindness and love for Gurkhas will surely be missed. Our thoughts and prayers are with her bereaved family.

Charity Event for the Gurkha Welfare Trust (GWT)

Like all charities, the GWT have been severely affected by the economic downturn and logistical implications the pandemic has brought. Donations to the trust have reduced which could have long term damage in sustaining the financial and medical support to our most vulnerable veterans and widows in Nepal.

Rfn Surya Limbu took the initiative to support the charity by taking part in the “Everest at Home” challenge introduced by GWT, scaling Mount Everest (8, 848m), the tallest mountain in the world over the course of 4 weeks. The incentive was also to encourage everyone to keep active during these testing times. Rfn Surya Limbu completed the challenge by climbing Pen Y Fan (868m) 11 times and managed to raise £689 for the GWT.

On competition, he had the privilege to present the cheque to Col BG, who is a trustee of the GWT. He was praised by the Col BG and GWM members for his effort and was also awarded with victory medal from GWT for his success.



Col BG receiving the cheque from Rfn Surya Limbu

Training Pipeline 1/21

Recently, LCpl Pradip Limbu and Pte Dipesh Deuja from IBS, deployed to support 14th Signal Regiment (Electronic Warfare) from 28th Feb - 04th March.

The training had been conducted in SENTA to ensure that all the members of the Regiment are at the minimum standard and can be fully utilised by receiving Sqns, be that on UK Ops or overseas deployment, and meet the baseline PDT standard to deploy on Op CABRIT Op NEWCOMBE/AATF, etc. The mission was to cover: WHT, ACMT, annual CBRN shoot, moving targets, the limit of night visibility shoot, firing with night vision devices, and FMT.

The main aim of the IBS team was to deliver catering support and feeding 40-60 soldiers for a week. Within the training, Pte Dipesh had an excellent opportunity to demonstrate his skills and knowledge, whilst it was his first time training in the field kitchen since his basic

training. Pte Dipesh was content that he had gained more knowledge of the trade and progressed his NVQ apprenticeship from the training. As a mentor, LCpl Pradip went above his duty of delivering the catering outcome and of mentoring Pte Dipesh for his NVQ.

The IBS catering team had successfully supported the 14th Signal Regiment (Electronic Warfare) and is more than happy to support the regiment in the future.



Pte Depesh Deuja preparing a meal during the exercise

Gurkha Wing Mandalay Photo Album 2020



Rfn Suraj Dagal Magar with a big smile after completing the Gun support task on PCBC



70km Charity run from Brecon to Cardiff on Feb 20 by some of the fittest individuals in IBS



Cpl Raju Tamang leading his gun team to support PCBC on a Platoon Raid during heavy snowfall



Wishing farewell and good wishes to CO IBS Lt Col Chandler (RGR)



TSD welcoming the new CO IBS Lt Col D J Flanagan MBE and his family to the IBS

GURKHA COMPANY (TAVOLETO) SPECIALIST WEAPONS SCHOOL (SWS) WATERLOO LINES, WARMINSTER



Staff List

Major Chandrabahadur Pun RGR
WO2 Dinesh Rai 2RGR
WO2 Kumar Gurung 1RGR
WO2 Padambahadur Gurung 1RGR
WO2 Simon Boase FTRS
Colour Sergeant Richard Gurung 2RGR
Colour Sergeant Pratap Tamang 2RGR
Colour Sergeant Cheenakumar Gurung 1RGR
Colour Sergeant Paul Farrant FTRS
Sergeant Bhim Parangden QGE
Sergeant Tikaram Gurung 2RGR
Sergeant Prakash Rai 2RGR
Sergeant Nagendra Gurung 2RGR
Sergeant Ratanraj Rai 1RGR
Sergeant Chris Roberts FTRS
Sergeant Bhim Limbu QGE

Officer Commanding
Company Sergeant Major
Signals Platoon Commander
Assault Pioneer Platoon Commander
Commander CPCMM
MT Platoon Commander
MT Platoon Commander (DES)
Company Quarter Master Sergeant
Bowman System Manager CPCMM
Resource SNCO
Signals Platoon Sergeant
Assault Pioneer Platoon Sergeant
MT Platoon Sergeant
Signals Platoon Trg Sergeant
G4 SNCO CPCMM
Assault Pioneer Platoon Sergeant

Newsletter

Gurkha Coy Tavoletto (GC(T)), Warminster has had another busy year in supporting the Specialist Weapons School (SWS) and Land Warfare Centre (LWC). Having just 50 permanent staff, the Coy is responsible for providing specialised support i.e. Assault Pioneering, Signalling, Motor Transport and Communication and Crypto support particularly to SWS and the Reconnaissance & Armoured Tactics Division (RATD). Along with supporting SWS and LWC commitment, GC(T)'s achievements are highlighted below.

Bag Packing Charity

On 7th March 2020, Specialist Weapon School (SWS), Gurkha Company Tavoletto organized a charity event by conducting a 'Bag Packing' event in Morrisons superstore, Warminster. The fundraising event was conducted in support of the ABF the Soldier's Charity, The Gurkha Welfare Trust (GWT) and the Gurkha Museum. A total of 14 members from GCT took part in this event of assisting customers with packing their bags in order to raise money.

The event was successful with the support of the members of the trust who provided the necessary resources. Ex-military, Lt Col Steve Tinlin the Liaison officer of the ABF the Soldier's Charity helped to provide buckets, banner and other items required for raising the charity.

LCpl Arun Gurung led the event with great success raising a total of £1,750. One of the aims was to improve public relation and raise the profile of the Garrison with the locals in Warminster which we believe was achieved.



Gurkha Coy Tavoletto group during the Bag Packing Charity event in Morrisons

BCIP 5.6 Training

The COVID 19 pandemic affected every aspect of day to day life within SWS. However, to achieve excellence in what we do, continual training was carried out while adhering to the government guidelines. Signal Platoon led by Sgt Tika and various instructors, carried out a BCIP 5.6 COMBAT training package for Staff Users at SWS.

The training lasted for 2 weeks, while the preparations started two weeks prior. The preparation consisted

of acquiring the TLAN, instructor's hands on familiarisation and most importantly setting up classrooms while considering the current pandemic in order to ensure training was conducted safely. Overall, the training was a great success and we managed to train 48 members of the SWS as part of SWS modularisation plan 21.



COMBAT BCIP 5.6 Training - Opening Address



COMBAT BCIP 5.6 Training in GCT, SWS

SCHINF - PJNCO Cadre Support

The School of Infantry (SCHINF) initiated a pilot course for all infantry battalion within the British Army to run an Infantry Potential Junior NCO cadre during the period of 30 Aug - 12 Sep 20. It was held on Sennybridge Training Area. SWS being a part of the School of Infantry was also tasked to support the cadre with manpower and equipment.

A total of 29 personnel, including 11 from PWRR and the Royal Welsh Regiment were deployed to support the cadre. The main aim was to provide manpower and equipment support i.e. signals kit, weapons and FIST kit. The Signal Detachment led by Cpl Mahesh Tamang was responsible for providing a signal detachment (G6) support. 4 sections of COEFOR team were formed to support the 4 platoons of the PJNCO cadre ORBAT led by Sgt Ratanraj Rai. They were all involved in conducting a series of Recce, Section/Platoon Attacks during the cadre. The Enemy role was another element of support provided by the team during the cadre.



Gurkha Coy Tavoletto getting into position on the PJNCO Exercise



Gurkha Coy Tavoletto in position on PJNCO Exercise

Tavoletto Battle Honour Day

On 17th Sep 2020, Gurkha Company (Tavoletto) celebrated the battle honour day of the Tavoletto Company in Warminster. The purpose of the celebration was to remember and pay gratitude to the fallen heroes in the battle where The 7th Gurkha Rifles were the main elements, and fought courageously in the battle of Tavoletto in Italy.

The day started with a virtual temple service via Zoom, which was attended by all the members of the company including families. The main activity for the event was the Honour Guard and wreath laying ceremony led by CO SWS and OC GCT. Without a shadow of doubt WO2 Dinesh Rai, CSM GCT co-ordinated the event excellently, following the social distancing guidelines of the government and CO SWS. The event ended with some refreshments where the CQMS and his team made a huge contribution to the day.



CO SWS and OC GCT during Battle Honour Day



Team Tavoletto ready for the Virtual Trailwalker

Virtual Trail Walker 2020

Due to the current COVID 19 pandemic, Trail Walker was conducted virtually this year. Each unit representative participated in a 100 km Virtual Trail Walker 2020.

On 25th September 20, a team led by Corporal Abinash Limbu with team members: Rfn Pramesh Gurung, Rfn Agrim Tamang and Rfn Indradev Chaudhary from Specialist Weapon School (SWS), Gurkha Coy (Tavoletto), took part in this event. The team took 11 hours to complete this challenge and the distance was split amongst the team. The aim of this run was to raise money for Oxfam and the Gurkha Welfare Trust. The team successfully raised £576.00 towards the charity.

GOC ARITC Visit to SWS

Major General CJ Bell CBE (GOC ARITC) paid an official visit to the Specialist Weapons School (SWS) and Gurkha Company (Tavoletto) in Warminster. The Primary aim of this visit was to allow the GOC ARITC to gain an understanding of the SWS direction of travel, key risks and current issues. It was a great opportunity for the GOC to meet the key personalities within the school. The Secondary aim was to present medals and commendations to SWS personnel in a manner which befits the importance of those awards. Gurkha Company got the opportunity to brief on the company outpost to the GOC ARITC. He kindly presented the medals, commendations and commissions to company personnel.



GOC ARITC Commissioning signing the Visitors Book



GOC ARITC Commissioning Capt Basanta Kumar Rai during his Visit

CO 1RGR Visit

After taking over command of 1RGR as a Commanding Officer, Lt Col EP Oldfield paid his first visit to GC(T) on 21 Oct 20. The main aim of this visit was to feel and understand the roles and responsibilities of members serving with SWS, GC(T). He had a chance to meet and share information with CO SWS, OC GC(T) and the members of 1RGR currently on ERE post at Warminster. He was accompanied by WO1 Prawin Malla, RSM, 1RGR.

During his visit he updated us with the current situation in 1RGR and mentioned his vision and priorities as CO 1RGR during his tenure.



CO 1 RGR, Lt Col EP Oldfield signing the visitor's book in GC(T)

Ex FROSTED BLADE

Ex FROSTED BLADE - 35 is an annual Infantry Skiing Competition which took place during the period of 9 Dec 19 to 9 Jan 20. The aim of this competition was to develop and test individual's determination and physical courage under stress, pressure and fatigue. It was held in Val D 'Isere, France. A total of 3 personnel from GC(T) took part in the competition. Sgt Ratanraj Rai was leading the team Tavoletto.



The Ex FROSTED BLADE Team: Sgt Ratanraj Rai, Rfn Pramesh Gurung and Suman Khatri Chhetri



Sgt Ratan and the Team during Ex Frosted Blade -35

There were 5 different categories namely Giant Slalom, Slalom, Super G, Downhill and Super-Combined. Among the 5 events, Rfn Pramesh Gurung won Gold in the Giant Slalom, Slalom and Silver in the Downhill in the novice category. The Team Captain, Capt Dominic Ward won Bronze in Giant Slalom and Gold in Super-Combined. Capt Ward was selected for the Division championship, while Sgt Ratanraj Rai was awarded the accolade of “Fearless Skier”. Rfn Pramesh Gurung not only won the Gold Medal in the overall Novice but was also awarded as “The Most Dedicated Skier”. Rfn Suman Khatri Chhetri was awarded “The Most Improved Skier”. Overall, the team had an excellent ski experience.

BLESMA - Remembrance 11K Run

With the huge respect and support for a good cause, 11 members of GC(T) successfully completed the 11k BLESMA charity run on Wednesday 11 November 2020, at 0900hrs, which took place on the local training area while abiding by government guidelines.

The British Limbless Ex-Service Men’s Association (BLESMA) is an Armed Forces charity dedicated to assist serving and ex- service men and women who have suffered life-changing limb-loss or the use of limb or sight. BLESMA supports those affected in their communities throughout the UK and worldwide.

The Team GC(T) consisted of all ranks from Officers, WOs, SNCOs, JNCOs and Rfn. The team was led by Sgt Bhim Limbu and assisted by Cpl Surya Gurung with an outstanding admin team lead by Cpl Lekhraj Maden. The team was supported by GC(T) members and all other well-wishers which enabled them to raise a fund of £1238. The event unfolded with a short opening brief by Maj Chandra Bahadur Pun (OC GC(T)) about the

events and COVID-19 restrictions that was emplaced. At the starting point of 11k, Lt Col Tom Smith (CO SWS) lowered a GC(T) flag for the opening run at 0900hrs. After the completion of the 11k run, all the members of GC(T) assembled in-front of the Company HQ at 1055hrs. Lt Col Tom Smith (CO SWS) laid a wreath in front of the Gurkha Company (Tavoletto) Headquarter and exactly at 1100hrs, the whole SWS and GCT observed a 2-minute silence in order to pay tribute to the fallen ones.

Jai Gurkha Company (Tavoletto)



Team GC(T) just before the 11K Run



OC GC(T) And WO2 Padam enjoying BLESMA Run

THE BAND OF THE BRIGADE OF GURKHAS



History

The Sirmoor Rifle Regiment, later 2nd Gurkha Rifles, was the first Gurkha regiment to form a band immediately after the Indian Mutiny in 1859. In the mid-1950s, authority was given to raise an additional 'Staff Band of The Brigade of Gurkhas', until 1970 when both bands were amalgamated as The Band of The Brigade of Gurkhas (2nd King Edward's VII's Own Gurkha Rifles). Twenty years after being formed, the Band undertook its first operational tour of duty by providing support to the Army's deployed

medical units during the Gulf War of 1991.

At the beginning of 1994, the Band was re-located on a permanent basis to the United Kingdom, and was re-structured and established as 'The Band of The Brigade of Gurkhas', where it served on short tours of duty with British Forces both in Germany, Cyprus and Nepal, and deployed as a military band to the operational theatres of Bosnia and Afghanistan.

During 2019 the Band's command structure placed the unit within the LONDIST sphere allowing closer relationships between Brigade, the Royal Corps of Army Music (RCAM) and the Army Music tasking Authority (AMTA). The Band's command structure comprises of a Director of Music (RCAM), an Assistant Director of Music (Gurkha), Gurkha Bandmaster, Band Sergeant Major and Assistant Band Sergeant Major.

All Gurkha musicians undergo basic infantry training with all other Gurkha recruits before being assessed and accepted into the band, where they receive formal musical training, including attendance at the Royal Military School of Music at Kneller Hall.

The band is undergoing an important period of growth as it aligns with all other British Army Bands by becoming larger in order to support the growing demands for musical support by Brigade and the wider Army.

Staff List

Director of Music	Captain S O'Neill RCAM
Assistant Director of Music	Captain Basudev Gurung
Senior Band Sergeant Major	WO1 Krishna Tamang
Gurkha Bandmaster	WO2 Sunil Gurung
Assistant BSM	WO2 Bhim Gurung
Administrative Officer	Miss Barbara Ramharak

Foreword

By Director of Music



**Captain Séan O'Neill OMS MA BMus
BA PG Dip DMSL MST**

The second year of my tenure with the Band has seen unique challenges both professionally and personally. The year started with a well-planned and very important multi-faceted visit to Nepal. This involved 80% of the unit and incorporated the Attestation Parade in Pokhara (CGS as inspecting Officer), in country specialist joint training (Nepal Army, Nepal Police and the Armed Forces Police), political support to the Embassy, and community engagement (combined Nepal Army/Police and Band BG event in central Kathmandu and local School visits).

A hugely successful endeavour with the added bonus of 2 weeks leave bolted to the end. It was during the leave that COVID-19 became a household term and we were recalled to the UK ungloriously.

The UK had already gone into lockdown, so it was immediate dispersal to remote training and work from home environment for all unit members. As musicians, with the essence of our business requiring performing as a group, the bottom fell out of our primary role. We need only to look at our professional colleagues from the orchestral and show scene to see the impact within our chosen trade.

However, as always, we adapted and used the time to plan and deliver virtual training, not only within our specialism but used the opportunity to take a closer look at our own education. Software like 'Zoom' and 'Teams' became our new portholes. I cannot praise the entire team enough as qualifications ranging from *The Study of Mammals*, *Caring for the Vulnerable*, *Mental Wellbeing*, *Teaching in a Virtual Environment* to *Forensic Interview Techniques* as well as our mandated military courses were completed.

While only the most vital musical group tasks were undertaken the available time also allowed the senior

team to develop and run tabletop exercises for future training, recruiting and policy plans.

A year of mixed emotions from our PTI's rigorous Zoom sessions to being held at high readiness to assist the Emergency Forces with our main focus shifting from 'Live Delivery' to 'Virtual delivery and Training' I cannot praise my team enough for the effort and care to their Gurkha brothers and families during this highly unusual period.

Defence Engagement Nepal 2020

By Musn Adarsh Gurung

It was my first Nepal Defence Engagement tour and I was very excited to go to Nepal, my home country where I started my journey to become a Gurkha and wearing the uniform. On the program day, I was privileged to perform with the Nepal Army, Nepal Armed Police Force and Nepal Police Band, which gave a new experience and knowledge to work with Bands in Nepal.

After our engagement was over, we had our long awaited leave which was very helpful as it was a chance to meet our family and friends.

On 20 Feb 2020 our band had a training and mentoring session with the Nepal Army Band and Armed Police Force Band. We were welcomed in the traditional way by a red Tikka and Khada, and later started our training by dividing ourselves into different groups of similar instruments. On the afternoon we put it all together and rehearsed various pieces to prepare for the concert for the Nepali audiences.



**Rehearsals with the Nepal Army &
Armed Police Force Bands**

The next day in the afternoon we made our way to the concert area Durbar Square Kathmandu, the chief guest was Nepal Chief of Army Staff General Purna Chandra Thapa and British Army Chief of General Staff General Sir Mark Carleton-Smith, and we started our concert by playing various Nepali and European music which the crowd seemed to enjoyed a lot. The concert went very well and later the Nepal Army Band thanked us with a memento.



Capt O'Neil and Capt Basudev Gurung with the Nepal Army & Armed Police Bandmasters at Durbar Square



The combined bands at the Police Academy, Maharajgunj



Musician of the combined bands, preparing for the concert in Durbar Square



The combined bands group photo after rehearsals



Capt Basudev Gurung conducting the combined bands at the Police Academy, Maharajgunj



The Police Band Pipers

On the 3rd of March we went to the Police Academy, Maharajgunj. We started our day with a presentation by the Nepal Police Band and a welcoming program where they performed various dances of Nepal. We started with a productive sectional rehearsal in the morning to mentor and teach the Nepal Police Band followed by a combined concert rehearsal in the afternoon to prepare for the program.

The next day on the 4th of March we started our day in the afternoon and headed to the Nepal Police Academy Maharajgunj for the combined concert with the Nepal Police Band. The Chief Guest was the SSP Mukunda Acharya and all the officer cadets. The program went really well and later they gave their appreciation with a memento and souvenirs for the band.

After our engagement was over, we had our long-awaited leave which was very helpful as it was a chance to meet our family and friends.

Attestation Parade, Intake 2020 *By Sgt Kushiman Gurung*

I feel fortunate to be back again at the same place, where I started my journey, 18 years ago, just like these young men who are about to start their exciting careers as the newest members of the Brigade of Gurkhas.

No matter how many times I visit, it feels exactly the same as it was, the only differences is, I now stand as a matured man and a valued member of the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas.



Recruits prepare for their Attestation Parade

Today, 18th February 2020, 432 recruits of intake 2020 are a step closer to becoming a member of the Brigade of Gurkhas after their Attestation parade at British Gurkhas Pokhara camp in Nepal. Nearly 1,700 family members of the new recruits were present to cheer them on at the parade.

General Sir Mark Carleton-Smith KCB CBE ADC Gen (CGS) was the inspecting officer for the parade. Also in attendance were H.E British Ambassador to Nepal, Nepal Army Major General, APF Inspector General and the Deputy Colonel Commandant Brigade of Gurkhas too.

These young men are really lucky because the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas flew all the way from the UK to provide musical support for their attestation parade. It was definitely a new experience for these young men to get the taste of military music and marching with the band playing in the background, which is a beginning, as well as a welcoming for them in a military life.

It was a special day for these new recruits and their families, and we wish them a safe journey to the UK for their basic training and hope we meet again after completion of their training in ITC Catterick, during their passing out parade.

Virtual Lessons and Mentoring

As we were unable to come together for mass band rehearsal and face to face mentoring, our training had to be developed and delivered by virtual means. Section leaders and ICs had to learn and use Zoom, Skype and Teams to continue delivery of a full musical package to our younger members.

As musicians this took some time to get used to, as we are trained to work within an ensemble, this means listening, watching, observing body language, facial expression and feelings. All of which can become easily lost when we move to sitting in your rooms alone with a phone camera pointed at you. There is no shame in saying there was a bedding in period. But as our ICs completed specific virtual teaching, training themselves in new ways to approach practice, the groups started to work.

I think all would agree that, from a musician's perspective, that face to face and full military band

rehearsals are still the best way to rehearse however, our section leaders really embraced the challenge and learned to deliver some excellent lessons. Hugely important for us to maintain our musical standards.



Zoom - Brass Section practice



Musician receiving virtual lessons via Zoom



Physical Training during Lockdown

By Musn Amrit Gurung

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought our fast-flowing world to a much slower pace. The impact has been massive, resulting in the closure of business activities, public places, fitness activity centres, and overall social life. This has hampered many aspects of the lives of people including routine fitness activities, which increased the risk of health and psychological issues. Lack of fitness activities and increasing health concerns were becoming a major concern for the military.

As with the delivery of our musical training it was vital that the band PTI team designed and delivered physical training across the various virtual platforms.

With such an impact on our regular duties we established physical activities session on Zoom where physical training, led by the Band PTIs were maintained. These took place three times a week with the final third session (Fridays) being a more inclusive 'families' lesson. Our wives and children joined us for a more relaxed and fun lesson.

We started with basic movements: Squat, Lunge, Hinge, Push, Pull, Brace, Rotate before gradually advancing towards the resilience phase. Here we included muscular endurance, explosive strength, aerobic, anaerobic and cross-fit exercises. Each lesson was about 45 -60 minutes, which helped all service personnel to burn calories and maintain their fitness overall.

To talk about the experience, it was new for all the band members and everyone could see improvement in their physical ability over a short period of time. At last, we hope this pandemic will end soon so we can do our normal duties like before. We the Brigade Band love to explore the world and represent the Brigade of Gurkhas.



Virtual PT lessons

Queen's Gurkha Signal 71st Regimental Birthday

With the majority of our output now on the internet, live engagements were dramatically reduced. However in Jul-Oct there was a short window when the Government eased restrictions. The Band was delighted to be tasked to support the Queen's Gurkha Signals as they celebrated their 71st Regimental Birthday parade on the 21st September 2020.



Captain O'Neill escorting HRH Princess Anne after her inspection of the Band



HRH Princess Anne inspecting the Band



Band Trailwalker Team

TRAILWALKER 2020

By LCpl Doran

This year our Initial Trade Training team (ITT) took part in the virtual Trailwalker Relay 2020. In previous years, it had been difficult for the Band to enter a team as we are usually requested to support in our musical role. So, the GBM (WO2 Sunil Gurung) and I (LCpl Doran) decided to seize the initiative and enter a band team. The intention was to motivate our young musicians to work together and foster their strength and the strength of our team. The intention was to encourage collaboration rather than competition. With so many of our musicians interested, we decided to register two teams of six members and managed to raise £805. The 100 Km run was completed within the stipulated time which was a tremendous achievement and all participants were very proud to receive their medals. We cannot thank our DOM, ADOM, all band members and our generous donors enough for their overwhelming love and support.

Jai The Band of The Brigade of Gurkhas

THE GURKHA STAFF AND PERSONNEL SUPPORT COMPANY (GSPS)



Staff List

Colonel of the Regiment
Officer Commanding

Colonel A D Griffiths OBE
Major Jit Bahadur Hamal

Officers

Major Suryakumar Rai
Major Narendra Kumar Gurung
Captain Anil Gurung
Captain Ang Mingma Sherpa
Captain Chandrakumar Limbu
Captain Suren Limbu
Captain Surendra Limbu Lingden
Captain Dugendra Tamang
Captain Sumitkumar Joshi
Captain Ram Thapa
Captain Bijay Limbu
Captain Samitchya Gurung

Army HQ
DCOS BGN
RAO 10 QOGLR
RAO 22 Sig Regt
RAO 30 Sig Regt
RAO HQ Warminster Gar
RAO 30 Sig Regt
RAO 36 Engr Regt
Det Comd 2 RGR
Det Comd 16 Sig Regt
SO Admin Def Sect Nepal
Det Comd 3 Sig Regt

Warrant Officers Class 1

WO1 Priyachandra Rai - Supt Clk HQBG/2IC GSPS

GSPS Soldier of the Year 2020

Corporal Suresh Dewan

GSPS Senior NCO of the Year 2020

Sergeant Sagar Sherchan

Commander's Foreword

Maj Jit B Hamal - OC GSPS



Our officers and soldiers continued to live by the GSPS ethos and delivered vital service and support to the Brigade and wider Army including the national effort against the COVID-19 pandemic. It has been a very challenging year, but our members (individually and as a Pariwar) have remained strong and relevant in the relentless pursuit of excellence on all fronts.

We welcomed 14 new Babujis into our growing family this year – the biggest intake in the last 3 decades. In short, the GSPS is going from strength to strength on all fronts as we look forward to celebrating our first milestone, the 10th Anniversary next year whilst also

set to take on future challenges and to make the most of the available opportunities. Jai GSPS!

Recruit Intake 2020 (RI20) Passing Out Parade

The RI20 PoP was held at Gurkha Company, ITC Catterick in the presence of VVIP and senior officers. The Inspecting Officer was The Secretary of State for Defence, the Right Honourable Ben Wallace MP.

14 lucky trainee riflemen (out of many more who had chosen Gurkha SPS as their first preference) have been selected to join the GSPS. This is the largest intake in



Col of the Regt and OC GSPS with Intake 20 GSPS members at the Passing Out Parade in ITC Catterick

the history of the clerks of the Brigade of Gurkhas in 30 years. Here are the names of the lucky 14 T/Rfns who have been selected to join the special family:

1. Pte Abijal Gurung
2. Pte Ashok Gurung
3. Pte Deepraj Sunuwar
4. Pte Prashis Limbu
5. Pte Ramesh Vikram Budha Magar
6. Pte Ramraja Ghale
7. Pte Rijesh Rai
8. Pte Ritiz Rai
9. Pte Rojan Rasaili BK
10. Pte Sandip Gurung
11. Pte Saroj Tamang
12. Pte Satish Tamang
13. Pte Sushan Rimal
14. Pte Suraj Sinthan

The new members were congratulated and welcomed into the GSPS Pariwar by Col GSPS (Col A D Griffiths OBE), Officer Commanding (Maj Jit Hamal) and GSPS staff based in Catterick.

British Gurkhas Nepal (BGN) - Repatriation of families to the UK due to COVID-19 pandemic

All British Gurkhas Nepal (BGN) families were repatriated to the UK as part of the FCDO coordinated COVID-19 response plan in April 20. The Rear Operations Group (ROG) was responsible for the provision of vital Real-Life-Support (RLS) for 130 dependants, who were evacuated to the UK unaccompanied and stayed there for seven months. The ROG team was led by Capt Bijay Limbu (SOA/Defence Section).

Families travelled with only a suitcase of belongings and moved into sparsely furnished Service Families Accommodation. The ROG team engaged with several enabling agencies including HQ RC, HQBG, BFBS, AMEY Defence Services, AFF, AWS, Hive, the local community and the Garrison to source a substantial amount of white goods. On arrival the ROG delivered a robust Reception, Staging, Onward Movement, and Integration (RSOI) package in liaison with HQ RC which provided huge confidence to the families at the time of the pandemic. After that, the ROG team worked tirelessly to ensure the mental and physical wellbeing of the families. From day one, the team scrupulously ensured all vehicles and the workplace was kept COVID-19 free according to the UK government’s safety guidelines. Throughout, the ROG team organised various recreational activities such as coffee morning, visits, shopping trips, a socially distanced Dashain and mental well-being lecturette.

There were several visits from COs and GMs from various Gurkha Units. OC GSPS made several visits in his capacity as both OC GSPS and DCOS HQBG. All in all, the ROG’s energy, focus, and force of will helped achieve the singular aim: the safety of the families.

The ROG team also provided RLS to families from 2RGR and BFB Brunei, evacuated from Nepal to UK for their onwards journey to Brunei. In early November, all families returned to Nepal. It is no mean feat that



OC GSPS (Maj Jit Hamal) congratulating RI20 GSPS members on successfully completing their 9 months training



Cpl Amit Rai currently serving as a Sect Comd in Gurkha Coy, Catterick during the Intake 20 Passing Out Parade Ceremony

COVID-19 positive cases within BGN families in the UK was nil and there were no welfare issues – testament to the ROG team’s effort. It was arguably the most critical operation undertaken by BGN in the last 4 years.



Families travelling to the UK with only a suitcase of belongings



Documentation check before boarding the repatriation flight

Ex LION KHUKURI - RAO Det 10 QOGLR

The 10 QOGLR RAO Detachment conducted Ex LION KHUKURI over the period of 13 to 15 Oct 20 in the Elmoore Training Area, Aldershot. There were altogether 12 members of the detachment deployed on the exercise: 8 exercising troops and 4 on the support team. The main aim of the exercise was to learn and revise basic fieldcraft skills and develop leadership qualities among the junior members of the detachment. On 13 Oct 20, we deployed in a section of 8 personnel and our first objective was to occupy the harbour, secure the location and establish our harbour area. Later in the afternoon, we were given a lesson on conducting fighting patrols, reconnaissance (Recce) patrols and section attacks. Each member of the section was appointed as either a Section Commander or Section 2IC in different stages of the exercise, which helped us sharpen our fieldcraft and at the same time, helped us develop our confidence in the section/team. Later in the night, we conducted a night Recce Patrol to gather information on the enemy and then went back to our harbour location.

On the following day 14 Oct 20, we cleared several enemy positions and established a Vehicle Check Point (VCP) to disrupt the enemy presence in the area. As the day progressed, our team cohesion got better, which was clearly reflected on the section attacks that we executed later that day.

In the evening, we conducted a Recce patrol to gather information on the enemy position for the following morning’s dawn attack to find the best possible route to execute the attack. Once we gathered enough intelligence, we returned to our harbour location where we received orders from the Section Commander for the following day’s deliberate attack. The following morning, we executed the attack and cleared two enemy positions. However, we suffered one casualty who was swiftly extracted from the area to the casualty evacuation point. Although this exercise was very challenging, we had a good opportunity to revise and



Ex LION KHUKURI Team with Commander 10 QOGLR and the RHQ Team

learn about basic infantry skills and at the same time, develop our leadership skill. The exercise has concluded but “Grenade”, “Section Commander Position Cleared” is still buzzing in my ears!

GSPS Soldier of the Year 2020

By Cpl Suresh Dewan

The GSPS Soldier of the Year (GSPS SoY) award was established in 2017 to formally recognise the best soldier (between the ranks of Private and Corporal) who has consistently upheld the GSPS ethos and inspiring others as a junior leader and role model, thus bringing the cap badge and the Gurkha brand into the limelight.



Cpl Suresh Dewan - GSPS Soldier of the Year 2020

I have been honoured to receive the GSPS SoY award this year. I was shocked, excited and was over the moon when I heard the news. It would not have been possible to win this award with only my hard work, effort, and dedication, but it has only been possible with the unceasing support of Officers, Seniors, Numbaris and Juniors who have always been alongside me during my highs and lows. They never stopped advising and supporting me when I was struggling. I learnt a lot from each member of the GSPS and had put all the good things that I have learnt into the practice to bring out the best of me while serving. I was never expecting that I would be honoured with this award during my career. I just did what I am supposed to do to provide G1 administration to the best of my ability. Equally, I have always thought of promoting GSPS whether being in Trailwalker, the Triple Crown Competition or any other military or charitable activities. I am grateful to the Chain of Command who considered me worthy of this reward.

It has been 8 years since I joined the British Army and a good 7 of those being a part of GSPS. I have served in 10 QOGLR, Brunei Garrison, 1 RGR and presently in 3 RGR. During all my assignments until today there has not been a single day where I haven't enjoyed my work. I always tend to help others with the best of my knowledge and have always tried to raise the GSPS flag high wherever I am privileged to work. I believe being optimistic is the key in an individual to achieve goals

with the best results and I have always lived by it.

Having now been awarded the GSPS SoY award, I look forward to working harder and to promote the GSPS to the wider defence services. I will keep on doing what I have been doing to date and inspire more juniors to be great leaders and role model for generations to come, not forgetting the GSPS ethos. Every day is a learning day and I believe time will teach me to be a great GSPS ambassador which I aspire to the most.

Jai GSPS!

Trail Walker 2020



Two teams from the RAO Det British Forces Brunei in Tuger Lines, Seria after completion of their virtual Trail Walker Challenge

Trail Walker 2020 was cancelled in its original format this year due to the coronavirus pandemic. However, it did not stop some resolute and charitable members of GSPS to find different ways to take on the challenge and raise money for the Gurkha Welfare Trust (GWT) and Oxfam. In total, GSPS members from across the units raised a significant amount (over £6000). The following were the highlights:

1. Team HQ ARITC led by Colonel of the Regt GSPS (Col Andrew Griffiths OBE, Chief of Staff ARITC) completed the TrailWalker (100km run) and Everest Challenge (8848m climb) in 9hrs 11 minute, raising £2160. The team included WO2 Khadak Chhetri (the most senior serving soldier of GSPS) and two members of SPS (Maj Beck and Capt Whitecross).
2. Two teams from British Forces Brunei (BFB) RAO Det led by Cpl Bibek Limbu completed the virtual run and raised £919.
3. Members from the RAO Det 1 RGR ran the virtual event individually from various locations and raised £450. The team was led by Cpl Bishwajit Rai.
4. GSPS members based in various QGS units took on the challenge too. Sgt Sagar from Blandford Garrison raised £781. Cpl Pratik represented 246 Gurkha Signal



Team HQ ARITC (Col GSPS and WO2 Khadak before and after the Trail Walker relay challenge)

Sqn and raised £365 and 247 Gurkha Signal Sqn RAO Det raised £400. Cpl Bhoj led a team from 22 Sig Regt and raised £350.

5. Other GSPS teams from RMAS RAO Det raised £400 and ITC Catterick £287.

GSPS Photo News



Lama Guru briefing the BGN/ GSPS repatriated families in Larkhill



Visit to RAO Det 10 QOGLR by HQ 3UK (Div) SPS Team during Ex LION KHUKURI



Sgt Sagar organising Virtual Tihar celebration for Blandford based Gurkha community members



Ex TEMBURONG BABUJI & AQUATIC THRIL 20 organised by RAO Det 2 RGR



WO2 Khadak Chhetri representing AGC in Sky Diving



GSPS SNCO of the year 2020 - Sgt Sagar Sherchan



Charity Run in aid of Blink-Now organised by Cpl Nauraj Gurung GSPS

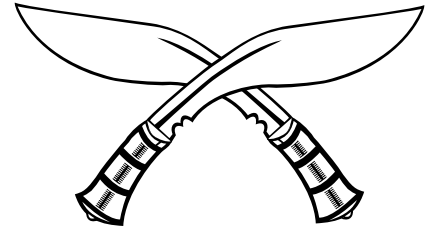


Cpl Taraman Gurung representing Army in Inter Corps Tennis Competition



GSPS Intake 19 during their SIPAC Field Exercise - Ex EAGLE WARRIOR

BRITISH GURKHAS NEPAL (BGN)



Staff List

Headquarters British Gurkhas Nepal

Colonel Richard Goodman MBE	Comd/DA/Dir GWS
Lieutenant Colonel Simon Townsend QOGLR	DComd/COS
Maj Narendrakumar Gurung GSPS	DCOS
Maj Muktiprasad Gurung MVO RGR	GM
Capt Nabin Rai GSPS	Adjt
WO1 Kamalbahadur Pun Magar RGR	RSM
Capt Sundar Sherchan R Sigs	SO3 G2/3/6
Capt Liam Walsh RLC	SO3 G4
Mr Thomas Howard	Civ Sec
Gaurav Chandra Gurung	Communications Officer

Defence Section British Embassy Kathmandu

Col R T Goodman MBE	Defence Attaché
Maj Hebindra Pun QG Signals	AMA/MLO
Capt Bijay Limbu GSPS	SO Admin

British Gurkhas Kathmandu

Maj Graham Boardman RRF	QM
Maj Neil Fidler AGC (SPS)	RAO
Capt Khagendra Pun QG Signals	OC NST
Maj (Retd) Rajeev Shrestha QG Signals	BUWO
Mr Sisir Kumar Pandey	LEC HR Manager

British Gurkhas Pokhara

Maj Jack Millar RGR	OC
Capt Binodkumar Kerung RGR	2IC
Capt Govindabahadur Rana QGE	QM
Capt Hannah Karas R Sigs	Ops Co-ord Offr
Maj (Retd) Manbahadur Gurung AGC (SPS)	Records Officer
Capt (Retd) Ganeshkumar Rai RGR	SARO
Capt (Retd) Tirthabahadur Gurung RGR	ARO Co-ord
Capt (Retd) Hariprasad Rai QOGLR	ARO (East)
Capt (Retd) Ashok Sen RGR	ARO (West)

Defence Infrastructure Overseas (Nepal)

Capt Christopher Hatchard RE	Senior Estate Facility Manager
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British Gurkhas Dharan

Mr Chandra Kamal Rasaily	Head of BGD
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Gurkha Settlement Office

Maj (Retd) Gyanbahadur Limbu QOGLR	LO GSO
Mrs Jamuna Gurung	Dep Proj Manager

Kadoorie Agricultural Aid Association (KAAA)

Colonel (Retd) Andrew Mills OBE	Director KAAA
Major (Retd) Krishna Gurung BEM, ex QG-Signals	Deputy Director
Engineer Narayan Gurung M Tech	Technical Director
Captain (Retd) Rajan Rai, ex-10 GR/2 RGR	Projects Director
Captain (Retd) Pradip Limbu, ex-QOGLR	Administrative Officer
Captain (Retd) Meenjang Gurung, ex-QGE	Training Director

Commander's Foreword

By Colonel Richard Goodman, Commander British Gurkhas Nepal



Well, 2020 proved to be quite an interesting year. The decision to front-load the majority of the year's key activity into the first four months of 2020 – notably the visit of Chief of General Staff (CGS), Chief of Defence Logistics and Support (CDLS), Commandant RMAS and the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas, plus the scheduling of the first ever Combined (RMAS, ACSC, RCDS) Alumni event – was, with hindsight, a stroke of luck. Shortly after the departure of the last senior visitor, Nepal went into lockdown on account of the COVID-19 pandemic which, significantly, saw the closure of the international airport for a period in excess of 160 days. At the same time, Service personnel were scaled-back and dependants repatriated to the UK in line with the (then) Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Drawdown Plan. However, British Gurkhas Nepal (BGN) remained operational in-country throughout, both supporting broader HMG outputs as well as fulfilling its MOD objectives.

The rapid imposition of the national lockdown left many British nationals stranded in Nepal. Working with FCO staff, BGN was able to recover over 100 British nationals (and almost 30 foreign nationals) from the more remote and mountainous regions of Nepal to meet specially-chartered repatriation flights to the UK. Our locally employed drivers and their military commanders spent over three weeks on the road, covering more than 4,000 miles into 13 different districts, negotiating river crossings and landslides along the way. The recovery operation generated positive publicity that reached a readership of around 34 million people in the UK alone.

BGN personnel then spent many months confined to camp as Nepal enforced a strict lockdown in an attempt to prevent the pandemic's arrival in country. This national lockdown included closed borders and restrictions on internal travel. However, a major respite came with the arrival of UK military Resilience Flights to Nepal, three flights in total, bringing much-needed supplies and mail, as well as allowing Service Personnel a breather in the UK with their repatriated families.

Significantly, these were the first UK military aircraft to be permitted access to Nepal in over five years, and allowed us to exercise an element of our contingency plans to support Nepal in the future.

Additionally, we were able to mark significant military events throughout the year, all carefully modified to comply with the COVID-19 restrictions imposed by the Government of Nepal. These included commemorating ANZAC Day at the Australian Embassy in April, VJ Day in August, and Remembrance Sunday in November – the footage from which was, for the first time, screened live on-line to audiences around the world.

In all, 2020 was a momentous year of high-points and low-points. The high-point was certainly the Attestation Parade for the largest intake of British Gurkha recruits in 35 years with CGS, General Sir Mark Carleton-Smith KCB CBE ADC, officiating as the inspecting officer of the 432 new Gurkha trainee Riflemen. The low-point was definitely waving farewell to our families as the international airport closed. Our families subsequently spent over seven months in temporary accommodation in Larkhill, although were ably supported throughout by a bespoke Rear Operations Group led by Captain Bijay Limbu GSPS. Fortunately, we were able to establish the right conditions for the return of our families in November, when the international flight schedule was re-established.

In an extraordinary year, I felt extraordinarily privileged to work with the BGN team who displayed characteristic commitment, resilience and adaptability. There was not one member of my team who did not step-up to the challenge and, despite the most testing of circumstances, all remained earnestly focused on supporting the serving Brigade, our Veteran community and the Gurkha brand.

Jai British Gurkhas Nepal!

Movement in Nepal during COVID-19

By Warrant Officer Class 2 (WO2) T Stone RLC, MCWO, BGN

Whilst at the back end of a deployment on Op KIPION as the Force Movement Warrant Officer for the Middle East in 2019, I learnt there was an opportunity to be assigned to Nepal. Thinking that my current deployment would hinder my chances, I volunteered but remained unconvinced I would be offered the assignment. To my surprise, I promptly received an assignment order and swiftly got in contact with the incumbent at the time to find out what I could. I completed my tour at the end of March 2019 and was on a flight to Nepal at the end of April 2019. The first 9 months of the assignment were spent making the most of what Nepal has to offer. However, as it has been all over the world, the COVID-19 global pandemic had a vast effect on how we conducted our daily business and inevitably an adverse impact on the supply chain.

The Government of Nepal imposed lockdown began on 24 March 2020. This included the suspension of all air and long-distance ground travel with the cessation of the lockdown unpredictable. The ground line of communication from India had been considerably impacted, with no expectation of significant movement until COVID-19 was under control within the region. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs had also been impacted by the lockdown and had very limited capacity, causing delays in import licences and permissions for surface freight. British Gurkhas Nepal (BGN) at the beginning of the lockdown had 14 containers held in Kolkata (India) incurring demurrage charges whilst awaiting import authority. New processes had to be quickly formalised by my department and accepted by both the relevant Nepal and Indian Customs authorities or the clearance of the backlog could have taken months and cost thousands to the MOD. Additionally, the lockdown was inevitably extended into monsoon season. Flooding and landslides were a common occurrence during this time which created further delays to the import of surface freight.

Equally, with the international flight suspension there had been no routine air supply route. The Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal was permitting foreign government sponsored, chartered relief flights for repatriation, freight and essential (mainly medical) supply. Some freight carriers were operating a significantly reduced service, but not as routine.



The riverside exchange between Kathmandu and Pokhara had become quite a struggle due to the monsoon season

Shortly after the lockdown was announced the British Embassy in Kathmandu (BEK) ordered the drawdown of all non-essential personnel and dependants from Nepal. The Defence Attaché in Nepal, Colonel Richard Goodman, who is also the Commander of BGN, subsequently advised a commensurate draw down of our families and any non-essential service personnel. On this announcement, our families were extracted back to the UK on one of the three Foreign and



Passenger brief. WO2 Stone delivering the passenger brief to all the passengers of resilience flight two

Commonwealth Office (FCO) Charter flights in which BGN played a huge role.

There were 109 British nationals, and a further 28 foreign nationals identified as stranded in isolated parts of Nepal when the Coronavirus crisis broke out which resulted in a rescue mission to retrieve them. With severely diminished transport routes available in country, over a three-week period, BGN personnel travelled over 4,000 miles through the Himalayas to 13 different districts to retrieve the stranded tourists disseminated across Nepal.

Some areas were inaccessible due to local barricades or landslides, meaning that some of the journeys to retrieve the tourists had to be conducted on foot over severely undulating terrain. Not all journeys could be completed in one day due to the length and precarious routes, so various individuals were forced to camp for the night on the side of the road.



A400M arriving at Tribhuvan International Airport Kathmandu, Nepal

With the unpredictability of the lockdown duration and COVID-19 cases on the increase in the region, it was decided there was a requirement for personnel and stores movement in and out of Nepal. The organisation of three resilience flights followed in order for BGN to maintain a safe COVID-19 facing posture, its disaster response capability, the delivery of mandated outputs, the sustainment of the Army-wide summer posting cycle and to enable personnel to take leave. The resilience flights were scheduled to take place every six weeks and operated in July, September and October.

The Defence Attaché noted that the use of MilAT has enabled BGN and the BEK to rehearse the capability of coming into Nepal which has allowed confirmation that BGN's contingency capability is enhanced. Providing

some confidence to the serving personnel that, should there be any AEROMEDEVAC required in the future, many of the wrinkles in the Nepali processes have already been ironed out. Additionally, it has also given the chance of some Defence Engagement. Most of the airport staff could not recall seeing any MilAT (of any flag) landing in Nepal for a considerable time.

Despite the ongoing rise in COVID-19 cases in the region, the international flight suspension ended on the 2 September 2020 with the domestic flights following on 21 Sep 20. Families were repatriated back to Nepal over the period of October-November 2020 which helped bring a bit of normality back for those serving after some had spent in excess of six months apart.

There has been a lot of planning and coordination that has been required during this unpredictable and unusual period. It certainly has at times been extremely challenging, causing long hours and headaches. Nevertheless, I have been happy to play a role and will look back on this period in my career with fond memories.

Repatriation in Figures

By Gaurav Chandra Gurung, Communications Officer, HQ BGN

British Gurkhas Nepal’s Serving Personnel and drivers from the MT Department deserve high recognition for the exceptional deployment during the Covid-19 induced lockdown in Nepal. With their rescue, numerous British and other foreign nationals and serving personnel of the wider Brigade of Gurkhas and their dependents were safely repatriated back to their homes. The figures of the mission:

Battalion the Royal Gurkha Rifles - 24 x pax (10 SPs and 14 deps), Queen’s Gurkha Engineers - 4 x SPs, Queen’s Gurkha Signals - 11 x pax (8 SPs and 3 deps), Queen’s Own Gurkha Logistic Regt - 8 x pax (7 SPs and 1 dep), Brigade of Gurkhas Band - 1 x SP, MPGS – 9 x pax (7 SPs and 2 deps) Army HQ - 1 x SP, HQ ARRC - 1 x SP, 9 Regt RLC - 1 x SP, Royal Sigs - 3 x deps, Light Dragoons - 2 x pax (1 SP and 1 dep) and 14 Royal Artillery - 3 x pax (1 x SP and 2 deps).

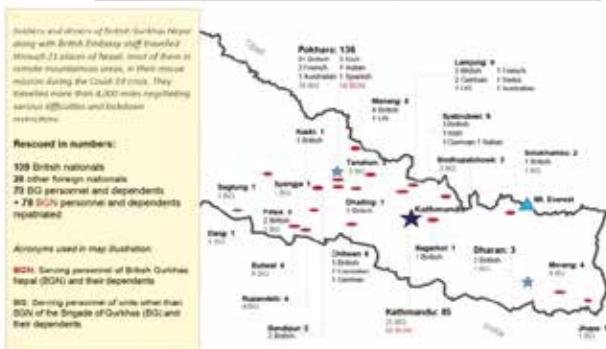
Royal Signals 100 for 100

By Lance Corporal Ghan Bahadur Pun, NST HQ BGN

The Royal Corps of Signals celebrated its 100th Anniversary on 28 June 2020. To mark the centenary, an array of events were carried out during June by various units of the Corps scattered across the globe. It was trending as #100for100 on various social media platforms. Restricted by the Covid-19 rules, most of the Royal Signals 100 events were organised and celebrated online.

The Nepal Signal Troop (NST), currently with half its workforce, endured this challenge to contribute to this historical event. This included a cycling event, the brainchild of Captain Khagendra, to cover the distance between Mechi and Mahakali rivers, the eastern and western borders of Nepal respectively, comprising a total distance of 775.33 km a day, which the team managed to complete in 8 hours and 15 minutes. Sergeant Bikash from British Gurkhas Pokhara (BGP), did the cycling inside the wires of BGP camp until his muscle started to cramp up at the 50 km point.

Rescue and evacuation during the Covid-19 crisis



Brigade of Gurkhas evacuation in figures:

Total British Gurkhas Nepal (BGN) Serving Personnel (SP) and dependents (deps) repatriated (78):
 14 x SPs, 38 x Deps, 26 x Children

Non-BGN Brigade of Gurkhas (BG) SPs and deps repatriated (70 pax):

1st Battalion the Royal Gurkha Rifles - 2 x SPs, 2nd



NST SPs all out for 100for100

Prior to the build-up to the event, each member of the troop including a few from the ROG team in the UK and Captain Murray of the Royal Signals, were already engaged in running, cycling, swimming and the most noted of all, the ‘doko’ carry, for the #100for100 challenge. While the distance measuring unit for all the events were kilometre, the two grey haired officers, Capt Khagendra and Capt Murray decided to do the toughest one, the doko carry, in miles. They also upped the ante by increasing the weight from 15 kg to 25 kg, which they later regretted. Nevertheless, with their grit and perseverance, in the heat, rain and darkness, with a head torch strapped in their heads, in a confined

compound of Kathmandu camp, they managed to achieve this remarkable feat within their target date.

Corporal Sunil organised this event with meticulous planning and smooth execution. His contingency plans for adverse weather conditions further ensured that. Coinciding with the occasion, the troop bid adieu to Deputy Commander Lieutenant Colonel Wettenhall, Captain R S Murray and our own Lance Corporal Ghan Pun. Of all the farewell 'tolis', Capt R S Murray was taken by surprise, when his name was called out for farewell and had to do with an impromptu farewell speech.

Apart from the QG SIGNALS and ROYAL Signals cap badged serving personnel in HQ BGN, Kathmandu, the event was attended by the Commander BGN, and ex-members of the regiment, who currently reside near the camp.



Families and Dependents take part in what ways possible

The ROG team and families participated in the event via a Zoom conference, with Staff Sergeant Sanjay and Beepana didi delivering farewell notes on behalf of the ROG team and their families. Commander BGN, Colonel R T Goodman MBE congratulated all the Corps members and also revealed that he had been secretly embarking on the #100for100 challenge by growing his hair for 100 days. **Certa Cito!**

BGN's Community Relation Strengthened with Help in Crisis

By Gaurav Chandra Gurung, Communications Officer HQ BGN

Community Engagement is the cornerstone of British Gurkhas Nepal (BGN)'s Mission to deliver its core outputs - Gurkha recruitment, provide local support to the soldiers and ex-servicemen and maintain Disaster Relief preparedness within resources in order to support Firm Base activity in Nepal in accordance with UK Defence Strategy.

BGN like all other military garrisons and units actively seeks to foster and maintain good relations with the local community and Community Engagement Projects

(CEP) are one way of developing this relationship. Each year BGN has a limited amount of public fund from Regional Command to sponsor worthy projects in the local community in order to support BGN recruiting mission. 2020/21 has been heavily affected by Covid-19 where CE projects couldn't take place but BGN still managed to deliver the effects by providing Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) to the local communities and distributing food products to underprivileged local populace.

The cordial relation between BGN and the local communities of Nepal spans out to the local communities of the major cities of Nepal built with engagements of Headquarters BGN in Kathmandu and British Gurkhas Pokhara (BGP) and British Gurkhas Dharan (BGD). This relation is reinforced by services provided at the Area Welfare Centres of the Gurkha Welfare Trust across Nepal, credit to the close association between BGN and the Gurkha Welfare Trust.

One of the first support programmes HQ BGN took to the authority of Lalitpur Metropolis, Ward number 5 during the Covid-19 lockdown period was the distribution of essential food items to the local residents. On 7 June 2020, when repercussions of the COVID-19 lockdown was at its peak, Lieutenant Colonel Pete Wettenhall Deputy Commander BGN, Major Muktiprasad Gurung MVO Gurkha Major BGN and WO1 Kamal Bahadur Pun RSM BGN took the lead to deliver the support programme that saw 225 families of the local ward receive essential food products and the Ward authority financial support. Similarly, food products were distributed by HQ BGN in Kakani local community and in Pokhara by BGP.



Deputy Commander, Gurkha Major, RSM BGN distributing food products



Gurkha Major BGN, QM and 2IC BGP with Valam Dada authority



BGD Staff with Mayor of Dharan Sub-Metropolis

In tandem, BGN's support to the local communities continued in Pokhara and Dharan. In Pokhara, Major Mukti Prasad Gurung MVO (GM BGN), Captain Binod Kerung (2IC BGP) and Captain Govinda Rana (QM BGP) handed over Personal Protection Equipment (PPE), protective suits, masks, gloves, goggles, etc. to Valam Danda Ward Health Post. Major Sandy Nightingale (OC BGP) and Captain Binod Kerung handed over oxygen support equipment and PPE to Hon'ble Social Development Minister of Gandaki Province Nardevi Pun Magar. With one of Nepal's largest medical institutions - B. P. Koirala Institute of Health Sciences (BPKIHS) - based in Dharan, the BGD staff engaged with both the Hospital and local authority for their assistance. Head of BGD Mr. Chandra Rasaily and the staff, on separate occasions, handed over oxygen support equipment and PPE to the Vice Chancellor of BPKIHS Prof. Dr. Gyanendra Giri and the Mayor of Dharan Sub-Metropolis Mr. Tilak Rai. What was most needed and in highest demand at the time were things that would help the health sectors combat the unprecedented situation.

With uncertainty still looming over when and how the pandemic will end and people will be able to go back to their old normal lifestyles, it is important to remember that the people working at the frontlines at this difficult time need all the support that they can get. BGN continues to monitor the situation and will remain ready to extend help when needed.

The close engagement during the COVID crisis has emboldened the already strong relationship between BGN and the local communities. Apart from this, BGN continued its community engagement in its typical format aimed at improving sanitation and basic facilities in the local areas. In early 2020 prior to COVID emerging, BGN's Civilian Staff and members of the local areas came together in an area clean-up programme. This saw participation of nearly a hundred members including BGN's staff and local residents. Similarly, on 21 January 2021, HQ BGN provided 64 large dustbins to the authority of Lalitpur Metropolis, Ward number 5, which are now placed at various places in the Jawalakhel vicinity.

Engaging with the local communities is a core activity at BGN. As much as it helps strengthen relation with the people and places around us, we at BGN value the high recognition bestowed on us by the local communities and honour the cordial sense of belonging we feel



Deputy Commander and Gurkha Major BGN with members of local Lalitpur-5

HQ BGN Christmas Sports Day

By Sergeant Prakash Gurung, Headquarters British Gurkhas Nepal

Due to COVID 19, this year has been a bit different than the previous ones. Adaptations were implemented in every single part of our daily routine. Wearing mask, sanitising hands, maintaining social distances and avoiding mass groups were a new normality for all of us.

Similarly, as in previous years and before the start of festive holidays RSM WO1 Kamal Pun managed to organise a Christmas sports day in HQ BGN Kathmandu adopting new normality with implementation of COVID measures.

Three different events of Badminton, PT consisting of rowing machines and bikes and BGN's favourite three-a-side Volleyball were organised. Six teams of three players each were set up of Officers and Senior ranks vs Junior ranks with a Christmas theme music.



Deputy Commander hands over prizes to the winning team

After a short safety brief and rules for sports from PTI Sergeant Prakash, teams were placed into their respective sports events. The volleyball and badminton games were



Christmas Lunch after the sports events

really enjoyable and fun to play with the added element of competition, but the PT stand had some challenges and gave a gentle reminder of army PT lessons to the teams. Everyone seemed to have enjoyed the day and had some good times of togetherness which was well missed for a while due to the repatriation of BGN families and some serving personnel back to the UK in early March 2020.

At the end of the event, scores were counted by the sports ICs, and the results were published declaring the overall best team. Corporal Sujan, Corporal Thaman and Corporal Bimal from Junior Team A were announced the best team, winning all three events. A small presentation of Christmas hats and congratulations were presented to the winning team by Deputy Commander Lieutenant Colonel Simon Townsend before the close down of BGN Christmas sports day.

Road safety Challenges in Nepal

By Sgt Mahesh Wanem, AMTO, BGN

Road crash fatalities and injuries are becoming a growing problem in Nepal. The increasing human population and traffic congestion have made the city roads ever busier and more dangerous; consequently, road crash deaths and injuries in Nepal have been rising significantly over the last two decades. On average 1,700 people lose their lives and 12,000 people sustain injuries in Nepal every year due to the road traffic collision (Manandhar DUDBCK). Nepal has developed a national road safety strategy and Road Safety Action plan 2013 -2020 based on the five pillars of the United Nations Global plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020. However only a little effort has been given by the government on addressing these pillars and consequently Nepal is facing a serious road safety challenge.

Almost 70 serving personnel and more than 200 civilian staff are currently serving at BGN and about 99 percent of them use some sort of means of transportation and

because of that road safety is a major concern for British Gurkhas Nepal and it is important to highlight some prominent factors that can contribute to a road crash.

Factors that can contribute to a road crash

Road crashes may not occur by a single cause; multiple factors can contribute to a road traffic collision. All contributing factors to the road crash are generally classified in the following categories.

- **Human factor:** Most of the road crashes in Nepal are caused due to the behaviour of the people involved. Tiredness, driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs and non-defensive driving habits such as deliberate risk taking, distraction (by mobiles, music, friends), speeding, being late, disregard for road rules and choosing the unsafe option are commonly seen on the roads of Nepal.
- **Vehicle factor:** Vehicle issue are another prominent factor that cause road traffic collision across the country. We can witness poorly maintained vehicles (without safety inspection and servicing) being driven on the roads and they are the most obvious hazards among the road users. Some of the vehicles lack modern safety features such as brake assist, electronic stability controls and ABS system posing a potential risk to other road users. Vehicles not suitable for the local terrain may also sometimes present risks to others.
- **Environmental factor:** The Road network in Nepal is mostly dominated by un-engineered roads this being one of the dominant factors for road crashes in the country. Surface and the condition of the road has a tremendous effect on road driving. Poor visibility as a result of heavy rain, pollution and bright sunshine are the biggest hazards while driving. Pedestrians, cyclists and M/cyclists become more vulnerable when the road surface is wet. Animals, push carts, street vendors and debris on the road are also common factors contributing to road crashes. Poor street lighting significantly impairs the safety of drivers, pedestrians, riders and public transport users.

Improvement in road safety

A robust plan must be developed to make roads safer not only for drivers but also for vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists and public transport users. Improvement in road safety can save road users from death and prevent non-fatal injuries and lifelong disabilities. In order to improve the road safety in Nepal the government should particularly focus on the following areas.

- **Engineering:** Priority must be given to the functional aspect of the roads across the country. Poorly maintained and muddy roads must be replaced with well-engineered concrete roads.

Investment should be made on traffic signs, traffic signals, intersection management, streetlights and road surface markings. The government must develop various road safety strategies and implement road crash mitigation measures.

- **Education and public awareness:** Road safety education must be introduced in school curriculums as part of their education. It plays an important role in shaping the attitude and behaviour of children and young people ensuring they become responsible road users. A wide range of public awareness campaigns on road safety can be launched across the country.
- **Enforcement:** The enforcement of traffic laws is an effective way of improving road safety in Nepal. Road safety related laws regarding speeding, drink driving, seat belt, motorcycle helmet, and child restraints are to be implemented.
- **Health and Emergency services:** Quick response from medical services can save lives and mitigate the severity of injury. Emergency medical services, police, fire brigade and air ambulances should be provided by the government. Qualified medical personnel, medical facilities and post trauma care must be established in different locations.

Road Safety Management System in Nepal

Road traffic injuries and deaths can be prevented by introducing and implementing nationwide road safety programmes and policies however, road safety management in Nepal is a complex and multi-dimensional problem. Political instability, lack of road safety awareness, poor funding, governance and corruption are the major constraints for development and implementation of a functional road safety management system in Nepal. A constructive road safety management system can be established by ensuring the following simple steps.

- **Database system:** A Database system provides access to different kinds of related data and helps to manage a huge amount of information. For the effective management of road safety, database in various specific field are required e.g. population database, road network across the country, vehicle registration and ownership, driving licence, road crash statistics.
- **Governance and planning:** Independent bodies/ departments should be established for different purpose e.g. strategic road networking, data collection and safe holding, traffic law enforcement, vehicle licence acquisition etc. All governing bodies must be able to create an achievable plan to complete their mission within a specific timeframe. All those departments/ bodies need to work cooperatively to draft legal documents related to road safety, acts,



Driver training- Jan 2020 (Vehicle fault reporting Procedure)



BGK MT driver training - Feb 2020 (Before COVID 19 lockdown)



Sgt Mahesh – Road safety brief to SPs and CS staff prior to Hills' Angels' M/cycle fun run

rules, regulations and guidelines, with mechanisms for amendments.

- **Crash Prevention system:** Crash prevention measures must be developed and made available across the country such as Road user guides, booklets on road rules, protective clothing, driver education and licencing system, regulated driving schools, driving licence acquisition system, public awareness, law enforcement, speed management, vehicle safety inspection and maintenance, road design, maintenance standard, traffic control devices and road side hazard management.

- **Post-Crash Management System:** The aim of the Post-Crash management system is to reduce damage or injury, treat injury and save lives by using emergency facilities. Police, fire brigade, ambulance, air ambulance, qualified medical staff and health care facilities must be adequate and well facilitated with modern technology and equipment.
- **Vehicle Crash investigation system:** Every crash event must be investigated and recorded which helps to improve road safety management. It also helps the investigators to analyse and make further improvements in the system. All vehicle crashes must be recorded in a database and should be made publicly accessible.
- **Road safety analysis and research:** Analysis and research is necessary in order to develop an effective road safety measure.

BGN's efforts to keep our people safe on roads

Road safety is a shared responsibility and every member of society can contribute to improve road safety and BGN is no exception to this. BGN itself is a huge organisation where more than 80 vehicles are in operation in three stations (BGK, BGP and BGD) in order to sustain its operational capability across the country. Furthermore, almost 98 percent of the serving members and civilian staff own personal vehicle and share public roads every day. In order to keep our people safe on roads, BGN has been implementing road safety measures in various ways. As AMTO (Assistant Mechanical Transport Officer) I am required to conduct road safety awareness campaigns for BGN every month. The aim of the campaign is to make our people aware of potential hazards while on roads. We also conduct an annual road safety presentation to all serving members, dependants and civilian staff and which was delivered via Zoom this year due to the COVID constraints.



Sgt Mahesh - Road safety brief to SPs and CS staff prior to Hills' Angels' M/cycle fun run

BGN has been implementing precise policies regarding M/cycle helmet, child restraint, speed limit, seat belt, drink drive and they are available to read on BGNSI.

We are also educating our serving members and civilian staff on road safety by conducting regular briefs and training programmes like the induction brief, vehicle familiarisation training and driver EC training. BGN is currently working cooperatively with Nepal Traffic Police which allow us to exchange ideas, knowledge and experience with each other that can benefit both parties and helps us promote road safety in our community.

Defence Section, British Embassy Kathmandu

By Captain Bijay Limbu, SO Admin, Defence Section

Defence Section:

Defence Attaché: Col R T Goodman MBE (Richard)
Assistant Military Attaché: Maj H Pun (Hebindra)
SO Admin: Capt B Limbu (Bijay)

The first quarter of 2020 for the Defence Section team was occupied by numerous visits. CGS, CDLS, Comdt RMAS, Col Comdt, Dep Col Comdt, Col BG, the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas and MAB STTT visits were a huge success. The first ever Combined (RMAS, ACSC, RCDS) Alumni event took place on 08 Feb 20 in the presence of the HMA and Comdt RMAS. In Mar 2020, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic worldwide, Nepal went into national lockdown and the airport was closed for 4 months. HMG staff at the Embassy were scaled-back and dependants repatriated to the UK in line with the (then) FCO Drawdown Plan. The Defence Section remained operational in-country throughout, both supporting broader HMG outputs as well as fulfilling MOD objectives.

Throughout the lockdown, the Defence Section was called-in on a daily basis to create permissive environment for the MOD objectives. The Defence Section staff worked tirelessly to secure movement permits for BGN, BGP and the Gurkha Welfare Trust (Nepal) (GWT (N)) which greatly assisted in the continuation of their output delivery at the time of national lock-down. We were able to secure Diplomatic Clearance for UK Military resilience flights (three RAF A400Ms) to enter Nepal to sustain the British Army Garrison. This is significant in a number of regards. First, these were the first UK military aircraft to be permitted access to Nepal in over 5 years following some controversy over the UK's military response to the 2015 earthquake. Second, this has presented the opportunity to exercise an element of our Op WILFORD JFHQ contingency plan for Nepal and to capture lessons for the future. The Defence Section immensely lobbied Nepal Government to allow all three flight into Nepal and painstakingly coordinated with relevant airport departments for smooth ground handling on landing including fuel charges, customs, visas for crew members, cargo clearances and other airport facilities.



HMA addressing the attendees of the combined Alumni (RCDS, ACSC, RMAS) event held on 08 Feb 20



Col Goodman MBE (Defence Attaché) welcoming the Nepal Army Officers for the combined Alumni (RCDS, ACSC, RMAS)

Despite COVID-19 restrictions, significant military events were marked following COVID-19 safety protocols. The DA attended the ANZAC Day at the Australian Embassy on 25 Apr 20, and VJ Day was commemorated at BGN on 15 Aug 20 - the footage from which was sent to the MOD for use in wider UK commemorations.

Mention must be made of the work of the GWT (N) which has assisted in maintaining the trust and confidence of the Government of Nepal throughout the national lockdown. The UK charity is part-funded by the MOD and the DA acts as the in-country Director; the current Chairman of the Board of Trustees is CDLS. As well as maintaining medical and welfare support to its Gurkha Veteran beneficiaries during the lockdown, the organisation was able to re-purpose its community water and sanitation programme staff to provide much-needed COVID-19 support for government hospitals and quarantine centres, drawing down on UK Aid money. This has brought a great deal of kudos, both at home and in-country. This work was highlighted during the virtual visit to Nepal by Lord Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister of State (Minister for South Asia and the Commonwealth) on 27 Aug 20, just prior to the launch of the FCDO.

Face-to-face contact with the Nepali Army has been restrained during this period, owing to the restricted circumstances. However, the Defence Section has, despite numerous barriers (i.e. no in-country language testing, no UK visa system, no commercial international flight schedule) managed to get all of the Nepali Army students to meet the start of their respective Tier 1 UK courses – RCDS, ACSC, RMAS and pre-RMAS – as well as recover those Nepali Army students and their dependants who completed their studies in the UK over the summer. This achievement has been remarked upon favourably by the Nepali Embassy in London.

The UK also has a student currently attending the Nepali ACSC in Kathmandu. Attendance by overseas students is much-valued by the Nepali Army, but has reduced markedly on account of the pandemic. However, the UK has been able to take-up this place, as planned. Capt Bijay (SO Admin) deployed back to UK as the Rear Operations Group (ROG) Officer-in-Charge (OIC),

responsible for the delivery of Real Life Support to BGN dependants who were evacuated to the UK due to the COVID-19 pandemic and had stayed there for seven months. He was supported by a team of six members from BGN.

In summary, a persistent presence and active engagement has positioned us well over the last six months and we have been able to leverage off the back of a series of timely, earlier high-profile visits to secure notable concessions and freedoms to operate within the country where others have been restricted – whether this was in recovering stranded British nationals, or obtaining clearances for RAF flights to arrive at a ‘closed’ international airport. We have not burnt too much equity on route and have used the secured freedoms to capitalise on the situation, not least by coalescing operational-level inputs (i.e. from British Gurkhas Nepal, Gurkha Welfare Trust (Nepal) and UK Aid funding) for strategic-level positive effect.

Report on BGN Families Repatriation to UK in the light of COVID-19 pandemic Rear Operations Group (ROG)
By Captain Bijay Limbu, ROG

The UK Rear Operations Group (ROG) was established and deployed with the aim to deliver vital Real-Life Support (RLS) to British Gurkhas Nepal (BGN) families repatriated to the UK as part of the FCDO coordinated COVID-19 response plan. The team was responsible for the provision of RLS for 185 dependants, predominantly of Nepalese origin who had travelled to the UK unaccompanied and had stayed there for seven months.



Lama Guru visiting BGN families at Larkhill for a mental wellbeing lecture during the pandemic and national lockdown



BGN ROG Team (L - R Cpl Amrit Gurung, Cpl Surya Gurung, WO2 Nabin Rai, LCpl Dinesh Ghale, Capt Bijay Limbu, Cpl Khagendra Gurung, Sgt Mahesh Wanem)

First and foremost, the team delivered a robust Reception, Staging, Onward Movement, and Integration (RSOI) package to all families on arrival in the UK at Larkhill - this set the momentum from the onset. BGN families had arrived in the UK with a suitcase each to live in an empty service accommodation with no access to proper welfare provisions. The team engaged with a number of enabling agencies including AMEY Defence Services, Army Families Federation, Army Welfare Service and the Garrison and consequently, managed to source a substantial amount of goods. The team then started a home delivery service for assisting families with their household provisions and ran a thrift shop complete with a library. The venue enabled children to conduct education remotely as well as to seek help for after-school work. The team organised a number of activities such as trips to local sites of historical significance on a regular basis. All of which contributed significantly to the general wellbeing of families. Throughout, the team ensured that the accommodation, equipment and stores were COVID-secure. The ROG team member's initiative and action made a huge impact in terms of the ROG's ability to deliver vital RLS to a large contingent of families which included dependants with underlying health issues as well as one who had undergone major surgery.

The team organised numerous events, visits, coffee mornings, well-being lectures, religious events and even the Dashain 2020 celebration during their seven months stay. It would not have been possible without late night works, meticulous planning, numerous risk assessments and hard graft from every ROG members on a daily basis.

The ROG team played a huge role in the administration of three UK Military resilience flights (three RAF A400Ms) in the UK end - passenger pick-up and drop-off at odd hours; baggage collections, stores and delivery to Liverpool. The team also successfully moved 55 MFO boxes and additional luggage independently with the support of RC movers. End-to-end tasks included initial paperwork, liaison with RC movers, MCCP, pre-weighing, delivery of boxes to RAF BZZ, checks at RAF BZZ and finally loading into the bay for onwards loading into RAF A400Ms.

The driving details, children pick-up and drop-off, shopping details and the list goes on; but the team was

ever present for the dependants. The lack of resources and vehicle for the families was evident from the onset but the ROG team never made the dependants feel short of any day-to-day needs. The handover and takeover of SFAs, pre-travel administration to/from UK at the time of global pandemic tested the team to the fullest but the team's initiative, agile and adaptable nature and ethos made these tasks seamless.

The ROG team delivered an exceptionally high standard of support to approx. 185 dependants, constantly liaising with key enabling agencies such as HQ Regional Command, HQ Brigade of Gurkhas and local authorities. With tactful diplomacy, tenacity and forward thinking, the team successfully recovered BGN families back to Nepal and closed down the ROG without a single issue - a truly outstanding achievement!

In summary, the outstanding contribution made by the ROG members to the success of arguably the most critical operation undertaken by BGN in the last 4 years in the face of the pandemic's global impact is commendable beyond these few sentences.

Huge kudos to the following ROG team:

Capt Bijay Limbu (GSPS, SO Admin British Embassy Kathmandu) - OIC
 WO2 Nabin Rai (GSPS, RAWO BGN) - 2IC
 SSgt Chitra Gurung (QOGLR, Asst BUWO BGN)
 Sgt Mahesh Wanem (QOGLR, MT SNCO BGN)
 Cpl Khagendra Gurung (QGS, NST JNCO)
 Cpl Amrit Gurung (QGS, NST JNCO)
 LCpl Dinesh Ghale (QGS, NST JNCO)

Recruiting

By Major Jack Millar RGR (OC BGP)

Recruit Intake 21 (RI21), alongside significant levels of hand washing, saw the recruiting of 340 Trainee Riflemen from a cohort of 540 mask-clad Potential recruits (PRs). The call forward to Central Selection was from the best of those that were unsuccessful in 2020. The selection was altered to make it safe for PRs and the recruiting staff but the quality of Trainee attending Catterick remained high.



Medical Centre staff during RI21 selection

The key constraint was space. There was not enough of it in BGP to house all of the PRs during the testing phase and in the interim while they waited for results. This saw the hiring of local “Party Palaces” which were converted into large accommodation blocks. PRs were likely disappointed by the distinct lack of partying but, they were kept very well entertained by soldiers from the exceptionally professional 2RGR, Brunei based battalion.



Selection begins early at BGP

The second constraint was manning. Travel restrictions put in place by the Government of Nepal at the 11th hour prevented recruiting assistants from the UK from flying to Nepal. On announcement of the bad news 2RGR were quick to lend support and they matched the entire SET requirement in a single and selfless act that saved RI21 central selection... Thank you 2 RGR!



PRs doing heaves amidst health safety precautions

The restrictions prevented educators from traveling to Nepal too, so in keeping with the trend of the hour, the education exams were all conducted remotely. Speaking and listening exams were via an internet link and written exam papers were scanned and sent to the UK for marking, a novel work around in the time available. The main priority was personnel safety, while ensuring the quality-line was met. Recruits were selected on their performance in physical and mental assessments and an interview. The physical tests were Heaves, 2Km Run, Med ball throw and the Mid-thigh pull. The mental tests were English Speaking, Listening and Writing. This year saw the Speaking and Listening assessments combined into one single test that provided greater ability to understand a PRs communication quality and it will be sustained for future years.



Final Group Attestation

Unfortunately, RI21 were unable to complete the DOKO race which was sorely missed by all apart from the PR's.

The success for this year's selection was in the hard work of the civilian support staff and recruit assistants from Nepal and 2 RGR who diligently enforced the force health protection measures. The prevention measures from medical professionals were made central to the plan and this prevented any spread of the virus. Clear evidence that the professional advice from our medical staff works and it will be central to future plans as the pandemic continues.



*The Recruits attestation was conducted by Her Majesty's Ambassador to Nepal
L-R: GM BGN, HMA to Nepal, (back) OC BGP, Commander BGN, Deputy Commander BGN*

BGP Conference Room named after Gurkha legend Col (Retd) JP Cross
Sergeant Bikash Dewan, Senior Tech BGP

On 21 June 2020, Commander BGN and all of us in BGP gathered maintaining social distance to celebrate the 95th Birthday of Lieutenant Colonel (Retd) JP Cross OBE saheb. It was a special moment for him and historic for all of us to witness the event along with the naming of the BGP conference room by the KK mess as the JP Cross conference room, which he officially inaugurated. There were birthday wishes from all of us along with HQBG and his formal comrades from the UK.



Special cake for special occasion. Ready to be cut with Khukuri



Lt Col (Retd) JP Cross OBE saheb cutting his 95th birthday cake flanked by Comd BGN and BGP 2IC sahebs



JP Cross saheb and L Cpl Rupesh, youngest SP of BGP, jointly inaugurated the "Lt Col JP Cross OBE Conference Room"

Kadoorie Agricultural Aid Association
By Colonel (Retd) A M Mills OBE

It began over dinner at Flagstaff House, Hong Kong, in 1968 when Sir Horace Kadoorie and the then Brigadier Bunny Burnett agreed to help Gurkha pensioners returning to Nepal. Lessons in agriculture were provided at Kadoorie Farm in the New Territories; then two additional farms were established in Nepal and, before long, agricultural training and projects were provided through the Gurkha Welfare Trust's network of Welfare Centres. Today, the Kadoorie Agricultural Aid Association (KAAA), with its 73 permanent staff and 183 seasonal tradesmen, is still generously funded by the Kadoorie Family. We provide infrastructure projects and employment training to poor communities in the mid and upper hills of Nepal.

Infrastructure

Bridges. Built 14 trail bridges spanning 24-120m

Water Supply. Built 12 water projects, providing water to 5,000 people. Three of these projects have involved vertical pumping powered by solar arrays

Micro Hydro Electricity. Built six hydroelectric projects, providing electricity to some 8,000 people.

Earthquake Repair. Continuing towards our goal of building 800 houses by February 2022. So far, we have built 600 houses across nine villages, mostly from metal-fibre-sandwich and stone construction.



Decking out a suspension bridge



Sama Gaon hydroelectricity plant

Special Projects

Cliff Trackways. Built 14 kms of trackway in areas affected by landslides.

Trout Farm. A Trout Farm that sold 11.5 tons of trout, generating welfare income.

Apple Orchard. Continuing to plant 3,000 saplings. Apples to market in 2024.

Solar Home Lighting. 560 solar home lighting sets.

Mi-Player. A SIMPLEX internet system installed in Northern Dhading.

Medical Camps. Three camps, each treating some 1800 patients.



Team Gurkha: KAAA, BGN GWT(N)

Employment Training

We provide employment training to some 540 youth per annum. These range through some 30 different courses; from 3-months masonry training to a 3-year diploma in Medicine (HA).

Discretionary Funding. We have provided some £45K in discretionary funding, mostly in the fields of medical support, earthquake repair, destitution, education and support to NGOs.

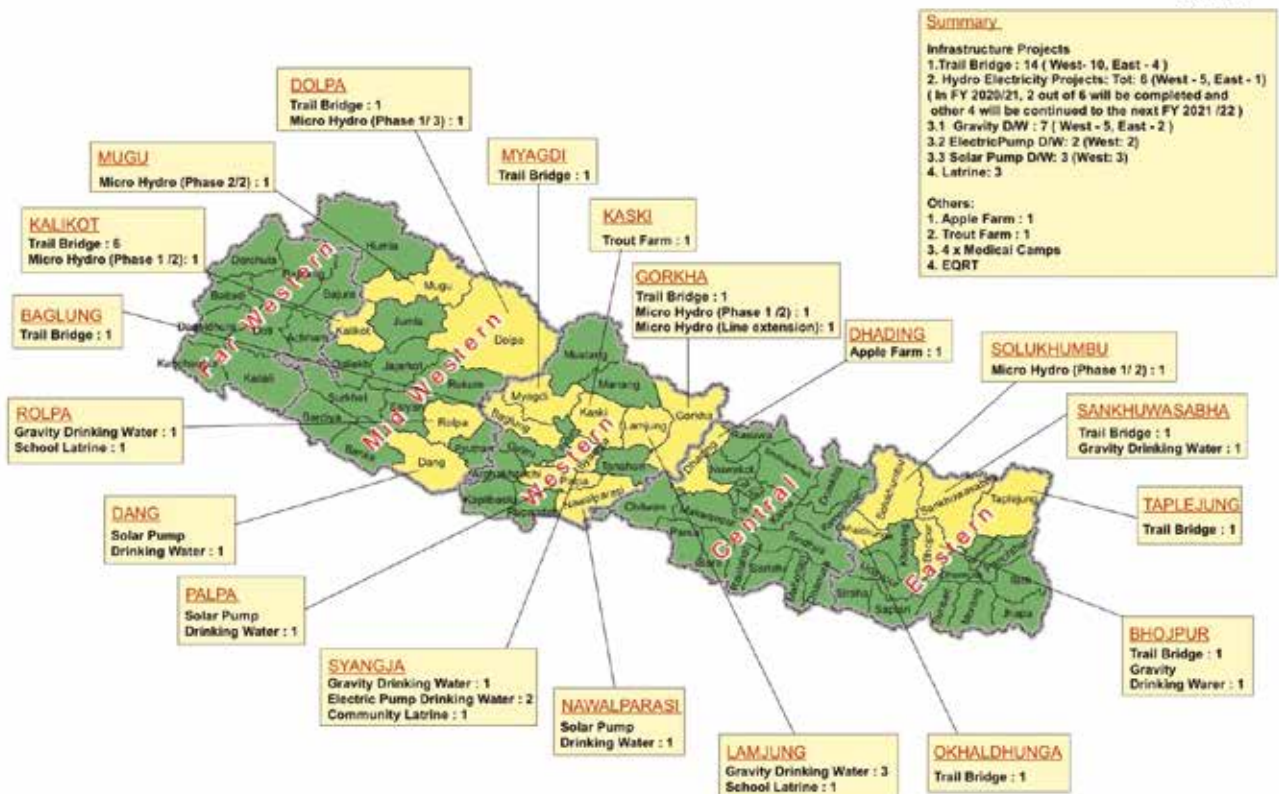
In addition. The Kadoorie Charitable Foundation provides funding to a number of NGOs.

We have been spared the worst ravages of the Covid pandemic, and have been able to carry on as normal, despite the occasional problems with material supply.

It is a great honour to play our part in Team Gurkha. We value the help we receive from the GWT, the Brigade and the Embassy and, after 53 years of successful partnership, we look forward to many more.

KAAA COMMUNITY AID PROJECTS - FY 2020/21

Annex D



THE GURKHA WELFARE TRUST

Gurkhas living their lives with dignity

Staff List

Director

Mr Al Howard

Director The Gurkha Welfare Trust

Headquarters British Gurkhas Nepal

Col Richard Goodman MBE

Director GWT(N)

Headquarters GWT

Lt Col Elton Davis

Lt Col (Ret'd) Yambahadur Rana Ex QGS

Dr Gerda Pohl, MRCP

Capt (Ret'd) Gamarsing Gurung Ex 1RGR

Maj (Ret'd) Hitman Gurung MVO Ex QGS

Maj (Ret'd) Yamkumar Gurung Ex QGS

Capt JJ Kelvey-Brown

Mr Sindhulal Shrestha

WO2 (Ret'd) Deepak Kumar Shrestha Ex RE

Dr Satish Gurung MBBS, MD

Mr Mohan Darlami

Mr Sidhartha Gurung

Mr Tej Bahadur Rana

Mr Om Bikram Gurung

Ms Samridi Shrestha

Mr Tokbahadur Gurung

Mr Purnabahadur Rana

Mr Dev Bhakta Thapa

Field Director

Deputy Field Director

Medical Director

Support Manager

Head of Assurance

Head of Individual Aid

Project Engineer

Financial Advisor

Programme Director Rural Water &

Sanitation Programme

Deputy Medical Director

Coordination Officer

Communications Officer

IT Officer

Logistics Officer

Human Resources Manager

Office Manager

EO (L) Admin Residential Home Kaski

EO (L) Admin Residential Home Dharan

Area Welfare Centres (AWCs)

Cluster 1

Maj (Ret'd) Yambahadur Rana MVO MBE Ex RGR

Sgt (Ret'd) Tejbahadur Thapa Ex 1RGR

Hon Lt (QGO) (Ret'd) Kharkabahadur Thapa Ex QGS

SSgt (Ret'd) Gambahadur Thapa Ex QGE

CI (Ret'd) Haribahadur Gurung Ex GCSPF

Senior Area Welfare Officer (SAWO) Butwal

Cluster Support Team Manager (CST Mgr) Butwal

Area Welfare Officer (AWO) Bheri

AWO Gulmi

AWO Chitwan

Cluster 2

Capt (Ret'd) Kedar Rai Ex QGS

Sgt (Ret'd) Bishwaraj Gurung Ex 6GR

Capt (Ret'd) Nimbahadur Pun Ex QGS

Maj (Ret'd) Birbahadur Gurung Ex RAMC

Sgt (Ret'd) Krishnabahadur Gurung Ex 1RGR

SAWO Kaski

CST Mgr Kaski

AWO Lamjung

AWO Syangja

AWO Tanahun

Cluster 3

Capt (Ret'd) Pimbahadur Gurung Ex GSPS

Hon Lt (QGO) (Ret'd) Thakursing Gurung Ex 2RGR

WO2 (Ret'd) Shriprasad Tamang Ex 1RGR

Insp II (Ret'd) Shyamkumar Rai Ex GCSPF

SAWO Bagmati

CST Mgr Bagmati

AWO Gorkha

AWO Rumjatar

Cluster 4

Capt (Ret'd) Purnaparsad Limbu Ex 2RGR	SAWO Dharan
Sgt (Ret'd) Birbahadur Limbu Ex 2RGR	CST Mgr Dharan
Capt (Ret'd) Badri Rai Ex RGR	AWO Diktel
Sgt (Ret'd) Dewaraj Rai Ex 2RGR	AWO Bhojpur
Sgt (Ret'd) Mangalsing Tamang Ex QGS	AWO Khandbari
Insp II (Ret'd) Govinda Kandangwa Ex GCSPF	AWO Tehrathum

Cluster 5

Hon Lt (QGO) (Ret'd) Punendraprasad Limbu Ex 2RGR	SAWO Damak
Hon Lt (QGO) (Ret'd) Tirthabahadur Thapa Ex 2RGR	CST Mgr Damak
WO2 (Ret'd) Khargabahadur Rai Ex 2RGR	AWO Taplejung
Hon Lt (QGO) Khemraj Maden Ex QOGLR	AWO Phidim
Sgt (Ret'd) Ramesh Lama Ex RGR	AWO Darjeeling

Honorary Area Welfare Officer (HAWO)

WO2 (Ret'd) Satyasagar Ghale Ex 6GR	HAWO Dehradun (Dharamsala)
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Liaison Officer Gurkha Settlement Office (LO GSO)

Maj (Ret'd) Gyanbahadur Limbu MVO Ex QOGLR

Changeover of Key Staff

GWT(N) said goodbye and wished well for the future to the following senior management staff who were departing either on retirement or completion of tour:

Maj (Ret'd) Hemchandra Rai MBE BEM Ex GSPS	Deputy Field Director
Lt (QGO) (Ret'd) Purnabahadur Gurung Ex 1RGR	Support Manager
Hon Lt (QGO) (Ret'd) Haribahadur Rana Ex 1RGR	SAWO Butwal
Lt (QGO) (Ret'd) Krishnadhaj Shahi MBE Ex QGE	CST Mgr Butwal
CSgt (Ret'd) Subhash Rai Ex 2RGR	AWO Diktel

Welcomes were made to the following:

Capt (Ret'd) Nimbahadur Pun Ex QGS	AWO Lamjung
Maj (Ret'd) Birbahadur Gurung Ex RAMC	AWO Syangja
CI (Ret'd) Haribahadur Gurung Ex GCSPF	AWO Chitwan

Standing together through uncertainty

Throughout 2020 we did everything we could to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on those we exist to support - Gurkha veterans.

Due to the swift and effective actions of Nepal's government, limiting movement and enforcing quarantines, the spread of COVID-19 in Nepal was initially slower than neighbouring countries. That said, the risk has remained high and the risk to our Gurkha veterans and widows even higher, due to their age and their health.

From March, the Nepal government banned all movement across the country, however, because we were delivering essential medicine and PPE, we were allowed to drive to the homes of the vulnerable Gurkha veterans and widows we look after. Whilst we normally deliver three months-worth of financial aid to our pensioners at a time, this year we have been delivering five months-worth, due to the uncertainty of the country-wide lockdown.

During the lockdown period (24 March to 17 August 2020):

- More than 1,100 field deployments were conducted, visiting over 4,500 veterans and widows at home and delivering medicines and/or Welfare Pensions.
- Our medical staff delivered:
 - 44k+ welfare screenings
 - 21k+ telephone consultations
 - Dispensed 20k+ medications
 - Held over 800 face-to-face medical consultations
 - Took over 900 medical emergency calls

In the UK, we have been blown away by the unstinting support of the public whilst in lockdown. Through May, June and July, over 200 people climbed their stairs, ramps and local hills repeatedly with the goal of summiting the equivalent of Everest in order to raise money for us. Their fundraising efforts raised over £50,000 for our work in Nepal. We also celebrated our most successful campaign to date. Launched in February, the second of our homebuilding appeals raised a phenomenal £800k+.

2,200km across Nepal unsupported on a Bicycle

Former Gurkha officer Rob Abernethy took on an epic journey cycling unsupported across Nepal smashing his target of £100,000 to build a school there. Rob departed the UK for India on 29 December 2019 to start his challenge in Darjeeling on New Year's Day. From there he tackled the brutal terrain of Nepal in its entirety before finishing the other side in Landsdowne, India. We were delighted to welcome Rob twice along the way; once at our Residential Home in Pokhara, and again at Shree Prabha, the school to be rebuilt thanks to Rob's journey. At the school, we made sure to give him a hero's

welcome. Hundreds of students lined the streets, each desperate to give Rob a Mala (flower garland) to thank him for paving their way to a brighter future. All of the funds raised by Rob's cycle will assist in the rebuild of Shree Prabha School in the Gulmi District of west Nepal.



Major Rob Abernethy garlanded on completion of his cycle ride

TRAILWALKER 2019

Organised by the Queen's Gurkha Signals, Trailwalker remains one of the highlights of our fundraising year and, in September 2019, 232 teams completed the 100km challenge across the South Downs in aid of the Trust and our charity partner Oxfam GB, together raising close to £1m. The Queen's Gurkha Signals were the first to cross the finish line in 10 hours and 25 minutes, beating reigning champions the Royal Gurkha Rifles.

New Homes for Heroes

Thanks to an outstandingly successful fundraising appeal, we took pre-emptive action by building 110 new earthquake-resilient homes for Gurkha veterans and widows before lockdown measures were imposed. Our homes are built to an earthquake-resilient design and they are able to withstand the heavy rains and strong winds of the annual monsoon season.

Empowering Women and Girls in Nepal

Though Nepal is increasingly developed in many senses there are still some subjects which are considered 'taboo' in some cultures within Nepal itself. As a result, there are many misconceptions around the subject of menstruation. In Nepal, only one in ten girls practice good menstrual hygiene. Since 2018, we have been distributing packs of reusable sanitary pads to GWT-built schools, for both students and teachers.

Medical Camp in Mugu

We provide free medical camps for communities living in the remote hills of Nepal. For many, this is the only medical assistance they receive. Relatively simple procedures like cataract removals and tooth extractions can make all the difference to those living in discomfort. Our medical team braved the cold weather in the far west of Nepal for the medical camp in Mugu at the end of 2019. Over 1,500 people attended the camp across the four days and the team worked flat out, delivering over 100 eye surgeries, 200 dental procedures and 90 hearing aids.

Keeping elderly Veterans and Widows warm

To help our vulnerable Gurkha pensioners stay warm last winter, we distributed blankets at our Welfare Centres, Residential Homes and at their homes. Weighing over 4kg each, the heavy 2m x 2m faux fur rugs were perfect for the winter months.

Our Years in Stats

Supporting Impoverished Gurkhas

We deliver a package of care to Gurkha veterans and widows to ensure they can live with dignity. Our Pensioner Support Teams journey into the hills of Nepal on motorbikes, in 4x4 vehicles and on-foot to pay them a pension, check their health and deliver medication in their own homes.

Last year our Pensioner Support Teams conducted just over 6,806 separate visits.

Financial aid

We pay a Welfare Pension to thousands of impoverished Gurkha veterans or widows.

Last year, over 4,400 Gurkha veterans and widows, with an average age of 80 years-old, received a pension worth 11,500 Nepali Rupees per month.

There were 232 recipients of the Disability Support Grant. 420 received the Home Carer's Allowance. Emergency Hardship Grants were awarded to 1,647 people, including home repair from flood and landslide damage.

All Gurkha veterans and widows also received a Winter Allowance of a warm winter blanket.

Medical Aid

We provide an international standard of healthcare and medication to Gurkha veterans and their families living in Nepal. We do this through our regional medical clinics, via home visits by specialist staff and by arranging subsidised treatment at carefully selected national hospitals. Last year The team treated 84,000 medical cases at our clinics and at home by mobile staff and held a medical camp attended by 1,538 people.



Widower Kausili Thapa



Widow Deukumari Gurung

Residential Homes

Our two Residential Homes provide round-the-clock care to Gurkha veterans and widows who would otherwise struggle to live alone. With no comparable facility in Nepal, they set the standard of care for the elderly.

This year our two Residential Homes housed 45 residents.

Clean Water And Sanitation

Our water projects bring clean water and sanitation to remote communities in Nepal. We install individual tap stands and toilets to households and schools. By ensuring a safe water source and providing a comprehensive education programme on the importance of sanitation we see sharp drops in water-borne diseases such as dysentery.

This year our Rural Water and Sanitation Team worked on a total of 109 projects. Over 6,500 households now have access to clean water, benefiting over 37,500 people.

School Projects

Our Schools Programme builds, repairs and improves schools in remote regions of Nepal and, in turn, provides access to education and a better future for Nepali children.

We built three major schools last year, worked on six building extensions, 32 refurbishments and two community centres.

Earthquake-resilient Homes

It's not if another earthquake hits Nepal, it's when. We are taking pre-emptive action by building earthquake-resilient homes for Gurkha veterans and widows. This year 110 new homes for vulnerable pensioners were completed. These homes offer a safer alternative for some of our most vulnerable Gurkha veterans and widows.



Kaski home visits



Prabha School Bohoragaon students Suman Sahi and Gagan BK



GWT's ubiquitous Land Rover delivering support in Nepal

THE GURKHA MUSEUM

Vice Patrons

Field Marshall Sir John Chapple GCB CBE DL
Lieutenant General NAW Pope CBE
Colonel D R Wood MBE

Trustees

Mr M R Brooks Esq
Colonel CM Barnett MBE
Lieutenant General Sir David Bill KCB
Mr JW Bulbeck MSCI
Major JR Harrop
Mr S Masin FCA
Mrs S Rai
Colonel W Shuttlewood OBE
Colonel J Davies MBE (ex officio)
Major Gajendra Angdembe (ex officio to March 2020)
Major Shuresh Thapa MVO (ex officio from March 2020)

Staff (as at 31 Dec 20)

Director	Gavin Edgerley-Harris (to October 2020)
Director	Dr Daren Bowyer (from October 2020)
Assistant Director	Christine Bernáth
Head of Fundraising and Marketing	Charlie Martin
Collections Officer	Doug Henderson
Museum Assistants	Meghbahadur Rai
	Mekbahadur Rana
	Hombahadur Pun
	Chris Manson

Director's Report

Going Digital

The Gurkha Museum, in line with all heritage organisations in the country, had to shut its doors and operate remotely for the majority of 2020 as the UK began to navigate its way through the COVID-19 pandemic. Although it has been a long year marked predominantly by closure, interspersed with short periods of re-opening to the public, the Museum has not been idle in developing new ways to engage its audiences by going digital.

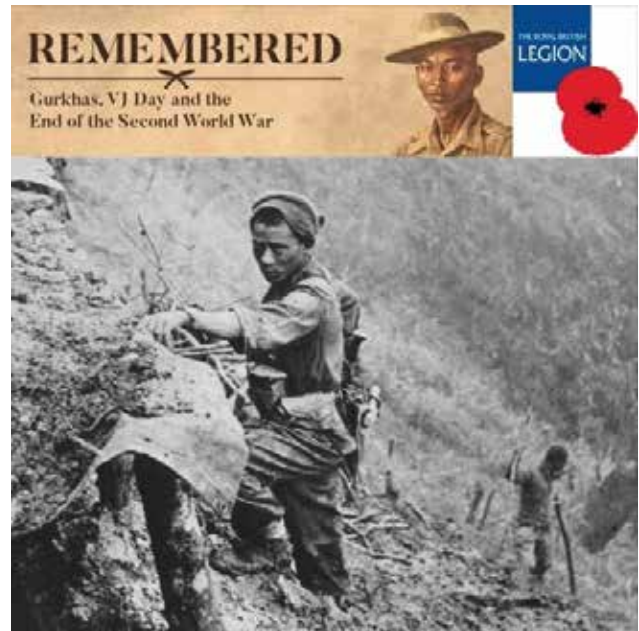
Public engagement is the key to the Museum's existence, without which it would serve as a mere repository of artefacts. To maintain public engagement while the Museum was closed proved a difficult but interesting challenge which has pushed the Museum to embrace its online and digital presence by creating new and exciting ways to share the Gurkha story.

One of the key changes that underpinned these new initiatives was the development of a new and improved website launched in July 2020, which hosted the Museum's first online Summer Exhibition: Remembered – Gurkhas, VJ Day, and the End of the

Second World War. The exhibition featured a series of articles, photographs and short videos, all accessible free of charge, and marked the start of what would become a regular addition to the Museum's exhibitions programme to accompany the physical Summer Exhibition on its return.

2020 also saw the start of the Museum's fledgling podcast series, through the release of three in-house produced podcasts which have since grown into a professionally curated series that will launch in 2021 with the kind technical support of Catriona Oliphant, daughter of a highly respected 7GR officer. To mark the 75th anniversary of VJ day, the Gurkha Museum worked with Catriona, alongside the Royal British Legion, to produce a podcast and accompanying film on the role of the Gurkhas in the Burma campaign.

Finally, the Museum has taken steps towards developing an entirely virtual reproduction of its viewing galleries to enable people across the world to virtually walk through the Museum and engage with certain artefacts and exhibits. This self-guided tour will be available to view through the Museum's website.



Although the Museum’s priorities in 2020 may have shifted towards the digital due to necessity, the closure has also brought about a significant physical project in the shape of a new Op HERRICK exhibition that will take the place of the VC gallery in the Museum. This exhibition, developed with the help of the Unit Heritage Officers with technical support from QGE, will serve as a representation of the Brigade’s actions in Afghanistan and the Middle East, and is due to open by summer 2021.

Staff

The Museum underwent a change of Director in October 2020, welcoming Dr Daren Bowyer to the role upon the retirement of Gavin Edgerley-Harris after 27 years at the Museum. Daren, a former Lieutenant Colonel in the Royal Engineers, left the Army in 2008 to pursue a second career in charity and educational leadership, and joins the Museum from Cumberland Lodge, a charity and residential retreat centre in Windsor Great Park. A new position of Head of Fundraising and Marketing was established and filled by promotion of the Commercial Manager, Mrs Charlie Martin.

Acquisitions

The care of the Collections has continued throughout the various periods of closure and have not suffered any detrimental effects during this time. A small but significant number of new acquisitions were made, including an unusual parang kukri donated by a former



British soldier who had acquired it during the Malayan Emergency. Three rare badges were also donated, consisting of two Martingale badges of 1st Gurkha Rifles and 3rd Gurkha Rifles, and one car badge of 10th Gurkha Rifles. A substantial portion of the Mike Barrett Archive was also left to the Museum by the late Lieutenant Colonel Mike Barrett OBE, which can be viewed on request. Finally, a portrait of Field Marshal William Slim was presented to the Museum by the 6th Gurkha Rifles Regimental Association, which is a copy of the painting presented by the Association to the Royal Gurkha Rifles on their formation.

Visitors, education, and outreach

The biggest single impact of the Pandemic was the reduction of visitor numbers to the Museum, which totalled just 2,730 during the periods of reopening. Our ability to welcome educational visits was likewise heavily impacted, although we were able to host 60 pupils jointly as part of Winchester Military Museums' contribution to National Science Week, shortly before the first lockdown. In addition to this, we also hosted five military unit visits over the course of the year.

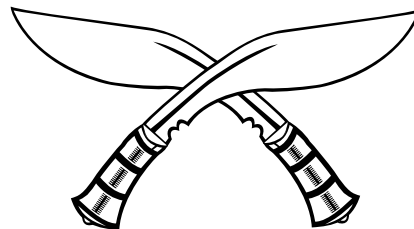
Despite our inability to host visitors and researchers at the Museum, we were able to continue supporting both the Army and the general public throughout our closure period by answering enquiries and conducting research remotely, ensuring continued engagement with our supporter base.

Conclusion

While there can be no doubting the negative impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Museum takes pride in its response to the challenges. The Gurkha Museum was among the first museums nationally to reopen after the initial lockdown. Covid control measures were developed and implemented to facilitate this, and the Museum was successful in achieving Visit Britain's "We're Good to Go" standard thanks to a number of a small changes to its operations. This includes the introduction of individual touch styluses for its interactives, as well as new and improved handsets for audio items. An online ticketing facility was also introduced to help control visitor numbers at any one time, in order to ensure visitors felt safe during their visit to the Museum.



THE GURKHA BRIGADE ASSOCIATION



Regimental Association Staff List

President

Lieutenant General Sir David Bill KCB

Life Vice Presidents

Field Marshal Sir John Chapple GCB CBE KStJ DL

General Sir Sam Cowan KCB CBE

Chairman

Colonel D G Hayes CBE

Secretary

Major Manikumar Rai MBE, DL. mani.rai121@mod.gov.uk

Chaplain

Lord Chartres GCVO, ChStJ, PC, FSA, FBS

Office

Headquarters Brigade of Gurkhas

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Camberley

Surrey, GU15 4NP

Telephone: 0300 1650582 Fax: 01276 412694

Regimental Associations

The Sirmoor Rifles Association 2nd King Edward VII's Own Goorkhas (The Sirmoor Rifles)

President	Brigadier I Rigden OBE
Chairman	Colonel WF Shuttlewood OBE
Hon Secretary	Major ND Wylie Carrick MBE honsec@2ndGoorkhas.com
Chairman Sirmoor Sathis	Captain Raju Gurung
Hon Treasurer	Captain EC Mackaness
Editor of Sirmooree	Colonel NJH Hinton MBE

6th Queen Elizabeth's Own Gurkha Rifles Regimental Association

President	Brigadier JA Anderson OBE
Chairman	Lieutenant Colonel D McK Briggs
Hon Secretary	Major D Bredin JP 6grspeedy@gmail.com
Gurkha Secretary	Major Kushiman Pangilama Gurung. kmgurung@hotmail.co.uk
Regimental Trust Secretary	MFH Adler Esq TD
Editor of Journal	Major RG Beven

7th Duke of Edinburgh's Own Gurkha Rifles Regimental Association

Chairman	Colonel MH Kefford OBE
Hon Secretary	Major PH Gay honsec7grra@outlook.com
Gurkha Secretary	Maj Padambahadur Limbu MVO plimbu67@hotmail.com
Editor of Journal	Brig DR d'A Willis CBE

10th Princess Mary's Own Gurkha Rifles Association

President	Lieutenant General PTC Pearson CB, CBE
Chairman	Colonel NDJ Rowe
Hon Secretary	Major HGW Stanford hgwstanford@gmail.com
Gurkha Secretary	Captain Capt Ashok Rai
Treasurer	Major SA Archer
New Letter Editor	Colonel R Litherland

The Royal Gurkha Rifles Association

President	Major General GM Strickland DSO MBE
Chairman	Colonel D Rex MVO
Regimental Secretary	Major B McKay MBE Bruce.Mckay100@mod.gov.uk
D/Chairman & Gurkha Secretary	Major Dammarbahadur Sahi
RGR Journal Editor	Major B McKay MBE

The Queen's Gurkha Engineers Association

President	Brigadier JL Clarke CBE
Chairman	Colonel R Walker OBE
Hon Secretary	Lieutenant Colonel I Moore qgeasec@gmail.com
Gurkha Secretary	Maj Prembahadur Ale
Hon Treasurer	MFH Adler Esq
Editor of Magazine/Website	Major A Gooch RE

Queen's Gurkha Signals Association

President	Major General JJ Cole OBE
Chairman	Lieutenant Colonel M R Complin qgsa@complin.co.uk
Assistant Secretary	Lieutenant Colonel Yambahadur Rana.
Treasurer QG SIGNALS Trust	Colonel RJ Watts MBE

The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment Regimental Association

President	Brigadier P Reehal MBE
Chairman	Lieutenant Colonel CRC Green
Hon Secretary	Maj (Retd) Palijar Tamang pali7317@hotmail.com
Hon Treasurer	Lieutenant Colonel LM Evanson-Goddard
Editor of Journal	Lieutenant Colonel JD Fenn

Gurkha Staff and Personnel Support

President	Colonel A Griffiths OBE
Chairman	Major Jit Hamal
Hon Secretary	WO1 Priyachandra Rai Priyachandra.Rai193@mod.gov.uk

Former Regimental Associations

- 1st King George V's Own Gurkha Rifles (The Malaun Regiment) Regimental Association
- 3rd Queen Alexandra's Own Gurkha Rifles Officers' Association
- 4th Prince of Wales's Own Gurkha Rifles Officers' Association
- 5th Royal Gurkha Rifles (Frontier Force) Regimental Association
- 8th Gurkha Rifles Regimental Association
- 9th Gurkha Rifles Regimental Association

Regimental Association officials may be contacted through The Secretary of the Gurkha Bde Association

The Gurkha Welfare Trust

Director Gurkha Welfare Trust

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Gurkha Welfare Centre (Salisbury)

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Gurkha Welfare Advice Centre UK (Aldershot)

Brigade Welfare Officer
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Gurkha Welfare Advice Centre UK
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The Gurkha Museum

Director Gurkha Museum

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Email: director@thegurkhamuseum.co.uk

Gurkha Brigade Association Forecast of Events 2022

Date	Regimental Association	Event	Location
19 Jan 22	7GR	7GR Lunch	Gurkha Museum, Winchester
01 Apr 22	QGE	Trg Party Attestation Parade	TBC
14 Mar 22	GBA	Memorial Gates Ceremony (Commonwealth Day)	Constitution Hill, London
30 Apr 22	RGR	RGR RA Reunion and Army v Navy Rugby	Twickenham
14 May 22	10GR	10GR Reunion	Twickenham Racecourse
14 May 22	7GR	All Ranks Reunion	Farnborough
04 Jun 22	GBA	GBA Memorial Service and Reunion	RMA Sandhurst
?? Jun 22	7GR	7GR Lunch	London
12 Jun 22	GBA	The Patcham Down Memorial Service	Brighton (2nd Sun in June)
14 Jun 22	7GR/GBA	Falkland island 40th Anniversary	National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire
04 - 08 Jul 22	HQBG	Brigade Week	RMA Sandhurst
06 Jul 22	HQBG	Brigade Briefing Day, Sounding Retreat & Dinner Night	RMA Sandhurst
09 Jul 22	GBA	GBA Bhela: Nepal Cup Final	Queens Avenue, Aldershot
10 Sep 22	7GR	Annual Reunion	Gurkha Museum, Winchester
15 Sep 22	GBA/HQBG	GBA Golf Competition (HQBG)	TBC
14 Sep 22	2GR	Sirmoor Club Reunion	Gurkha Museum, Winchester
22 Sep 22	GBA	GBA Trustees Meeting	Gurkha Museum, Winchester
10 Sep 22	2GR	SRA Delhi Day	Empire Banquet Hall, Aldershot
tbc Oct 22	10GR	AGM & Luncheon	TBC
10 Nov 22	GBA GBA AGM Briefing & Dinner	Field of Remembrance	Westminster Abbey Army & Navy Club, London
12 Nov 22	GWT	Gurkha Chautara Memorial Service	National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire
13 Nov 22	GBA	Remembrance Sunday - Cenotaph Parade	Horse Guards & Cenotaph, London

HRH The Duke of Edinburgh and The 7th Gurkha Rifles

By Brig D R d'A Willis CBE

The presence of a Royal Gurkha Rifles detachment, complete with Queen Victoria's Truncheon, on parade for the funeral of His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh at St George's Chapel in Windsor Castle on Saturday 17 April 2021 was an appropriate reminder of Prince Philip's connection with the Brigade of Gurkhas. This stems from the title 'Duke of Edinburgh's Own' being conferred on the 7th Gurkha Rifles on 1 January 1959 in honour of its record in both world wars, its long service in the Malayan jungles since 1948 and its close association with the British Crown. And of course, the 7th Duke of Edinburgh's Own Gurkha Rifles was one of the four antecedent regiments which merged to become The Royal Gurkha Rifles on 1 July 1994.

By serendipity, both 7th Gurkhas' battalions were stationed in Kluang, Malaya, at the time of the announcement and were able to celebrate the news together. A few weeks later during an official visit to the Far East, Prince Philip was able to meet many of the officers and men of the 7th, and their families for the first time, when he visited Singapore where the 2nd Battalion was now based at barracks on Blakang Mati island. That evening, the commanding officers of each battalion were invited on board *HMY Britannia* where amongst other matters they discussed with Prince Philip the form of a new badge which would recognise the link with him.

Later that year, to mark the grant of the Royal Title, a party of British and Gurkha officers and Gurkha Other Ranks led by the Colonel of the Regiment, Field Marshal Sir Gerald Templer, was received in audience by Her

Majesty The Queen and Prince Philip at Buckingham Palace. Then, on 21 June 1960, Prince Philip presented a new pipe banner to each battalion; on one side was his coat of arms and on the other the new 7 GR badge which incorporated Prince Philip's cypher, two entwined 'Ps' surmounted by his ducal coronet.



The new pipe banners presented by HRH Prince Philip at Buckingham Palace on 21 June 1960



HRH Prince Philip meets family members during his first visit to the regiment at Blakang Mati, 23 February 1959



Prince Philip meets Riflieman Sherbahadur Limbu MM 1/7 GR at Bau in Borneo

During the years that followed, Prince Philip visited his regiment of Gurkhas on a number of occasions when circumstances and his own programme of commitments allowed, both in the Far East and in the United Kingdom. One special occasion was his visit to 1/7 GR on operations in Borneo on 28 February 1965 when he presented the Military Medal to Rifleman Sherbahadur Limbu.

Other notable visits included the time 7 GR was on Public Duties in London in 1973, the first Gurkha battalion to do so and there was another visit to 1/7 GR at Church Crookham after its participation in the Falklands campaign. On that occasion he was able to watch a tactical demonstration and afterwards went forward to meet some of those who had taken part in

the mock attack. Speaking to one rifleman he pointed at the lanyard protruding from the soldier's combat jacket pocket and asked, 'What's on the end of that?' The man replied, 'Whistle, Sahib,' whereupon the Duke pulled out the lanyard to reveal a bottle opener. Everybody present there, including Prince Philip and the rifleman, roared with laughter.

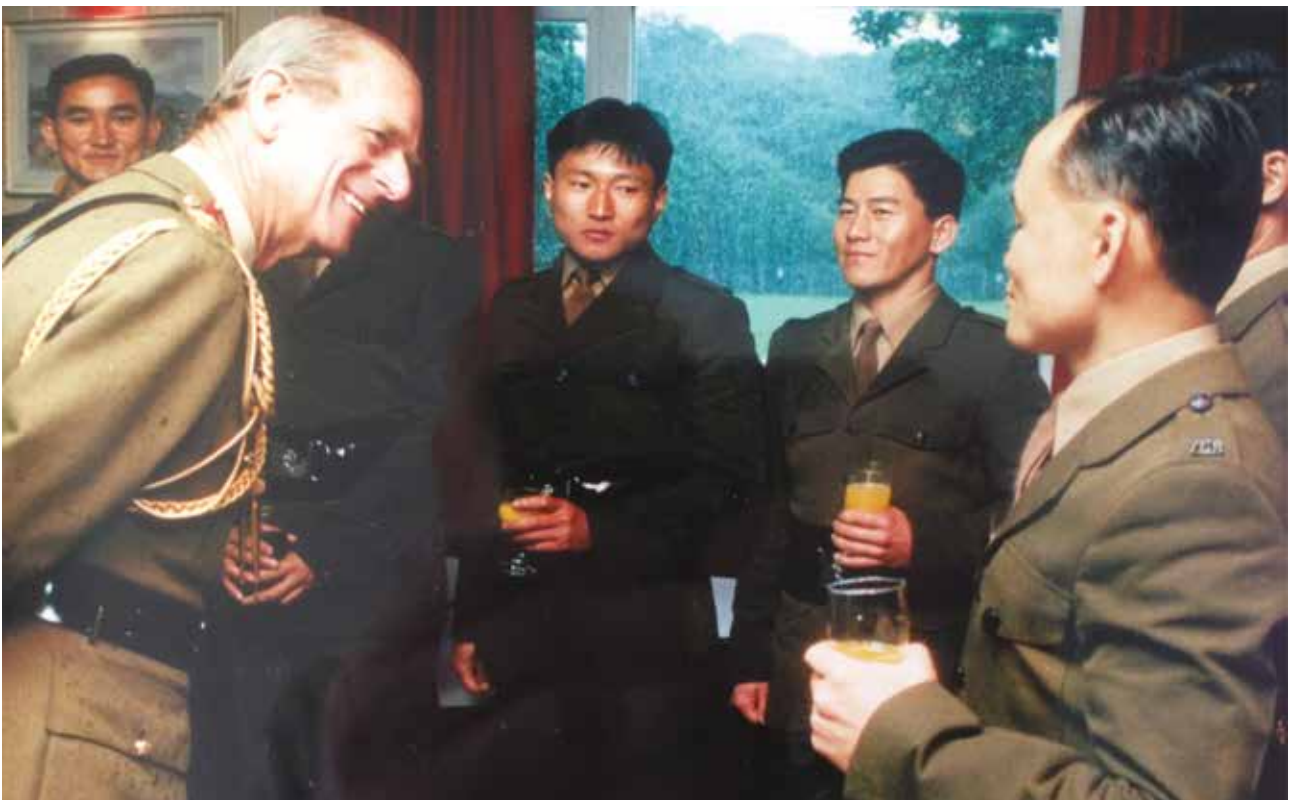
His Royal Highness was able to be present at the final parade of 2/7 GR at Lyemun Barracks, Hong Kong, on 23 October 1986 and again at the parade held Church Crookham on 26 May 1994 which marked the end of the regiment's existence prior to its reincarnation as the 2nd Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles. On all these occasions he clearly enjoyed meeting the men and families of the regiment which had so proudly borne his title for 35 years.



Prince Philip meets soldiers of 1/7 GR during a visit to the battalion at Queen Elizabeth Barracks, Church Crookham in March 1983

When the sad news of the death of Prince Philip was announced, the chairman of the 7th Duke of Edinburgh's Own Gurkha Rifles Regimental Association sent a message of condolences to Her Majesty on behalf of all former officers and other ranks and their families, and Major (Retd) Bhuwansing Limbu MVO, late 7 GR, attended a ceremony of remembrance for His Royal Highness held at the British Gurkhas Nepal camp in Kathmandu.

It is of note that the late Brigadier Sir Miles Hunt-Davis GCVO CBE (formerly Commandant 7 GR, Brigadier Brigade of Gurkhas and Colonel of the 7th Duke of Edinburgh's Own Gurkha Rifles), was for many years Private Secretary to HRH Prince Philip.



Prince Philip chats with members of the 7 GR Warrant Officers' & Sergeants' Mess at Church Crookham in May 1994 after the regiment's final parade

Letter from Nepal 2020

By Lieutenant Colonel JP Cross OBE

Forty years ago The Prince of Wales paid a visit to Nepal. After the official part he spent a week trekking not all that far from Pokhara during which time he made up his mind to marry Diana. Two days later he visited the Gurkha camp which I was looking after at the time. The British ambassador, the late John Denson, an interpreter in Greek and Chinese, and a friend of Mao's wife and the Gang of Four, helped out. A number of ex-servicemen were invited. I was almost blind and had put an extra dose of belladonna in both eyes in a try to see something. 'Here they come,' said HE as a motorcade entered the camp. 'Which car is the Prince in?' I queried. 'The one with the flag, you fool.' I went to the front car and it was only when my hand was on the chauffer's door handle did I realise it was the wrong door. 'This is a very unfriendly place,' HRH said as I took him into the Mess to sign the visitor's book. In fact anti-royal slogans daubed on walls on the route from his hotel to the camp had had to be painted out during the small hours by the police. I was given a photo of the Prince with 'You can throw custard at it on Mess nights.' I don't think that the general public was anti British royalty but rather it was an indirect way of saying how much it was against royalty in general and their own in particular. Forty years and I can still 'see' it all happening. But for how long are others remembered? In a hundred years' time, or many fewer probably, how many of us will even be an invisible marginal note on the title deeds of history? We will never know and

those like myself whose young adulthood was fired in the kilns of WW2, India and the empire are an endangered species.

Taken round the assembled company, he shook many hands. 'How soft they are,' said Buddhiman afterwards. I had managed to get two holders of the Victoria Cross, one of the George Cross and the only Gurkha who was given a Soviet medal for the Burma War. (The only other recipient was a British battalion commander.) The Prince leant over the wheelchair in which he holder of the GC was and asked him what he got his bravery award for. 'Rescuing 14 men in the Quetta earthquake of 1935 but the citation only put 12 men.' 'Poor old fellow,' the Prince said, 'it still worries him so many years later.' (In fact he was awarded the Empire Gallantry Medal which was upgraded to the George Cross many years later.) The Gurkha Major came to me and whispered, 'You're going too slowly' so I quickened the pace until another frantic whisper from behind, 'You're going too fast.' The Prince put his hand out to shake one old man's hand but there was no reaction. 'Shake hands,' I told him. 'Don't know how to,' came the unexpected reply. He was not an ex-soldier but someone who had heard about the royal visit and he walked five days from his house to try and meet the Prince. A journalist of a woman's magazine photoed the incident, captioning it 'HRH meeting a holder of the Victoria Cross'.



JPX busy at his desk

And also 40 years ago, before I had my eyes 'polished', I spoke sharply to a water tub wrongly thinking it was a fat Nepali functionary (I only realised I was wrong when, hearing titters, I turned to see an inquisitive group of your people intrigued by such eccentric behavior: I wondered why a fat man wearing a flowery patterned pullover didn't answer when I spoke to him: it was, in fact, a flowering shrub.

Too late for my last letter, Operation Black Rose, the fourth in the series, had been published, covering Britain's defeats in 1942 when so many of our soldiers were made prisoners of war of the Japs. The Malaysian Book Fest invited me over to Kuala Lumpur, quite what to do I wasn't told, but it was something to do with the 'Fiction Category of Readers' Choice Awards.' I declined: these days I find travel from Pokhara to Kathmandu travail. Last year *Operation Blind Spot* was also nominated but with no invitation. The prep school master who marked my essay 0% would be as surprised as am I. John le Carré once gave me advice about writing when he told me 'if a character wants to stand up rather than sit in a chair, let him.' That, a suspension of disbelief and an involvement in an illusion of reality, seem to be tricks of the trade. For me the main difference was in my morning walks: they became 50 times round the house with dog and golf ball, maybe three + miles and a couple of hours – except one day when a crow (or rook? or raven?) swooped down and flew away with the ball, much to the dog's annoyance, trying to chase it as it flew off. Buddhiman tells me that such also happens sometimes when playing golf.



JPX on his daily walk with Buddhiman

I felt like shedding a tear when I learnt of John Le Carré's death. When I was the Defence Attaché in Laos he visited me in the embassy (and later he offered me the use of his agent (I daren't walk down the street without my agent') and we exchanged letters in a desultory fashion. And of course, I greatly appreciated it when he wrote nice things about my knowledge of the jungle which 'my' publisher used on the cover of the books of mine he published.

Buddhiman was playing golf and heard a mewling. Two kittens of a small type of leopard or large type of civet cat. They were in extremis and followed the players. They were picked up and taken to the club house where they were fed with milk, one being so weak could hardly lap. They are being looked after but will, presumably, have to back to the wilds when big.

I was overwhelmed by a birthday message on video from England, all ranks from lieutenant-general to recruit. And another surprise was an e-mail: 'Dear sir, I'm from Kathmandu and hoping to pursue my PhD from Tribhuvan University. I am interested to take your series of historical novels as my area or source of study ... on my research on your books successfully thereby enriching scholarship in Nepalese studies, literature, and history.' Never would such a thought have struck me or, probably, anyone else: life is fun with such surprises.

Surprises in more ways than one: on 7 November the OC of the camp e-mailed me to say that a certain someone, unknown to me, wanted to contact me. I thought he meant this unknown wanted to drop in for a cuppa. But no, it was a Captain in the British High Commission in New Delhi who had been told that I was in Burma during WW2 and my wartime memoirs were wanted by an organization called New Ideas. This is an Indo-Brit affair, archived in New Delhi but run from London by the Chief Executive Officer – a highly educated English lady. I said I'd comply and the following day, a Friday, for the first time ever, I was 'Zoomed' by a pert Indian lass (I didn't gather whether she was talking from India or UK) who wanted to know 'about it and about'. I managed to make her laugh. After half an hour she said I had made her forget all the questions she really had wanted to ask so could we start again? We had about 40 minutes talking. On the morrow, the Saturday, 5 minutes, 55 seconds worth were shown. The CEO must also have a foot in BBC Breakfast. It seems that she so applauded my efforts that she rang us up at 9 p.m. (our time) on the Sunday. I was asleep and Buddhiman answered. Was I willing to be interviewed by BBC Breakfast at around 8 o'clock UK the very next day? So I complied. Towards the end of my being asked questions I said that I valued good health and peace of mind. By then I had resumed my morning walks with mask and social distancing, and it so happened that the day before the Breakfast talk I had walked for 5 hours and 7 minutes, considerably longer than normal, so, having said that I added 'so my health is good enough.' I wear canvas shoes and no socks.

I never rest or drink any water (the last learnt in the jungle) but, at times, I stand still – which is more tiring than walking - when people want to talk to me. I can't remember any walk in the last twenty years when that has not happened. Several times every month people seem to want a photo, together mostly but sometimes just me.

Nodules of History

The storm of religious rage, the torrents of spilt blood, the human agony and the political subterfuges that gave birth to the two new dominions of independent India and Pakistan are well known in greater or lesser detail by millions of people, both by the remaining few of us who were there at the time and subsequent generations.

In November 1947 I was in 1/1 Gurkha Rifles, based in Madhopur, not far from Pathankote. I commanded C Company which had been sent about ten miles over the River Ravi to a small village, Kathuwa, in Jammu State. Prime Minister Atlee had forbidden British officers to cross that river and go north in to a war zone, it not being any business of the British.

I have previously written about how chaotic were affairs, how dislocated and how dangerous and unpredictable was life generally, so not again, except to say that I disobeyed that order and walked up to and back from my company despite the order and decided to spend my last night with it, the better to bid farewell. A small latrine was dug for me and when I returned to Battalion HQ on the morrow I received an enormous rocket resulting from a report that 'Indian forces were digging defensive positions in Kathuwa' and the CO, Lt Col Jarvis had to tell GHQ in Delhi how a humble human requirement had been unscrupulously and absurdly magnified. I want to mention an incident that hardly any people ever knew about and I expect I am the only one of those still living.

Back to my opening paragraph: yes, all right, that is now out of date by many decades although we are living and will live with the result of hasty political decisions and much else that was wrong then. But what few people did know about was how much influence Indian and other Asian countries' Communists had. Colonel Jarvis detailed me to go to Delhi and hand in the papers for our Viceroy's Commissioned Gurkha officers to be fully commissioned. The journey there deserves its own article: suffice it to say that after two and a half days on the road I reached the office of Commander British Gurkhas, India, in the Red Fort, Delhi. He was Brigadier (later Major General, Major General, Brigade of Gurkhas) R C O Hedley, CB, CBE, DSO and two bars and four times mentioned in despatches, late 2/5 Royal Gurkha Rifles (Frontier Force), In parenthesis no married British officer was allowed in the battalion except the CO. Hedley was engaged for ten years before being given command and, to his frustrated wife-to-be, married.

Hedley was glad to see another British officer and told me I had only just reached him in time for the commissioning papers to be accepted. Later that evening we had a meal together and, despite my junior years and rank, he was glad to have another regimental officer to talk to. One item of our conversation I can remember was when he told me that a couple of days earlier a most senior Indian visitor had asked to meet him. The visitor said that for the Gurkha troops going to Malaya there was no accommodation ready nor could it be for at least twelve months. The Indian Government was offering all Gurkha units a year's extension in India so that, when they did get to Malaya, conditions would at last be satisfactory.

'Of course I refused,' the Brigadier told me. 'I couldn't think of any reason at all why I should ever recommend such an offer to be considered by London.'

The officer only made sense after the Malayan Emergency was declared seven months later. Had there been no Gurkhas in Malaya then history would have been different: either the colony would have become Communist or defeating them would have taken maybe twice as long.

Three other Communist-inspired actions are known to me, although there will have been many more. The first was in the early '50s when Gurkhas were asked to leave Malaya and go in force to Sarawak to keep order. Utterly spurious: all that was happening was that the Communists had started to lose their Malayan battle, the only time they have been beaten on territory of their own choosing.

The second time was in Rangoon in September 1951 when I was OC Troops, with 1238 leave men and families. We were allowed to exercise on the quay between 2 and 3 a.m. I was visited by the Nepalese Vice-Consul, his wife and the Consul's wife. Families went to their cabins and the single men to their boat stations. I walked round with the group, who were surprised when the children in the cabins clutched my knees rather than either of the woman's. I was taken to the Nepalese legation where he and the Consul told me that he had been forbidden to visit the passengers because they were a battalion of mutinying men who wanted to be Communist and had been disbanded by the British Government.

I asked where that battalion had been stationed. In Kedah. The only time any Gurkha troops had been to Kedah was A Company (under Major J E Heelis), 1/7 GR, on Operation 'Copley' for three weeks one month earlier. My protestations were accepted – 'none of the Gurkhas acted as though the report was true,' said the Vice-Consul. I asked how the news had reached them. The Consul said to the Vice-Consul, 'shall we tell him?' Emergency secret instructions from Nepal for my leave party not to be visited by the legation staff, received the

previous day. That was confirmed when I met the then Vice Consul at a wedding in Kathmandu in 1984. Who but some controlling Communists would have known about Operation Copley? In no way would the Nepal government have the remotest knowledge of it.

The third time was in Calcutta at the Transit Camp. Every evening when I was there after disembarkation (I was made temporary QM for a couple of months) coolies from the local jute factories, paid 8 annas, would come outside and shout anti-British slogans for half an hour, urging the leave men not to return to their units. One coolie, braver than the others, sidled up to the Guard Commander and asked him not to shoot if his group came and shouted. The wily Guard Commander said that he would not shoot if he did not hear anyone shouting. Result: the coolies went so far away to shout that they were not heard.

Two less weighty points: the war and its aftermath in Cochin-China and Java as well as in India had made us both grow old quicker than normal and also more callous than we realised. This was shown by an unusual incident that took place shortly after independence when, in the Punjab, scores of cadavers littered the roads. After one particularly frustrating week of escorting hapless refugees to and from the border a group of officers went to the club. In mock severity one saluted one particularly gruesome carcass as the vehicle passed on the way there. On their return, having relaxed in proportion to their previous tenseness, the same person saluted the same corpse again. What he did not see was a jackal pulling the arm of the dead man which raised itself in mock answer. The officer was severely jolted by the incident and quickly sobered up.

The second: during the unrelenting chaos of those days long-forgotten papers in an old records office were found. Charge sheets were discovered, one stating *that Private X was put on a charge by Sergeant Y for stating a falsehood in that, at.....on.....when asked where his bayonet was stated 'under my bleeding foreskin', knowing it not to be there at the time.* Punishment not recorded.

Another was about a subaltern at a Viceregal Ball who, during one of the dances, *propelled the Viceroy's daughter backwards at a dangerous speed, neighing the while like a horse.* The punishment was a loss of two years' seniority.

And how to end? Um: 'by the grace of God some of us who were spared can pass such nodules on!'

OBITUARIES

The Editor records with regret the deaths of the following members notified between 1 January and 31 December 2020.

2 GR

Nigel Cumber Esq	29 Feb 20
Lieutenant Colonel G Chadwick MBE	1 Aug 21
Lieutenant Colonel RT Hargreaves	1 Dec 20

6 GR

Lieutenant Colonel D Matheson MBE	27 Nov 20
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7 GR

10 GR

QGE

QG SIGNALS

QOGLR

Colonel Philip Chaganis OBE *	26 Jul 20
Major Ian Stewart *	11 Apr 20
Major Dipakbahadur Gurung MVO *	17 Jul 20

Note: Those marked with an (*) after their date of death have their Obituary published in this Journal.

Colonel Philip Chaganis OBE



Colonel Philip Chaganis OBE was born in South Shields on Tyneside and went to South Shields Grammar School and Welbeck College, before two years at Sandhurst and a commission in the RCT in 1969. It was the start of a long, varied and successful career. After commissioning, he served in Germany with 1 Armoured Division, including an attachment with the Green

Howards. This was followed by a job running an Army Youth Team in the north east of England, before being posted to Hong Kong and 28 Squadron GTR in 1972.

His tour in Hong Kong was memorable, principally for two reasons: Denise and he met there when she was working for United Press International; and his last year in the Colony was spent as ADC to Major General Ronnie McAllister, who was Major General Brigade of Gurkhas at the time.

In 1974, the Squadron was at Sai Kung Camp for annual training week and, on the Saturday, troop commanders took their soldiers either to the San Miguel Brewery, or, in Philip's case, to the Kadoorie Farm. As can be seen from the photo, immaculate turnout was a byword for Philip and on this occasion he wore Gurkha shorts with his regimental mufti. On return, the officers were invited to provide a brief outline of the day's events to the assembled Squadron. Philip stood in the centre of the room and explained that on arrival they were met by the Farm Manager, who showed a short film with a bit of history about the Kadoorie brothers' deep affection for Gurkhas that resulted in pig welfare training to help Gurkhas going home on pension. Philip then went on to say that after this excellent briefing, which included Gurkha tea and rusks, they were taken into a barn and introduced to various varieties of pigs. They then went to a barn next door where they were shown "more pigs". After that they were taken to many other barns

where “We were shown even more pigs”. At this point everyone was hooting with laughter, including the younger soldiers, because it was Philip’s emphasis on “pigs”, accompanied by his animation that made it so hilarious. The other troop commander, Allister Miller, was up next, and took great delight in telling everyone that his party also went from site to site, for “beer ... more beer, and even more beer”!

After three years in Hong Kong, Philip had two adjutant posts in quick succession: Moscow Camp in Belfast and then the RCT Depot and Training Regiment in Aldershot. A period on the Directing Staff at Sandhurst, during which he and Denise tied the knot in the Royal Memorial Chapel in 1977, was followed by the Army Staff Course at Shrivenham and the RAF Staff College, Bracknell.

After thinking they would never escape South East District, Philip was posted to Cyprus, before returning to Germany to command 4 Squadron RCT in Bünde. The ‘reality’ of MOD came next before promotion to lieutenant colonel and command of 10 Regiment RCT in Bielefeld. Philip’s tour included the whole of the First Gulf War, where he commanded over 1000 men and for which he was awarded the OBE.

After two years on the Directing Staff at the Army Staff College, promotion to colonel took him back to 1(UK) Armoured Division in Germany, as Commander Logistics, including six months in Bosnia with NATO forces. Tours in Deepcut, Andover, and MOD followed, before retirement beckoned in 2004. By then Philip and Denise had moved to North Wales, from where Philip commuted for the last two years of his Army service.

After the Army, Philip worked as a leadership training consultant and did a stint with the Conservative Party, which put him off politics for life. So, when he was offered a job in Abu Dhabi as Director of the Logistics Academy, he and Denise decided they were up for one more adventure. Sadly, their time in the Middle East was cut short because the health of both sets of parents was in serious decline. Philip was then appointed Chairman of Supply Chain Management at the Durham Logistics College, where he impressed his audiences by imparting the lessons of military management and leadership. For those who knew him, Philip was a true gentleman, who always put himself last. He was a strong supporter of the Regiment and the Association.

Philip died suddenly at home in Conwy on 26 July 2020, a month short of his 71st birthday. He is survived by Denise and sons Grenville and Howard. Grenville, a lieutenant colonel in the Royal Gurkha Rifles, is currently serving, like his father before him, on the Directing Staff at Sandhurst.

Major Ian Stewart



Major Ian Stewart first served with the Gurkha Transport Regiment in Malaysia in 34 Squadron. From 1969-71 he was with 28 Squadron in Sham Shui Po and later with 31 Squadron in Sek Kong from 1974-77. His final tour of duty with the Brigade was as SO2 Transport & Movements, HQ British Gurkhas Nepal from 1979-80.

Ian had been a member of the QOGLR Association for many years, until he was overtaken by Alzheimers. He died aged 74 on 11 April 2020 in a nursing home near Little Stukeley, Huntingdon, where he and his wife, Heather, lived for many years.

Major Dipakbahadur Gurung MVO



Major Dipakbahadur Gurung MVO was born in 1937 in the village of Tanting, Kaski, overlooking the Pokhara valley. His father, Kasiram, had been a subedar in the British Indian Army before retiring back to his village in about 1950. (Dipak's half-brother is Major Balasing Gurung MBE, a former Gurkha Major QOGTR.) In those days, there were no schools in Nepal other than in Kathmandu. At the same time, the Indian government was dispensing a huge post-war fund belonging to those Gurkhas killed during the war but not claimed by their dependants. A considerable amount of such funds came to the Pokhara Ex Gorkha Soldiers Board. Dipak was instrumental in helping the committee to utilise the funds, and he was also able to complete his studies in one of the schools of which, after matriculation c1955, he became its deputy headmaster.

He later moved to Kathmandu to study international affairs at the Saraswati Campus Banaras/Varanasi in India to sit the examination earlier than would have been possible in Nepal. He was deeply involved with the Nepal Congress from the beginning and he was doing very well. When, in c1959, the King usurped power by banning political parties and arresting many educated youths, Dipak followed his father's advice and joined the British Army.

Dipak enlisted on 11 December 1959 as a Private Clerk and, after basic training was sent to 30 Company Gurkha ASC in Kluang, Malaya. He spent the next five years with 30 Company/Squadron (rising to the rank of corporal), including tours in Tidworth and on operations in Borneo, handling communications and working closely with the OC, Major Jim Massey. In 1967, he was

sent as an instructor to the Education Wing, Training Depot Brigade of Gurkhas (TDBG), in the rank of acting sergeant, where he remained for two years. From Malaya, Dipak was sent back to the 31 Squadron GTR (by now relocated from Singapore to Hong Kong) as a SNCO MT Instructor in the Gurkha MT School, based in Sek Kong. He was promoted to staff sergeant during this tour and was commissioned as a Lieutenant (Queen's Gurkha Officer) (QGO) in November 1971.

After being commissioned, Dipak Saheb's career took him first to the British Gurkha Transit Camp, Kathmandu, and then 28 Army Education Centre, Sek Kong, before being selected as the Senior QGO of 28 Squadron GTR in Gun Club Hill Barracks, Kowloon. After 28 Squadron, Captain Dipak found himself back in TDBG as 2IC Admin Company for a year or so, before being selected to be a Queen's Gurkha Orderly Officer (QGOO) for the year 1984/85; he was the fourth QGOO in the Regiment's history to be presented with his medal as a Member of the Royal Victorian Order (MVO) by HM The Queen. His fellow QGOO was none other than Captain (QGO) Rambahadur Limbu VC, 10th PMO Gurkha Rifles. Needless to say, VC Saheb's presence attracted a lot of attention. Returning to Hong Kong, he was promoted to Major (QGO) but missed out on becoming Gurkha Major GTR. Instead he went to Records Office Brigade of Gurkhas as Editor Parbate magazine until his retirement in 1989, as an Honorary Lieutenant (Gurkha Commissioned Officer) (GCO), a rare honour for his outstanding service.

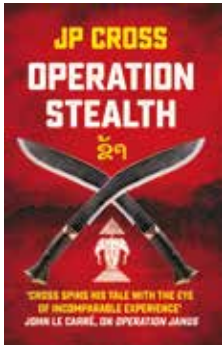
Soon after he retired in 1989, the political situation in Nepal changed. The multi-party system was allowed, which favoured his abilities and long-term ambitions. He was able to re-join the Nepali Congress and stood as the MP for Kaski but lost by a very small margin to one of his former students. He was very involved with the Nepal Ex Servicemen's Association (NESA), becoming deputy chairman and then chairman (three terms) from 1991-2002. Then, in 2002 he was appointed as Member of Parliament on behalf NESA. As Chairman of NESA, Dipak Saheb is best remembered by ex-servicemen for a number of welfare issues which he quite successfully campaigned for with the MOD and Nepali government. He also did a lot of social work for Gurung communities in Nepal, whilst running many businesses dealing with manpower and real estate.

Dipak Saheb was married twice. First to Asmaya, with whom he had five children and nine grandchildren; sadly, Asmaya died in 1991. In 1992, he married Khudi Laxmi, who survives him with their one child. Dipak Saheb was a staunch member of the Kathmandu Branch of the QOGLR Regimental Association in Nepal and would always support functions for visitors and birthdays; he attended the Golden Jubilee celebrations in UK. Although in poor health, he came to the Kathmandu 60th Birthday celebrations in 2017 and was handing out copies of his memoirs. With other retired Majors (QGO) from the Regiment, he became an Honorary Member of the Association in 1992.

BOOK REVIEWS

Operation Stealth

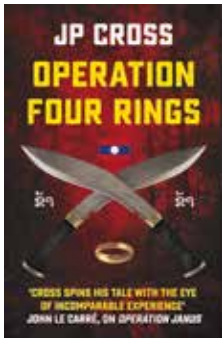
By J P Cross



Published by Monsoon Books Ltd,
UK: 2020. 302 pp.
ISBN (Paperback) 9781912049783;
(ebook) 9781912049790

Operation Four Rings

By John Cross



Published by Monsoon Books Ltd,
UK: 2020. 333 pp.
ISBN (Paperback) 9781912049509;
(ebook) 9781912049516

Available from leading book shops worldwide

Nearly a half-century has passed since America withdrew its ground forces from South Vietnam in a prelude to the communist take-over there. Of the three countries, Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, which were once colonies of French Indo-China, land-locked Laos was and perhaps still is the least known, lacking the drama of the much-publicised war in Vietnam and the murderous cataclysm of Cambodia. Lieutenant Colonel (Retd.) J P Cross OBE, who will be known to many readers of *The Kukri*, spent more than three years as Defence Attaché at the British Embassy in Vientiane, the Lao capital, and witnessed the final chapter of the thirty-year struggle to decide the fate of Indo-China. The author has brought some of what he experienced to these two new books of fiction, the stories of which run together but can be read separately, in which he again traces the adventures of Jason Rance, the protagonist of several previous novels about soldiering in the Far East.

Operation Stealth opens at the end of the Second World War with the start of the long march of a communist insurgency in Laos, codenamed STEALTH. A series of brutal murders by a communist gang intended to terrorise the local population in remote northeast Laos results in a secret alliance between four boys – the four rings. They assume false identities and take on

the appearance of dedicated communists so that one day they can take their revenge on the instigator of the atrocity. Nearly thirty years on, Jason Rance has a strange encounter with one of the boys, now an officer in the South Vietnamese army undergoing training at the British Army's Jungle Warfare School in Malaysia. Rance is then posted to Laos as the British Defence Attaché, having added the Lao language to his repertoire of East Asian dialects during his preparation for the job. He arrives in Vientiane with a mission - also ironically codenamed OPERATION STEALTH by Western intelligence services - to encourage the Lao king to go ahead with his much-delayed coronation so as to unite his people against the malign aims of the communist Pathet Lao and their sinister backers. In *Operation Four Rings*, Rance steps back from being centre stage to one that is more the role of a facilitator of a daring plan conceived by the original group of four boys to infiltrate enemy lines, kidnap a traitor and bring him back to Lao custody. This perilous operation provides an exciting climax to the story and the reader gets to learn something about jungle lore, in particular some of the tricks of tracking and counter tracking, as the kidnap team strive to keep ahead of their pursuers during an exhausting exfiltration. Throughout, Rance must exercise discretion and keep his wits about him to avoid being compromised and, more importantly, to avoid putting himself and others at risk of their lives.

What gives these books their special appeal beyond the intricacies and pace of the plot is the author's description of life in another time and place based on his ringside seat at events. The author provides a wonderfully observed picture of the colour and spectacle of Lao religious and political ceremonies. The slipperiness of the path a defence attaché must tread particularly when trying to do his job as a neutral actor in the snake pit of competing local and international interests is brilliantly described: the protocol, the diplomatic social round, the seething rivalries between Russian Marxists and Chinese Maoists, the honey traps for the unwary (not always set by foes), and much else. The occasion when Rance takes tea with his Chinese opposite number is a comic gem. There are real life lessons here for aspirant diplomats or indeed anyone from other parts seeking to gain the confidence of people living in the countries of the East where different traditions, lifestyles and expectations are no less worthy than those of the West.

The fate of Laos was a disaster for the gentle people of that once mystical country and it is good that these works of fiction can illuminate some of the historical aspects of its tragedy.

**Reviewed by Brigadier DR d'A Willis CBE
late 7GR**

