

The Kukri

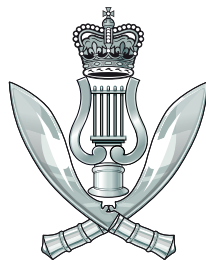
NUMBER 64

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March 2014

Headquarters Brigade of Gurkhas
Former Army Staff College
Royal Military Academy Sandhurst
Camberley
Surrey, GU15 4PQ

The Journal of The Brigade of Gurkhas 2013



**Front Cover
Queen's Gurkha Orderly Officers**

Capt Trilochan Gurung MVO RGR and Capt Devendra Ale MVO QOGLR

Contents

NUMBER 64

Contents	2
Editorial	7
Colonel Commandant Brigade Of Gurkhas Baton	9
Annual Report to the President of Nepal	10
OPERATIONS	19
Operational Honours & Awards	19
Rifleman Tuljung Gurung	20
Op HERRICK 17	21
I RGR	21
Life as a Rifleman in a CP And PB - Rfn Harkaraj Rai	23
Life in Op Sterga 2 - Rfn Bar Bahadur Budha Magar and Rfn Nabin Chandra Rai	23
Op HERRICK 18	24
246 Gurkha Signals Squadron - By Sig Rajan Thapa	24
Op HERRICK 19	25
70 Gurkha Field Squadron - Sgt Evans	25
BRIGADE OF GURKHA MAJOR AND MINOR UNITS	27
Headquarters Brigade of Gurkhas	27
Staff List & Newsletter	27
Bisley 2013 Results	29
G200 Brigade of Gurkhas 2015 Bicentenary	
Everest Expedition - Capt C E H Russell RGR	31
Britain Commemorates The Indian Army - Maj Gen Kamta Prasad Mc (Retd) 4 Gr	33
My Visit to the British Gurkhas in Hong Kong 1970 - Brig M K Balachandran	35
The Royal Gurkha Rifles	37
RGR Battle Honours & History	37
RGR Roll of Officers	38
1st Battalion	41
1 st Battalion Newsletter	41
The First Gurkha Colour Sergeant Instructor at RMAS - CSgt Jiwan Gurung	42
Intake 2013 - Induction & Attestation Parade - Cpl Sunilkumar Gurung	43
Sari Bair Day - Rfn Subash Pariyar	44
Battlefield Tour to BAREO and PA-LUNGAN, Ex ARAWAK SCHOLAR Malaysia Rfn Yaman Singh Gurung	45
Ex ANNAPURNA KHUKURI - Rfn Shreebahadur Pun	46
2nd Battalion	49
2 nd Battalion Newsletter	49
Ex GUNING MULU - Capt Prembahadur Gurung	50
Ex KHUKURI CATALAN - Lt P Lambert	51
The Queen's Gurkha Engineers	54
History & Staff List	55
The Commandant Queen's Gurkha Engineers Report	56
69 Gurkha Field Squadron	56

70 Gurkha Field Squadron	58
Ex SAILFISH - Lt J Hawkes	59
Ex THREE PEAKS Challenge Gurkha Ways - WO2 (SSM) Govindabahadur Rana	59
Queen's Gurkha Signals	62
History & Staff List	63
Colonel of the Regiment's Notes	64
Commanders Newsletter	65
Reflecting Back Whilst Looking Forward!	67
QGS TRAILWALKER 2013 - Sgt Bharatmani Chongbang Limbu	69
64 th Birthday Celebration - SSgt (SQMS) Gyanendra Rai	70
Attestation LSGC & Commissioning Parade - Sgt Rajkumar Gurung	71
Army Operational Shooting Competition - Sig Rajendra Dangi	73
246 Gurkha Signal Squadron Newsletter	74
248 Gurkha Signal Squadron Newsletter	76
250 Gurkha Signal Squadron Newsletter	77
Royal Signals School	79
Brunei Signal Troop	81
Alpha Troop	82
The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment	84
The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment History	84
Staff List & Promotions 2013	85
Commander's Notes	86
Ex TIGER THYANGBOCHE - Cpl Murphy	87
Transition to to the RAPTC - Sgt (SI) Bikash Gurung RAPTC	90
Gurkha Staff and Personnel Support Company	91
History, Staff List & Newsletter	91
GSPS Forum & Dinner Night - Sgt Bijay Limbu GSPS	93
BG Clerks' Cup 2013 - Cpl Pramod Rai ESPS	95
EX GSPS Run - Singapore Marathon - LCpl Sagar Sherchan ESPS	96
AGC Triple Crown Challenge 2013 - LCpl Pratik Paija	97
The Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas	98
Staff List & Newsletter	98
Germany and Lourdes Tour 2013 - Musn Binjay Limbu	99
Ladies Dinner Night 2013 - Mrs Anjali Mukhiya Rai & WO CPL Kiran Mukhiya	101
Trek to Annapurna Base Camp - Musn Sherjang Thapa	102
Op SANGITIK YATRA - LCpl Sunil Gurung	104
The Great Gurkha Kukri Dance - Major John Burlison	106
Gurkha Company (Sittang)	107
Staff List & Newsletter	107
Routine Support To The Academy	108
Additional Activities	109
Public And Community Relationship	110
Dashain & Tihar Celebration 2013	111
Visits To Gurkha Coy (SITTANG)	112
Ex DYNAMIC VICTORY (Germany)	113
British Gurkhas Nepal	114
Staff List	114
Commander's Foreword	115
British Gurkhas Kathmandu	116

British Gurkhas Nepal	118
British Gurkhas Pokhara	126
British Gurkhas Dharan	128
Gurkha Welfare Scheme	129
Kadoorie Agricultural Aid Association (KAAA (BGN))	132
Raid into Tibet - Gen Sir Sam Cowan	134
Two Hundred Years Of Nepal-Britain Relations,A Way Forward - HE A J Sparkes	136
THE GURKHA WELFARE TRUST	140
Director's Report 2013	140
Role Reversal - Mrs Anna Townsend	142
TRAILWALKER For Life - LCpl Santosh Gurung	144
THE GURKHA MUSEUM	145
Curator's Report 2013	145
Incidents in Waziristan (1937) - Major N D Wylie Carrick (2 GR)	146
ALLIED AND AFFILIATED REGIMENTS	147
The Rifles 2013 Newsletter	147
The Royal Australian Regiment	150
2nd/1st Battalion,The Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment	158
The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada	161
Royal Brunei Armed Forces	164
THE GURKHA BRIGADE ASSOCIATION	165
GBA & Regimental Association Staff List	165
Regimental Association Secretaries	168
Calendar of Events 2014 (as at 15 October 2013)	170
President Of The Gurkha Brigade Association	172
GBA Newsletter	172
Bishop of London's Address to the GBA Memorial Service	175
Dedication Of The Gurkha Memorial National Memorial Arboretum	177
6GRRR Durbar Pokhara - Col P Pettigrew (6 GR)	178
Message From Colonel Of The Regiment 9th Gorkha Rifles	180
Maj Gen AK BHATT, SM,VSM	
The British "Burhos" of the 9th Gorkha Rifles - Bruce Roberts (9GR)	180
The 2013 Cambria Patrol.The 3/9 th Gorkha Rifles Excels	181
Bruce Roberts	
A Few Burmese Days	182
60 th Anniversary of the 1953 Climb of Mount Everest (Part 1)	185
David Mallam (10 GR)	
Post WW2	205
Introduction & Background to Jungle Warfare - Lt Col J P Cross (1 & 7 GR)	205
Thoughts on Japanese Tactics in Burma - Capt W Smyly (2 GR)	210
The Ponra Rifles - Col D F Neill, QBE, MC (2 GR)	212
"Those Forsaken by God" - SSgt Yasomasa Nishijim	217
The Java Nightmare	222
As Others See Others (Part 1) - Lt Col J P Cross (1 GR and 7 GR)	224
Faith in His British Officer - Lt Col J P Cross (1 GR and 7 GR)	224

The Return of the British Gurkhas to Burma - Capt Ben Burrows (2 RGR)	227
Burma Battlefield Tour - Lt W A Plumley, (2 RGR)	229
Transition	231
Transition - Maj G Corrigan (6 GR)	231
Coming Across - Maj L E Pottinger (6GR)	232
Following The Drum - Lady Beryl Walker	235
'Here Today, Gone Tomorrow' - Sir John Nott	236
Recollections Of National Service - Field Marshal Sir John Chapple (2 GR)	237
One Years Service, A Lifetime of Support - Capt Miles Elliott (2 GR)	238
The Malayan Emergency	239
Jungle Warfare School - Lt Col J P Cross (1 GR & 7 GR)	239
Ambushed - Henry Burrows (10GR)	240
Memories of Old - Christopher Martin (10GR)	241
Aimed or Unaimed - Lt Col J P Cross (1 GR & 7 GR)	246
The Building Of Fort Kemar 1953 - D Wombell (MPFF)	248
Op KNOT I (1953) - D Wombell (MPFF)	254
The Baling Peace Talks 28-29 December 1955 - - D Wombell (MPFF)	259
Siputeh (1955) - D Wombell (MPFF)	263
My Visit To Malaysia. June 2012 - D Wombell (MPFF)	264
Chin Peng, an Obituary - Daily Telegraph	267
Chin Peng, an Obituary - Dr Reid	268
Chin Peng's Farewell: A Letter to Comrades and Compatriots	271
As Others See Us (Part II) - Lt Col J P Cross (1 GR & 7 GR)	271
Emergency Married Quarters - Mrs Whorlow	272
OBITUARIES	274
Notifications of Death	274
BOOK REVIEWS	300
Britain's Gurka War: The Invasion of Nepal by John Pemble	300
War From The Ground Up by Emile Simpson	301
The Malayan Emergency and Indonesian Confrontation by Robert Jackson	303
Garden of Evening Mists - by Tan Twan Eng	304
My Side Of History by Chin Peng	305
Four Brothers In Arms by Ian McGill	306
Quintology Historical Novel Of Gurkhas by J P Cross	307
Jungle Warfare Experiences & Encounters by J P Cross	309
Gurkhas at War by J P Cross	310
Gurkha Tales by J P Cross	311
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	313

Editorial

As the Kukri Journal readership will have noticed, the production of the Kukri Journal 2013 did run into 'editorship' problems. Looking back at some old Kukri editorials, this is not the first time that the editor has laid blame for the late production of the Kukri due to the relocation of HQBG, but in April 2014 we did move from the cramped bungalow office block in Upavon, Trenchard Lines to our smart and very grand new offices located on the first floor of the Former Army Staff College, Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. In addition, one of the consequences of our move was our farewell to Mrs Jan Patterson who, amongst her duties as the Executive Officer GBA, was also the Deputy Editor.

It was a busy period between April and September 2014 with the traditional round of GBA events and reunions culminating in the hugely successful opening of the Gurkha 'Chautara' at the National Memorial Arboretum, by the Princess Royal. However with the successful recruitment in October 2014 of Mrs Elizabeth O'Neill as the new Executive Officer HQBG/GBA, there has been time to take stock and review the Kukri publications. Fortunately, Kukri 2013 did exist, albeit in a rough unedited form, so in order to retain the integrity of the Kukri Journals as an 'Annual Historical Record', the decision was taken to continue with the production of the Kukri Journal 2013, and call forward the material for the Kukri Journal 2014. We hope that you will enjoy reading both copies of the Kukri Journals 2013 and 2014, in the coming months.

The Kukri Journal 2013 is in two parts; the first focuses on the Annual Reports, newsletters and articles from the serving Gurkha unit Annual Reports, followed by the Gurkha Brigade Association that focuses on Gurkha operational jungle experiences during World War II in Burma and Java, followed by the Malayan Emergency. Lt Col John Cross sets the tone on Jungle Warfare with his summary of the development of Jungle

Warfare through the ages. Capt Bill Smyly makes comment on the Burma Campaign, followed by a hard hitting article written by Col D F Neil OBE MC on his war fighting patrol experiences in Burma, 'Gurkha Poona'. In his account Col D F Neil makes mention of his finding a diary found on the body of a killed Japanese soldier, and although not related, this links his article with the diary of Staff Sergeant Yasomasa Nishiji, of the 20th Independent Engineering Regiment of the Japanese Imperial Army, 'Those Forsaken by God', which provides a graphic description of the privations suffered by the Japanese soldier in the retreat.

Following the Independence of India, the four Gurkha Regiments and three Gurkha Corps each played a significant role during the Malayan Emergency, all of which were partly officered by National Service Officers, some of whom went on to achieve high rank. Accounts of their experiences are covered, but I am grateful to Dennis Wombell (formerly of the Malay Police Field Force) whose articles provide a police perspective on the Malayan Emergency including his encounter with Chin Peng. The death of Chin Peng on 16 September 2013 has provided closure to the Malayan Emergency, so it seemed appropriate to include his obituary, last letter and final thoughts on his part in contribution in 'My Side of History'. The experiences of the Brigade during the Brunei Revolt and Borneo Confrontation will be covered in the Kukri 2014.

Finally, I would like to end with a huge thank you to all those who have contributed to the Kukri Journal. We continue to require researched, considered articles and comment on every aspect of Gurkha service; where we come from and where we are going, in order to record and continue to enhance and enrich the mutual bonds of respect and service that brings the British and Gurkhas together that makes the tapestry of the Brigade of Gurkhas.



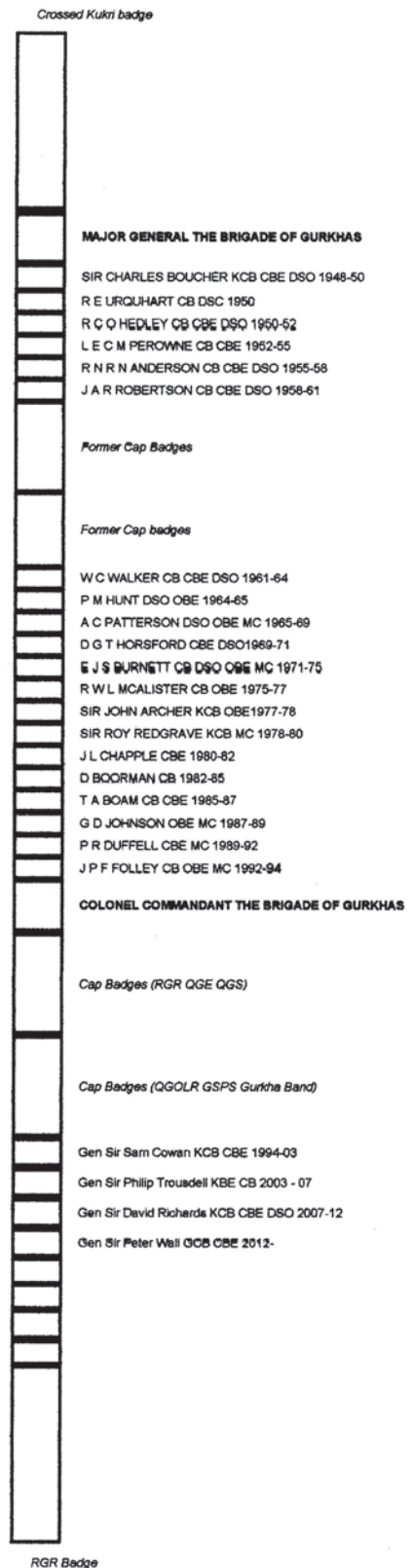
General Sir Peter Wall KCB CBE ADC, Colonel Commandant the Brigade of Gurkhas

Colonel Commandant Brigade Of Gurkhas Baton

Traditionally the Colonel Commandant Brigade of Gurkhas has carried his own Baton to signify his appointment as Colonel Commandant Brigade of Gurkhas and he carries this Baton when visiting any units of the Brigade in this capacity. Originally made for the Major General the Brigade of Gurkhas, the Baton has recently been refurbished to reflect the change of appointment title and provide additional space for future names.

Prior to the refurbishment it was agreed that the continuity of this appointment should be preserved by retaining the previous layout of the former Major General Brigade of Gurkhas Baton and incorporate the cap badges of the post 1997 Brigade of Gurkhas and names of the Colonel Commandants. To that end the Baton required to be slightly lengthened; the existing bands from the pre 1997 Brigade to be squeezed closer together; under the Colonel Commandant section, all cap badges of the four major units and two minor units Brigade of Gurkhas to be created followed by the names of the Colonel Commandants. The Baton was topped and tailed with the Brigade Cross Kukris and Royal Gurkha Rifles.

The refurbishment was carried out by Peter Hicks Ltd based in Devizes, Wiltshire and was completed in November 2013.



Annual Report to the Right Honourable Doctor Ram Baran Yadav, President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal

By General Sir Peter Wall KCB CBE ADC, Colonel Commandant the Brigade of Gurkhas



Soldier from IRGR on operations in Afghanistan

Honorable President,

It is my privilege to present to you my second annual report on the Brigade of Gurkhas as Colonel Commandant Brigade of Gurkhas.

The operational tempo has remained high for the British Army and the Brigade of Gurkhas continues to play a key part. The military capability the Gurkhas deliver is highly regarded and valued.

It is with deep regret that I reflect on the tragic deaths of two members of the Brigade of Gurkhas whilst deployed on operations in Afghanistan. Lieutenant Edward Drummond-Baxter and Lance Corporal Siddhanta Kunwar died on 30 October 2012 as a result of enemy action during Op HERRICK 17. This was a huge blow to both their families and to IRGR.

Brigade of Gurkhas Update

As part of the redesign of the British Army to a new Army 2020 structure, it will transform to a smaller organisation with some changes in roles and focus. This will see, over a 5-year period, the Regular Component reduce to a force of 82,000 and the Reserve Component grow to 30,000 with much greater interaction between the two. I am pleased to report that all our

Gurkha units have a key role to play within this new design but, along with the rest of the British Army, will have to undergo changes and reductions. The new Army construct will have units in Reaction and Adaptable roles and the Brigade will have representation in both.

The current period sees a gradual drawdown of the United Kingdom's commitment to Afghanistan, where the Brigade has performed to the highest standards, and thus future deployments by the Brigade units will now be reducing. A new area of focus for Army 2020 is a greater emphasis on upstream capacity building, assisting other armies with their capability development. I see much opportunity for the Brigade to play a key role in this and know that they are well suited to working with other nations.

Operation HERRICK 17

Op HERRICK 17, the deployment of British Forces to Afghanistan from October 2012 to April 2013, saw a considerable deployment of the Brigade. Nearly 700 deployed from IRGR, 69 Squadron QGE, and 246 Squadron QGS. Members of the Brigade were employed across the spectrum of activity and played a significant role in defeating Taliban activity and handing over responsibilities to the Afghan Security Forces.

Testament to the Gurkhas' excellent performance on Op HERRICK 17 was special recognition on the operational Honours and Awards list to:

Major David PACK, The Royal Gurkha Rifles - Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE)

Rifleman (now Acting Lance Corporal) Tuljung GURUNG, The Royal Gurkha Rifles - Military Cross (MC)

Rifleman Bikash GURUNG, The Royal Gurkha Rifles - Mention in Despatches (MiD)

Corporal (now Acting Sergeant) Govinda GURUNG, The Royal Gurkha Rifles - Mention in Despatches (MiD)

Major Leigh Morgan ROBERTS, The Royal Gurkha Rifles - Joint Commanders Commendation

Lance Corporal Prakash PUN, The Royal Gurkha Rifles - Joint Commanders Commendation

LCpl Tuljung GURUNG IRGR - Military Cross (MC)

'Tuljung was on guard in a tower overlooking the entrance to one of the Patrol Bases when the front gate was attacked by insurgents. The attack took place in the form of small arms fire and rifle grenades. Tuljung was struck in the helmet by one round which knocked him to the ground. At the same time a grenade was thrown into his sangar. Quickly composing himself, he picked up the grenade and threw it back. The insurgents then scaled his tower and tried to drag him out. He repelled the attack with his kukri and in the struggle he and an insurgent fell out of the tower. It was at this point that the insurgents gave up and fled back into the darkness. Tuljung then returned to his tower and apologised to the guard commander for having left his post.'

Transition

The reduction in the Brigade is being met by a series of 4 Redundancy Tranches. In addition, opportunities for continued service within the British Army, but outside of the Brigade of Gurkhas, are being offered to serving Gurkhas. So far 740 have taken up the opportunity and are employed in a wide range of employments across the Army.

In addition to the excellent support given to those selected for redundancy, housing and education, Headquarters Brigade of Gurkhas also provides specific support for those Gurkhas leaving under normal conditions. This includes briefings and advice on understanding the resettlement process, visas and immigration, and bespoke employment fairs attended by potential employers who are specifically interested in employing ex-Gurkha servicemen. The feedback from those undergoing this process has been most positive.



LCpl Tuljung GURUNG IRGR - Military Cross (MC)

Soldiers making enquiries with civilian companies for resettlement and career advice



The Reserve Component

The growth of the Reserve Component of the Army to 30,000 sees an excellent opportunity for our ex-Gurkha servicemen to enjoy continued military employment on a part-time, voluntary basis. I can report that their experience and skills are much in demand and a number have already taken up the offer. There is a comprehensive communication package being provided to inform them of the advantages and opportunities.



Soldier from IRGR on operations in Afghanistan

Since 2008 all servicemen joining the British Army joined under new terms of service; the Versatile Engagement. All receive an initial 12-year period of service and then a number, according to the requirements of each cap badge, are offered a full career of 24 years. For the Brigade this will result in some, mainly the lower ranks, finishing their careers after 12 years. In order to meet this additional outflow the Brigade will seek to increase recruitment from its current target of 126 per year to a figure of approximately 200.

Unit Activities

1st Battalion Royal Gurkha Rifles (IRGR)

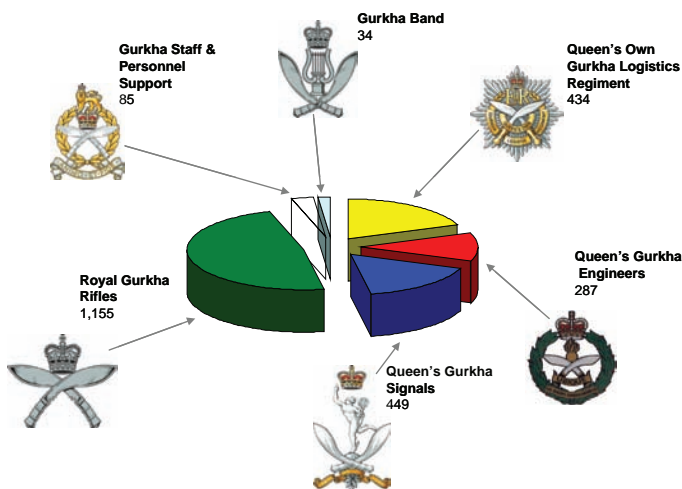
In April 2013 IRGR returned from a very successful eight month Op HERRICK 17 tour in Afghanistan, their third tour in five years. IRGR were deployed across Helmand Province and undertook the full role of operational activity, from offensive action to assisting with the handover of responsibilities to the Afghans. The battalion received much positive recognition for the suitability of Gurkha soldiers in their mentoring and capacity building role with the Afghanistan National Security Forces.



Soldier from IRGR patrolling on Op HERRICK 17

Redundancy and Manning Update

As the British Army transforms to its new structures, the Brigade of Gurkhas will gradually reduce from 3,140 to 2,444.



The Brigade will remain 3% of the British Army. 427 soldiers left the Army on Tranche 1 and Tranche 2 of the redundancy programme. A further 265 soldiers were selected for redundancy on Tranche 3 and are due to leave in June 2014. Work is now ongoing to determine the size of Tranche 4 for the Brigade to ensure the end result will be the correct number by rank and length of service to meet our new structures.



Soldiers from IRGR patrolling on Op HERRICK 17

The battalion successfully relocated to Brunei in the summer and will spend the next 3 years there as the Light Role Infantry Battalion. They return to become the British Army's jungle experts and reinvigorate their relationship with the Royal Bruneian Armed Forces.

2nd Battalion Royal Gurkha Rifles (2RGR)

2RGR recently returned to the UK after completing four years as the Brunei based battalion, during which time they deployed to Afghanistan twice. They successfully relocated to Folkestone, Kent this summer and have reorganised as the UK based Light Role Infantry Battalion as part of the Adaptable Force.

This year A Company, 2RGR conducted Exercise PACIFIC KUKRI in Australia, a six-week live-firing exercise. They have also conducted much bilateral training with the Royal Bruneian Armed Forces.

They were honoured to receive a visit from HM The Sultan of Brunei Hassanal Bolkiah in June.



HM The Sultan of Brunei Hassanal Bolkiah inspects 2RGR Honour Guard before wishing them farewell.

The Queen's Gurkha Engineers (QGE)

Until September this year, QGE were employed in the High Risk Search role, responsible for identifying improvised explosive devices. They were praised for the way they undertook this exceptionally dangerous and vital task. They also gained great respect for the speed with which they learnt this new skill.

In 2013 69 Squadron QGE deployed to Afghanistan and the regiment will continue to provide a few personnel on each deployment.

QGE is now transforming into Force Support Engineer role responsible for general engineering tasks. This will demand new skills and a change of structure and equipment. In summer 2013, 70 Gurkha Field Squadron had a successful Joint Force Engineer Exercise to Kenya to practise their deployment engineering skills. 69 Gurkha Field Squadron is scheduled to go to Canada for three months' training in early 2014.

Mine Clearance



QGE Bridge



The Queen's Gurkha Signals (QGS)

QGS have 3 Field Signal Squadrons embedded in 3 Royal Signals Regiments and in addition have two Signal Troops, one in Brunei and one in Nepal. This year has been spent restructuring and taking on new Communication Information Systems. QGS soldiers are the lead of much of this new capability across the British Army and are now training other units in the Royal Signals in it. QGS had a squadron in Afghanistan for the first half of 2013 and has also had soldiers deployed to the Falkland Islands, Cyprus and Somalia.

QGS setting up a communications system



Members of QGS represented the Army at Boxing and Judo at combined services level. Soldiers and officers took part in overseas adventurous training in Peru, USA, Nepal and various parts of Europe. The Regiment is fully integrated into the British Army delivering the required operational output. The officers and soldiers are achieving high grades on their trade courses, receiving civilian qualifications accredited by Universities.

Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment (QOGLR)

10 QOGLR returned from Afghanistan and Cyprus in October 2012. Following a period of leave it then set about transition to an Army 2020 Theatre Logistic Regiment structure, which notably saw over 100 QOGLR soldiers and their families relocate from Hullavington to Aldershot.

2013 has seen 10 QOGLR undertake a number of contingency tasks including transport support to the Very High Readiness Medical Transport Facility and the NATO Reaction Force. It also completed exercises in Southern England and Wales. The Regiment can be proud of many notable sporting successes throughout the year and in January 2013 a successful expedition to Everest Base Camp was undertaken.

QOGLR soldiers in Afghanistan in a weapons mounted landrover



QOGLR soldiers on a combat logistics patrol



Gurkha Staff and Personnel Support (GSPS)

GSPS was created as a single, distinct unit in June 2011 from RGR clerks. The GSPS are continuing to evolve as a new organisation. Now with their own cap badge they continue to fill their previous roles and conduct the same career development as their British counterparts.

In addition they are attached to Regular British Army units in a broad range of management, financial and accounting roles. They remain exceptionally well respected.



Staff Sergeant Lachuman Rana assisting with the recruit administration

Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas

The Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas has continued to perform concerts at military and civilian events across the globe and to raise significant funds for the Gurkha Welfare Trust. They have identified many opportunities to enhance the Band's reputation, not least, the latest a tour to Nepal and India in December 2013 and January 2014, which included supporting the Nepal Army Band, the Armed Forces Band and performing at the Gurkha Recruit Intake Attestation Parade in Pokhara.

Other Activities and Adventurous Training

Bisley - The Army's Shooting Competition

Sergeant Sombahadur Chhantel from 1RGR was the winner of the Queen's Medal at Bisley in 2013, the British Army's annual shooting competition.

247 participants from across the British Army competed, all 45 Gurkhas that competed are in the top Army 100. The Brigade of Gurkhas represents 3% of the British Army so to achieve 45% of the Army's top 100 is a notable achievement.

All Gurkha units came in the top ten of the British Army with 1RGR coming first, 2RGR second, 10 QOGLR fourth, 36 Engr Regt fifth and 30 Sig Regt Eighth.



Sergeant Sombahadur Chhantel 2013 Queen's Medallist

The Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas, Pipes & Drums and Buglers performing 'Sounding Retreat' in Hanover, German.



Exercise ANNAPURNA KHUKRI

30 Soldiers from B (Sari Bair) Company, IRGR on Exercise ANNAPURNA KHUKRI, a 10 day arduous trek around the Annapurna circuit in Nepal following a six-month operational tour in Afghanistan



Sari Bair day - the Regimental battle honour of B Company, I RGR in Brunei





Lance Corporal Tejbahadur Pun (pictured) and Lance Corporal Tilbahadur Magar represented the Brigade at the funeral of Baroness Thatcher



His Excellency The Nepalese Ambassador Dr Suresh Chandra Chalise pictured with members of the Brigade of Gurkhas at the annual dinner during Brigade Week June 2013



QOGLR Chefs, winners of a fat carving competition at the National Exhibition Centre in January 2013



Captain Amrit with HRH Princess Anne, Colonel in Chief of The Royal Corps of Signals

Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas at the Virginia International Tattoo, USA



Captain (now Major) Chandra Pun with HRH Prince Harry on Operations in Afghanistan



Colonel-in-Chief of the RGR - HRH The Prince of Wales' Orderly reunion in May 2013



British Gurkhas Nepal Ladies - Teej celebration

OPERATIONS and Honours And Awards 2013

New Year's Honours List 2013

CB	Major General Ian Martin COPELAND (late RLC and QOGLR)
CBE	Brigadier John Craig LAWRENCE MBE (late RGR)
OBE	Diana, Mrs DONOVAN (GWT(UK) Trustee) ¹
MBE	Nicholas COCHRANE-DYET (formerly 2GR) ² Major Hemchandra RAI BEM AGC (SPS)

Queen's Birthday Honours List 2013

KGB	General Sir Peter Anthony WALL KCB CBE ADC Gen
OBE	Colonel Sean Patrick Francis HARRIS (late RE)

New Year's Honours List 2014

OBE	Colonel Andrew MacFarland MILLS (late RE) Lieutenant Colonel Niall McKerrow STOKOE Royal Corps of Signals
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Operational Honours and Awards 2013

MBE	Major David Thomas PACK , The Royal Gurkha Rifles
MC	Rifleman (now Acting Lance Corporal) Tuljung GURUNG , The Royal Gurkha Rifles
MiD	Rifleman Bikash GURUNG , The Royal Gurkha Rifles Corporal (now Acting Sergeant) Govinda GURUNG , The Royal Gurkha Rifles

¹ For services to the Gurkha Welfare Trust

² Civil List. Deputy Chair, British Business Group, Abu Dhabi, UAE. For services to British business and to charitable work in the UAE.

Operational Honours & Awards

Military Cross Citation Rifleman Tuljung Gurung

Afghanistan 22 March 2013

In the early hours of 22 March 2013 Rifleman Tuljung Gurung was on guard duty at the front gate Sangar to Patrol Base Sparta, Lashkar Gah. At 0345 am two insurgents conducted a close quarter attack on the Patrol Base and directly on Gurung's sangar. Gurung repelled this small arms and grenade attack and then fought the insurgents with his kukri fighting knife to prevent access to the Patrol Base. His actions averted potential significant loss of life.

Gurung was occupying a three metre high hesco bastion construction sangar that provides a sentry position to the entrance of patrol Base Sparta. The Patrol Base houses some 84 UK serviceman and US civilian contractors. Advisory Teams work from the base to advise, assist and train the

4th Kandak of the 3/215 ANA Brigade, which is based in a separate camp 200 metres away. On the night of the 22 March 2013 Central Helmand was experiencing very poor weather. This resulted in a thick dust cloud settling over Lashkar Gah area and visibility had reduced to 20 metres. ISAF surveillance devices used to protect the base were rendered ineffective and the aerostat balloon that would have provided 360 degrees surveillance out to a distance of seven km was also grounded. The insurgents used this cover of darkness and poor visibility to mount an audacious attack on Gurung's sangar in order to gain access to the Patrol Base and inflict maximum casualties on the ISAF personnel based within. At 0345 Gurung observed two individuals running towards the sangar from a disused compound 90 metres to its south. He issued a verbal challenge, and was immediately engaged with several bursts of extremely accurate small arms fire. Rounds struck the frame of the sangar as Gurung returned fire. A bullet struck Gurung on his helmet and he was knocked to the floor. As he regained his footing to resume his fire position he saw a grenade bounce off the ceiling of the sangar and land next to him. Showing exceptional instinct and courage he picked up the grenade and threw it out of the sangar. The grenade detonated, peppering the sangar with fragmentation. Gurung was again knocked off his feet. Through the obscuration of the debris he quickly identified an insurgent climbing into the sangar. Due to close quarters, and unable to bring his rifle to bear, Gurung instinctively drew his kukri and slashed at the insurgent. In the ensuing hand to hand combat Gurung and the insurgent fell three metres from the sangar, landing on the ground outside the Patrol Base. Exposed to possible further insurgent firing positions, he aggressively and tenaciously continued to fight with his kukri. The two insurgents, defeated, turned and fled. Gurung then quickly climbed back into the sangar by which time the Quick Reaction Force had arrived. Gurung reported the incident calmly and bemoaned the fact he had not been able to prevent the insurgents escaping.

Gurung's actions showed the highest levels of gallantry and courage. His speed of reaction and utter disregard for his own safety prevented two armed insurgents from gaining access to the Patrol Base. His actions prevented loss of life and were exemplary for a private soldier. In the face of the insurgent, Gurung's valour and decisive action was out of all proportion to that expected of such a junior rank and deserved recognition of the highest order.



Op Herrick 17 - I RGR

It is worth re-capping the experiences of each Company during Op HERRICK 17. The tour represents a huge achievement for the Battalion, in which all ranks can take justifiable pride. It was markedly different from our previous tours in that, whilst the threat was as great as ever, we were able to be part of a real sea change in the direction Afghanistan is taking, with the resumption of responsibility by the Afghan authorities and security forces becoming a reality. I RGR found itself not deploying as a whole Battlegroup, but instead operating as sub-units attached to various other Battlegroups, including the BAG and PMAG. Gurkhas were therefore found across the whole area of operations in Helmand, in a wide variety of roles, operating alongside or as part of British units. British units were able to see first hand how our men earn their reputation, and for our soldiers, many on their third or fourth tour of the country, the experience was a gratifying one.

A (Delhi) Company was attached to 40 Commando Royal Marines for the tour. They found themselves operating out of PB 2 in the exact same area many of them had patrolled during OP HERRICK 12. In many cases the local civilians also recognised some familiar faces amongst the Gurkhas returning and were happy to see soldiers who already knew the people and places from two years ago. Much had changed since the last tour. Whereas before soldiers could expect to be contacted fairly regularly when on patrol, nowadays fights with the Taliban were the exception, with only certain areas in the south west proving troublesome. Tragically, on 30 October Lt Edward Drummond-Baxter and (A)LCpl Siddhanta Kunwar were murdered in an incident involving a suspected member of the Afghan police. These were the only fatalities of the tour, and the manner of their death greatly shocked everybody. However, within days, A Company were back supporting the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and did not let these deplorable events prevent them from carrying out their mission. After Christmas so much progress had been made that there were periods of weeks when no incidents of any kind occurred. This quiet period enabled the ANSF to truly take control and A Company to take a back seat and help only when asked. By the time A Company had handed over in April, the area was well and truly under Afghan control, with a local population who would no longer tolerate the Taliban violence that interfered with their lives.

B (Sari Bair) Company similarly found themselves back in the same area in which they had previously worked on OP HERRICK 12. In fact B Company went back to the exact same bases they had occupied on the last tour, with the bulk of the company based in PB 4 working to the Nad-e-Ali Battlegroup, under the command of I MERCIAN. Even more had changed here than in A Company's area. What had once been one of the most violent and IED intensive areas in all of Afghanistan had been transformed. Now local nationals could carry on their farming and daily work, whilst B Company soldiers could patrol areas on foot that previously would have required helicopters

and deliberate operations to reach. Although there were some issues with the local Afghan Uniformed Police (AUP) and worries of Taliban sympathy and corruption, with B Company help these did not impact on the local nationals too much. Such were their successes that B Company were able to close down or hand over all their bases to the Afghans and so were able to return home slightly earlier than planned, arriving back in the UK at the end of February.

C (Mogaung) Company had the most diverse tour as they found themselves working to the Royal Dragoon Guards as part of the Police Mentoring Advisory Group. Their main job was training and working with the Afghan police to raise their professional standards so that they were no longer seen by locals as corrupt and predatory. C Company were spread throughout the whole area of operations working in small teams, visiting police in their checkpoints to help with training or arranging courses for the police to attend in NATO checkpoints. One element of C Company was based in the Lashkar Gah Training Centre, where all AUP Phase I recruits and NCO courses are run. The C Company soldiers helped mentor and train the Afghan police so that by the end of the tour these policemen were confident and capable enough to run the training courses themselves, with limited Task Force Helmand involvement. The threat of 'Green on Blue' incidents was high during the tour, and for some of the multiples that operated out by themselves, alone in AUP checkpoints, this was particularly so. The fact that C Company were able to train and assist so many police without incident, often during periods of heightened tensions, was a credit to their professionalism and skill.

D (Kandahar) Company spent their tour as part of the Nad-e-Ali Battlegroup operating from PB Wahid on the Loy Mandeh Wadi. Here they were responsible for helping to keep the insurgents away from the protected communities to the south of the Nar-e Bughra line, as well as work with the Afghan National Army (ANA) and the AUP. This area remained more kinetic and violent than some of the other areas and D Company would regularly patrol out into the desert in order to prevent the insurgents from coming too close to the population centres. Perhaps though their greatest success was to get the neighbouring ANSF units to begin to work together and provide each other mutual support. This took many hours of patient negotiating and lots of shared experiences on patrols together, but eventually the police and army showed themselves capable of co-ordinating to provide better security for the locals. In March D Company moved out of PB Wahid and into Forward Operating Base Shawqat, which lies in the centre of Nad-e-Ali district. Here their responsibility was to provide support to any remaining advisors still mentoring the ANSF and to retain an understanding of what conditions were like outside of the bases. This they did before successfully returning to the UK in the middle of April.

Support (Medicina) Company did a variety of tasks over the tour. The HQ itself served as a Kandak Advisory Team, working with an Afghan combat support battalion commander in Ops BOX RIKKI, to the east of Lashkar Gah. Here they helped the recce/engineering/artillery Kandaks become more established and used in their specialised roles rather than just as infantry. The recce platoon was attached to the Lashkar Gah Battlegroup under command of 1st Battalion Duke of Lancaster's Regiment. Operating out of PBATTAL they worked to help keep the main highway into Lashkar Gah district centre (Route 601) open. The FSG platoon was broken down into two with an element being attached to 40 Commando operating with A Company, and another element with D Company in Nad-e-Ali.

Towards the close of the tour, a singularly heroic action was fought hand-to-hand by 21171380 Rfn Tuljung Gurung, of Mortar Platoon. At 0345hrs on 22 March 2013, Rfn Tuljung was manning a sangar when he sighted two individuals running at the front gate from a disused compound 90 metres to the south. Displaying steadiness and calm Tuljung issued a challenge in line with escalation measures and rules of engagement. He was engaged immediately with several bursts of highly accurate fire that struck the frame of the sangar. Tuljung made his weapon ready and returned fire. Within seconds he was hit by a round to the helmet that knocked him to the ground. As he resumed his fire position he heard the distinct pop of a grenade being primed and whilst getting to his feet he saw a grenade bounce off the wooden frame and land at the entrance of the sangar. Showing exceptional calmness and speed of thought, despite having just been hit by a bullet, he was able to locate and throw the grenade over the side of the wall. It was at this point that the grenade detonated. The resultant blast peppered the sangar with fragmentation and once again knocked him off his feet. Dazed once again and with visibility reduced further by the debris thrown up in the blast, he quickly identified an insurgent attempting to mount the sangar. Unable to bring his rifle to bear due to the close-quarters involved, he instinctively drew his kukri and slashed at the insurgent. In the ensuing close quarter combat Gurung grabbed the insurgent in a bid to prevent him from escaping and was pulled from the sangar, falling three metres to the floor outside of the Patrol Base, exposing himself to the insurgent firing points. His aggressive and tenacious actions dissuaded the insurgents from pressing home their attack and instead they turned and fled. For this action Rfn Tuljung has been awarded the Military Cross.

IRGR deployed seven members of the Quartermaster Department on Op HERRICK 16/17 to provide the bulk of the chain of command of the Bastion Joint Operating Base Quartermaster Department. The Department at the time was responsible for J4 support to 64 sub units and around 5,000 troops, as well as many other Garrison functions including support for local and international contractors. The department is made up of Tri Service personnel and at the time there were 32 staff in total. This was a proud moment and excellent opportunity for IRGR, the majority of the key posts such as the QM Tech, RQMS(M), RQMS(T), ET SNCO, Ammo SNCO, Miscellaneous Account and Clothing SNCO were held by IRGR personnel.

As there was no firm IRGR-only base, the QM Department played a pivotal role and remained the main point of contact for visits from UK to IRGR, administration of IRGR Battle Casualty Replacement during RSOI package, administration during R&R for Battalion HQ key staff, J4 support to IRGR by resourcing equipment and exchanging clothing, repatriation parade for fallen comrades and Dashain Celebrations. The department also managed to build a temple which both military, including non RGR, and civilian personnel were able to use.

This was extremely successful deployment for the QM Dept including, despite the complexity and breadth of the BSN QM accounts, achievement of 'Greens' in both ECI & LSI. Furthermore both the RQMS(T), WO2 Yam Gurung and LCpl Man Gurung were awarded Camp BSN JOB Commander's Commendations.

Devoid of a BG to C2, the CO and a handful of Bn HQ officers deployed as staff in HQ TFH. As SOI J5 the CO led on the detailed work to plan the phased withdrawal of TFH from all PBs and FOBs, bar a few, to BSN over the current and forthcoming HERRICKs. This work included planning the maintenance of 'surge' combat capability to ensure TFH is able to maintain one foot on the ground as required during what will be a dangerous, protracted period of drawdown. He was assisted in this work by the Adjt who, in addition to maintaining a robust rear-link to the ROG and continuing with Bn G1 business, owned the detailed process of scheduling base closures and handover (to the ANSF). The Bn 2IC deployed as SO2 J3/5 TFH, and immersed himself thoroughly in the world of OSW, as well as deputising for the COS on occasions. The Ops Officer expanded his role somewhat to run the task force Joint Operating Centre as the Brigade Ops Officer, and the IO stepped up to be SO3 J2 TFH, the key J2 planner in the task force plans team; on many occasions deputising for SO2 J2 in the delivery of updates, briefings and planning input.

Throughout the tour, all elements of IRGR and their dependents were reliant on the sterling efforts of the Rear Operations Group (ROG). A soldier who is content that his administrative needs and family's welfare are taken care of can focus entirely on the work at hand. This fact was not lost on IRGR, who invested heavily in the ROG and left a number of key personnel in place to ensure its smooth running. The ROG was run as a small battalion complete with acting CO (the GM - initially Maj Dhyanasprasad Rai, who handed over in December 2013 to Maj Rambahadur Pun), Adjt, RSM, Trg Offr and QM as well as critically, a Welfare Officer and his team. The numbers of ROG personnel fluctuated throughout the tour but averaged nearly 200, with the addition of roughly 480 families.

Key highlights and tasks over the six month period of the tour included the arrival and subsequent training of the new recruit intake. This comprised 40 new soldiers who were inducted into the battalion by completing a four week cadre, followed by a Khasam Khane parade. The ROG also hosted a number of high profile visits from, among others, CGS and Comd 3XX. The VIPs were given a tour of the

camp, witnessing day-to-day training and were then hosted for lunch in the Officers' Mess where they were joined by the wives and children of those deployed. Another key task was the organisation of battle casualty replacements (BCRs), which was done as a staged deployment of a BCR group or 'pulse' at four to six week intervals. The work of the welfare team in particular was deeply appreciated by our families.

Although the IRGR was split up, the boys were able to do a wide range of jobs, in a large number of places, working alongside multiple units. The experience this brought was invaluable for IRGR, whilst the professionalism and high standards shown by the Gurkha soldiers won a huge number of friends and admirers across the Task Force.

The Battalion having recovered, and taken POL, Friday 28 June witnessed the Op HI7 Medals Parade. The day was of extra special significance because it also marked the disbanding of D (Kandahar) Company and celebrated the Regimental Birthday. Presenting the medals was Brigadier Bruce, Commander of 4 Brigade. Brigadier Bruce had become a familiar and much respected face on tour and during the preparatory training. It was particularly appropriate that he should present the medals after having shown such appreciation and respect for the Gurkhas throughout his command. This was a proud moment for all, especially those receiving medals after their first tour of Afghanistan, but it was also a time for contemplation and remembrance. Every man present thought of Lance Corporal Siddhanta and Lieutenant Drummond-Baxter who were there in spirit. They were also remembered by senior officers and VIP guests at the wreath-laying which followed the parade.

Life as a Rifleman in a CheckPoint (CP) And Patrol Base (PB)

By 30141958 Rfn Harkaraj Rai

As a soldier we have to deploy to several countries for peacekeeping. What is the primary role of the Army? Some people are still in confusion; I want to just let them know; soldiers are protecting the people not killing them.

The Army has lots of responsibilities. Every nation has their own army and the British government has also, but there is a difference in recruiting; every nation has soldiers from their own nation (own nationalities) but the British government also recruits from the Commonwealth and Nepal.

Afghanistan is a land locked Muslim country surrounded by other Muslim countries, but Afghanistan is mostly affected by Pakistan which is well known for terrorism. When the American twin towers were hit by Al Qaeda, NATO started an operation called HERRICK in Afghanistan in order to neutralise the Taliban in Afghanistan who were protecting Al Qaeda. NATO forces have been continually fighting the Insurgency until the end of 2014.

Now we are here in PB 2(Afghanistan) to support the Afghan people and government. We are all well informed about the current situation in Afghanistan but the people are suffering because of the insurgency. We have deployed to the front line to directly help the people. We spent the past two and half months in a checkpoint (CP) called PRRANG. Checkpoint life is very different from patrol base and normal life. The checkpoint is very small but there is a lot of work that has to be done on a daily basis. We were very busy in the CP. On a daily basis we patrolled at least once, at the same time we had to do sentry, cooking, and cleaning. But one good point was we ate two goats in one week. It was a very busy work routine and we didn't have good facilities in the CP as here in our PB.

Our CP finally closed down on 22 December, after which we returned to PB 2, where we are doing different tasks in different places. We now do a lot of vehicle patrolling which we didn't get to do in the CP. The PB is well defended and well managed with a gym, cookhouse, shower, and laundry, but the most important thing is that it is far safer than a CP. This is my first OP HERRICK Tour so I didn't know what types of danger we have had to face and I didn't know what facilities there would be in Afghanistan. Before coming here I thought we would not get the chance to use such types of good facilities, and it is very different from what I had thought. We have already done four months in Afghanistan but we have to remain careful. We are very busy here but after long duty, fatigues and lessons, we get a chance to have a good shower (with hot water), use the internet and chat with friends and families, when we can forget all these things that we did. That's how life rolls on. Despite all these things, we are enjoying our tour.

JAI A(DELHI) COY, IRGR

From a Rifleman's Perspective Life in Op Sterga 2

By Rfn Bar Bahadur Budha Magar

OP HERRICK 17 is my second tour of Afghanistan. Once RSOI was completed my platoon, 3 platoon (Delhi Coy), moved to a small OP located on high ground called OP Sterga 2. We overlook the Helmand river and green zone to our north and there is vast open desert to our south with dispersed compounds.

My first tour was HERRICK 12 in 2010 in the same area. I'd been in the green zone many times but the OP was new to me. Knowing I was going back to a small CP though filled me with dread. I had known how tough life is in a CP. I had flashbacks of my experiences on HERRICK 12; no water, limited supply, full of dust in a filthy Afghan compound with flies, mosquitoes, rats and lots of other species of insect.

On 13 October we landed in the open desert in a tiny Hesco compound with only a few tents inside. All round was sand and dust. We met our Platoon Commander and Platoon

Sergeant there to finish off handover/takeover with the Grenadier Guards and from then on OP Sterga 2 was our home. There was lots of work to be done to make the OP safe as before it was only supposed to be a temporary OP. We built sangars and prepared the accommodation for the harsh Afghan winter. We had nearly seven months to go living in the OP.

Initially there were no entertainment facilities and all we had to look forward to was patrol and sangar duty. We were proactive though and set out making our home, building a gym and table tennis board and our OC's tac sent us a Karem board and life was much better. The austerity did not end there though. Resupply proved very tough due to our isolated location. I will never forget when we ran out of toilet bags and we had to use bin bags instead. Water was at a minimum and we had to get water from the River Helmand just so we could wash.

After a couple of months the company had worked tirelessly to ensure we got resupplied correctly. Suddenly we were receiving lots of parcels from the UK, Nepal and Brunei and morale was high again. We are a family and everyone looked after each other in every instance. Due to our hard work it was decided in January that our OP would be hugely improved and made bigger. We received lots of British attachments and the Engineers were sent in to construct the build. We worked hard alongside them, moving everything back and forth to allow the construction. We built a good relationship with them. As I write this we now have lots of facilities including telephones, TV and internet. Morale is now on top of Mount Everest!

We built our OP into a huge base with the best assets in Afghanistan like PGSS. We all had a hard time but we've all had fun in the process.

By Rfn Nabin Chandra Rai

As part of 40 Commando Battle-group we (3 Platoon, Delhi Coy) deployed on 03 October 12 to Afghanistan where we completed a week RSOI package before we moved to OP Sterga 2.

When we arrived, OP Sterga 2 was in a very poor condition without proper facilities or force protection. We began our duties and patrols immediately with a group of recce troop from 40 Commando. My intake, 2010, and the intake below me had no operational experience so initially going on patrol would fill us with great fear as we did not know what to expect; however, one gets habituated to anything one does in one's daily life. Our Platoon gurujis supported us and shared their knowledge and experience with us. In the OP there were no facilities to make life easier for us. We had minimal water, no fresh food, no showers or welfare facilities. We were caught in an awkward situation as the initial plan was to collapse the OP by the end of December and that meant that higher command would not invest in it as it was due to close.

Our main task was to observe insurgents in the area and provide information about insurgent activities within our AO. The information we gave from this OP extremely impressed higher commanders and they built up plans for offensive ops from our information. We were also the main form of J2 collection in the entire Dashte area. Our role in the Brigade became very important and valuable even though we were one of the smallest locations in Afghanistan. This led to visits from 40 Commando Commanding Officer; Task Force Helmand Commander, Brigadier Bruce and Commander of Regional Command South-West who is a two star general of the US Marine Corps. They were hugely impressed looking at the hard work we'd done and the contribution we'd made to Brigade. They decided that OP Sterga 2 was vital ground for the upcoming HERRICK tour so whilst all other CPs and PBs were closing they changed the plan and decided to make us into a far bigger location - more like a PB.

The Engineers are currently at Sterga 2 just putting the final touches to the massive build they have constructed. We, all the members of 3 Platoon, are assisting them happily with high morale as we now have much better facilities and life has been made much easier.

We have enjoyed life in Sterga 2 with many different people and conducting many different tasks to help achieve the Brigade's aim. Definitely this OP will be the vital ground for the coming HERRICK tour and we can be proud that that is due to our hard work.

OP HERRICK 18 246 Gurkha Signals Squadron OP JANA

By Sig Rajan Thapa

Operation JANA is a joint operation in Afghanistan consisting of the Army, RAF and civilians. The sole purpose of Op JANA was to complete an update to computer systems in Afghanistan. 2nd Signal Regiment contributed nine personnel of which six of us were from 246 Gurkha Signal Squadron.

After RSOI the JANA team were shown to their workplace in Camp Bastion where we would be spending nearly every single hour of our tour. The factory is where we receive the legacy computers and then upgrade them in a factory line process.

We were divided into three different teams with each having its own role, the 'Build' team, 'Rollout' team and the 'Floorwalking' team. The role of the 'Build' team was to upgrade the computers to Windows 7 and install the software applications. The build process was lengthy and would take up a lot of time during the day, so we had to split the 'Build' team into two sections. One section would build during the



Members of 2 Sig Regt on Op JANA Camp Bastion

day, while the other group would build during the night. After the build process, the computers were 'Rolled Out' to various sites around Helmand Province. The 'Rollout Team' worked throughout the night installing the new computers in place of the old ones. This is a lengthy process because of the testing that has to be done on the new network to ensure that everything is working correctly. When the 'Rollout Team' has completed its shift, the 'Floor Walking team' turn up at the site during normal working hours and assist users who have problems either using the new operating system or have network problems.

We are now currently into the last month of the tour and everything seems to be going as planned. We are looking forward to our decompression in Cyprus, where a good rest is long overdue.

OP HERRICK 19 70 Gurkha Field Squadron 'Searching on Ops'

By Sgt Evans (HERRICK Search Advisor, Op HERRICK 19)

On 22 October 2012 70 Gurkha Fd Squadron (Search) were tasked to replace 15 Fd Squadron (Search) on the Op HERRICK 19 ORBAT to provide an Explosive Ordnance Disposal and Search (EOD&S) capability to Helmand Province. Previously scheduled to deploy on Op HERRICK 20 it would present somewhat of a challenge to train sufficient High Assurance Search (HAS) Teams to meet the demand.

Hot on the heels of the Squadron deployment on Op OLYMPICS and despite having trained Searchers from the Squadron's Very High Readiness commitment, the task of juggling leave and career courses became a mammoth task to ensure the teams were ready to start Mission Specific Training (MST) in the New Year. 70 Gurkha Field Squadron (Search)

were able to provide 5 HAS Teams in total to attach to the EOD&S Group. As the New Year dawned it was apparent that the requirement for teams was going to be scaled back and so the Squadron were dropped to only three teams. Having aimed high we now found ourselves in a strong position to be able to pick teams and create a Search Troop specifically dedicated to Op HERRICK 19.

K Tp, under Lt Waddington Saheb, were re-ORBATed in February and their first MST with the EOD&S Group would be Ex PASHTUN HAWK. This week-long range package gave the boys an opportunity to try out weapons such as the Glock, GPMG, LMG and the trusty SA80 in a wide variety of shooting practices including the Platoon House and Section in Defence; a rare treat for Sappers. On top of that there was some much needed back ground activity in Team medic training and MASTIFF fault finding; each one was valuable revision.

The next hurdle was deployment to Jordan on Ex PASHTUN LINKS; the EOD&S Group test exercise. Here the boys were put through their paces searching in conditions much closer to the Afghan environment than Salisbury Plain could produce. Despite all being on their first HAS tour, the QGE teams outperformed all of the more experienced teams leaving the EOD&S Groups OC in a quandary! His recent recce to Helmand had shown that the number of teams required was going to be cut further and with the QGE teams being attached they were the obvious choice to cut, however their performance on task had clearly shown their worth!

In the end the decision was made not only to include the QGE teams but that one team would support the Brigade Recce Force (BRF); the prized slot and a huge pat on the back for the Squadron. On 20 July 2013 the first QGE HAS Team deployed to Afghanistan led by Sgt Sanman Guruji who would be based out of Camp Bastion to support the Afghan Army on search and strike operations.

Our BRF HAS Team then deployed on various UK exercises attached to the BRF to familiarise themselves with personalities and Standard Operating Procedures. On 12 September they deployed and after Reception, Staging and Onward Integration (RSOI) they were straight in to orders for their first strike mission working with the Afghan Tiger Teams.

The final QGE HAS Team was held back in the UK to provide Battle Casualty Replacement until mid-February 2014 when we will replace the BRF HAS Team, keeping it in QGE hands. With the drawdown upon us, Sgt Sanman's team will recover at by 1 January 2014 and the last QGE HAS Team will have recovered by June 2014. After 69 Gurkha Fd Sqn (Search) were able to deploy *en masse* in 2012; it will be the end of a short, but significant, era in QGE history where, once again, a call to change roles completely has not only been answered, but the challenge grasped and expectations exceeded.



Dashain 2013 in Camp Bastion (Afghanistan)



Spr Dipendra and Spr Manoj getting ready for a Search Task.



BRIMSTONE 35 celebrating QGE Birthday in HERRICK 19 Afghanistan.



Spr Manoj looking for IEDs in suspected area.

BRIGADE OF GURKHA UNITS

Headquarters The Brigade Of Gurkhas

Staff List

Col	James Robinson	Col BG
Lt Col	(Retd) Robert Bruce OBE	G200 Project Offr
Maj	Tom Pike RGR	CoS
Maj	Bijayant Sherchan GSPS	DCoS
Maj	(Retd) Bruce McKay MBE	Regtl Sec
Maj	(Retd) Nigel Wylie-Carrick MBE	Bde Sec
Capt	Justine Williams AGC(SPS)	SO3 G1/MS
Capt	Kumar Gurung QOGLR	SO3 Transition / QGOO
Capt	Shuresh Thapa RGR	SO3 Plans / QGOO
Capt	Mahendra Limbu (Retd)	Bde Welfare Offr
Hon Lt	Tulbahadur Gurung (QGO)	Asst Bde Welfare Offr
WO2	Chandra Limbu GSPS	Supt Clk
A/SSgt	Sumit Joshi GSPS	Establishment and Budget Clk
Mrs	Jan Patterson	EO GBA / Media & Comm
Mr	Matthew Curtis	Fin Offr
Mrs	Debbie Ewart	Staff Assistant
Cpl	Anil Thapa GSPS	G1/G4 Clk
Cpl	Rakam Thamsuhang GSPS	Asst Ed Parbate
LCpl	Vijaysingh Gurung QOGLR	Welfare NCO

Newsletter

Spirits are high and attitudes positive as HQBG continues to achieve success in times of ever decreasing staff and financial resources. Like any efficient small or medium sized business every one must contribute to every thing which means that the structure is now at an irreducible minimum.

By way of example, in 1995 Brig BG had a PA, Driver and Orderly, now there is no orderly, he self drives and his PA is now a general staff assistant to the whole HQ. Shockingly the information systems mean he also has to do his own filing which obviously causes no end of problems. Elements of these 'efficiencies' conspire to distract Col BG from his core task, but armed with Blackberry, iPad and an MT car he cuts around achieving influence by persistence, persuasive argument and ruffling the odd feather with the Col Comdt's newly elongated baton.

Lead by CGS the Council of Gurkha Colonels has been active in ensuring that our key strengths are fully understood in the right directorates - with good results and hopefully more to come which are better briefed verbally. Of particular note is the increase in the size of our band from 34 to 48.

Never one to sit still, Col BG has engineered a move of location from the desolate edge of Salisbury Plain to the prestige of Sandhurst and grandeur of the Former Army Staff

College both of which you may remember with equal fondness. This puts HQBG in the Gurkha (and ex-Gurkha) centre of mass and retains good access to Army HQ and the MoD. With the Sittang Coy families already in Sandhurst, our families will also benefit greatly and this makes a posting to HQBG an even more attractive proposition.

Redundancy

By the summer of 2015 when the last of the Tranche 4 (T4) group leave the Army, some 1,000 Gurkha will have been made redundant. All will be acutely aware of the reasons for the large Gurkha surplus so rather than dwell on this, it is worth recognising the magnificent effort the BG has made to support those leaving the service. Our Corps QGOO now double hats as SO3 Transition and works closely with all units in addition to 2 and 145 Bde transition teams. The result of this is the opportunity for a much smoother and better facilitated move into a second carrier which is delivered by series of bespoke Gurkha employment fairs and transition fairs. This is inextricably linked to the excellent facilities provided by the Career Transition Partnership, the Regional Forces Employment Agency and of course the invaluable support of the units' chain of command. This effort is unmatched in any other organisation and means

Table 1. Gurkha redundancy

Unit	T1-3	T4 ¹	Total
RGR	379	246	625
QGE	44	28	72
QGS	104	0	104
QOGLR	164	71	235
GSPS	1	9	10
Band	0	0	0
Totals	692	354	1,046

our soldiers really are given the best available support to transition to a civilian career.

Staff

In times of such austerity it with great pleasure that we welcome the new G200 Project Officer. Robert Bruce retired as a Lieutenant Colonel in the RIRISH and then worked for St John's Ambulance. He is married with 2 grown-up children and lives in Upavon. Col BG tactfully told him the HQ would move to Sandhurst after he'd accepted the job! As this journal goes to press, we are interviewing candidates for a new Media and Communication post which will bring an expert into HQBG to enhance our brand and sustain our heritage as we move into G200.

In 2012 we welcomed the QGOOs, Capts Shuresh Thapa RGR and Kumar Gurung QOGLR and in time honoured fashion we say goodbye a year later. The title of QGOO masks a great deal of work that these two officers have done in HQBG and

they will be greatly missed. Mrs Debbie Ewart, whom you will have all spoken to and been helped by over the years, is also leaving. The fact that we have no replacement has highlighted just how much she actually does in addition to her routine work and I'm sure you'll join us in wishing her the very best of luck.

You've read and loved their product so it is with sadness that we say farewell to the Parbate team. Mrs Jan Patterson (editor) leaves on retirement and we wish her luck and hope she continues to full health. Cpl Rakam Thamsuhang GSPS (assistant) moves to QOGLR who will benefit from his excellent producing, editing and type setting skills; our loss, their gain.

Lance Corporal Vijaysingh Gurung QOGLR takes over as Welfare NCO from Corporal Kamal Thapa Magar QOGLR. Kamal returns to QOGLR where we wish him the best of luck in his new rank. Whilst we are confident that Vijay will be equally good as Nepali teacher, Welfare NCO and staff assistant, Colonel BG is teaching him how to drive.

¹ Tranche 4 figures are as at the time of publishing; historically, the numbers have reduced.

Bisley 2013 Results

MATCH 1 Inter Unit Operational Shooting Championship

A total of 48 units across the British Army took part in the "Match 1" competition, out of which all Gurkha units finished within top ten and the results are:

Units	Position
1RGR	1
2RGR	2
10 QOGLR	4
36 Engrs Regt	5
30 Sigs Regt	8



MATCH 10 Inter corps match Championship (Methuen cup)

RGR won the METHUEN CUP 2013



MATCH 40 Combat Rifle Championship (Queens Medal)

247 best firers across the Armed Forces took part in the competition. Cpl Som Bahadur Chantyal has won the Queen's Medal this year. All 45 firers from the Brigade of Gurkhas are now in the Army 100. The Brigade of Gurkhas represents about 3% of the total Army to achieve 45% of the top Army 100 is a notable achievement. Additionally further five Gurkhas who have transferred into other units also came in the Army 100.

Colonel BG Congratulating Corporal Som



I RGR Achievements at the Army Operation Shooting Championship (AOSC) 2013

Individual Champion Trophies

- The Pistol Cup Overall
- The Artillery Cup (Class B) Overall
- The Graham Trophy Class B - The Urban Contact Match
- The Graham Trophy Overall - The Urban Contact Match
- The Association Cup Overall Winner - The Short Range Rural Contact Match
- The Roberts Cup Overall Winner - The Attack & Re-org Match
- The Bullock Trophy & Large Presentation Khukri Winner - The Gurkha Welfare Match
- The Southern Command Cup Class A Winner
- The Southern Command Cup Overall
- The Watkin Cup and ARA Gold Jewel Overall Winner

Team Champion Trophies

- The Royal Ulster Cup Winner - The Fire team falling plates match
- The Parachute Cup Overall Winner
- The Provost Marshall's Cup Overall
- The Coronation Cup Overall Winner

- The King's Royal Rifle Corps Cup - The Infantry Champion Winner
- The Dunlop Trophy - Overall Unit Champion

2 RGR Achievements In AOSC 2013

Individual Champion Trophies

- ARA Silver Jewel Cup Winner
- The Manchester Reg Cup Winner (Class B) - The Indv Rifle Championship
- The Roupell Cup Overall Winner - The Defence Match
- The Governor's Cup (Class B) Winner - The Attack & Re-org Match
- The Malta Cup (Class B) Winner - The Short Range Rural Contact Match
- Young Soldier Challenge Cup (Class B) Winner
- The Revolver Challenge Cup (Class B) Winner - The Pistol Match
- ARA Silver Jewel Overall Winner
- ARA Bronze Jewel Overall Winner

Team Champion Trophies

- The Britannia Trophy Overall Winner
- The Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders Cup Overall Winner

The Queen's Gurkha Engineers Achievements In AOSC 2013

Individual Champion Trophies

- Top Royal Engineer Team - The Wyke Cup Winner (36 Engr Regt)
- The RAC Cup Winner - Non Infantry Unit Champion on Rifle & Machine Gun
- Individual Winners
- RE Champion Shot - LCpl Krishna Rai
- RE Runners Up - Spr Bijaya Rana



Three out of Four from the Regt team have been selected to represent the British Army Shooting Team.

The Queen's Gurkha Signals Achievements In AOSC 2013

Individual Champion Trophies

- The Queen's Own Highlanders Cup (Class B) Winner - The Machine Gun Match
- The Worcestershire Cup and ARA Gold Bar Overall Winner The Machine Gun Match
- The Henry Whitehead Cup (Class B) Winner - The Advance to Contact Match
- The Cheylesmore Cup (Class B) Winner - The Defence Match
- Top Tyro - Small Presentation Khukri Winner - The Gurkha Welfare Match
- Tyro The 6th Queen Elizabeth's Own Gurkha Rifles Trophy Winner - The Indv Rifle Championship
- New Soldier the Rifle Brigade Cup Winner - The Ind Rifle Championship

Team Champion Trophies

- Top Royal Signal team - The Royal Signal Shield (30 Sig Regt)
- The Household Div Cup (OA & CS) Winner (22 Sig Regt)
- The Eastern Command Cup overall Winner (22 Sig Regt)



QOGLR Achievements In AOSC 2013

Individual Champion Trophies

- The Old Contemptibles Cup Winner
- Team Champion Trophies
- The Royal Hussars Cup Winner - The fire team combat sharpshooting match
- The Queen's Regt Cup (OA & SVCS) Winner - The fire team close combat match
- The Malta Challenge Cup Overall Winner - The fire team close combat match



G200 Brigade Of Gurkhas 2015 Bicentenary Everest Expedition

Training Update as at February 2014 - 13 Months Remaining

by Captain Charles Russell RGR, Secretary, GESC

Planning for the Brigade of Gurkhas 2015 Bicentenary Everest Expedition continues in earnest. There have been a number of key additions to the membership of the Gurkha Everest Steering Committee (GESC), not least Major Shane Burton (previously OC B Company, I RGR), who will assist Brigadier Ian Rigden in his continued fund-raising efforts. The Media Committee headed by Brigadier Jonny Bourne ably supported by Major Andrew Todd continue their sterling work. Although not set in stone yet, it is hoped that a national broadcaster (name to be released in due course) will be contracted to cover and produce a documentary of the expedition.

It was with this in mind, that the most recent Winter Training Camp, as a key part of the preparation and selection of the Everest Team, was documented by a team from Army Media Communications. The team was able to capture valuable media footage in high definition (HD) which will be archived along with further HD footage of the Summer Training that took place in Snowdonia during July 2013, for use with the future expedition documentary and supporting media.

Captain Doug Brain (QGE and G200E Training Officer) alongside Major Dick Gale (Expedition Leader and DIO Kathmandu) are to be commended for their continued efforts in planning, coordinating and at times instructing on the various training camps that have taken place. The first of these was the extremely successful Summer Training Camp held at the joint Service Mountain Training Centre Indefatigable, Snowdonia National Park, North Wales where 80 volunteer Gurkhas from across the Brigade were trained in basic summer mountaineering skills. All who attended for one week during the two week camp attained as a minimum the Summer Mountain Foundation (SMF) qualification, a number qualified further gaining the Mountain Leader Training (MLT) Qualification depending on previous experience.

"We got maximum navigation practise throughout the week, at the same time there was a mixture of different cap badges from across the Brigade working together. A good team bond was developed as the days passed by and everybody seemed to enjoy the course. Obviously the course demanded physical robustness and good navigational skills which did not seem to be a big problem for lads."

Corporal Bhupendra Gurung, QGE

Most recently, between 6 and 18 January 2014, the Winter Training Camp took place mainly in the Cairngorms, based from Inverness Barracks, Scotland. 36 members of the remaining squad (numbers have been carefully reduced based on character, previous experience, commitment and suitability) were tested

in the demanding Scottish Winter conditions and undertook the Winter Mountain Foundation Course (WMF).

"Day one: *Avalanche awareness and the Trans-receiver. We know that every year several climbers don't return home because of avalanches. It is very important that every climber should have a high degree of knowledge and awareness about this threat otherwise lives could be lost, buried underneath the snow. The Trans-receiver is a great tool to locate a buried avalanche victim quickly without diving into the pile of snow or in the absence of search dogs. While in the snowline, every member should wear it securely so that it will be at hand when needed most.*

Day two: *We aimed towards the Cairngorm ski area. The training started from walking in the car park with snow boots and gradually progressing towards the snow, learning different techniques to walk in soft snow using our foot work. Then we progressed towards some exciting activity using the life saver tool, an Ice axe. We had a great and breathtaking experience, sliding down slope on our back, front and head facing down the slope practicing snow emergency stop drills using the ice axe. Ice axe is undeniably one of the most crucial tools for mountaineers, being without it is like a canoeist without paddle. At the end of the day we also had chance to put crampons on which provide more stability and comfort while walking on the ice.*

Day three: *We headed towards other parts of the Cairngorms where more snow fall was expected. After few hundred metres of walking we put on our crampons and began the journey towards the world of snow. We practiced different ways of step cutting and different techniques of walking while ascending steep hills. Midway to Cairngorm we saw a recent avalanche and we also conducted search and find mission using our Trans-receiver, very quickly locating the item. We dug into the snow then found the buried item.*



Day four: We advanced towards a more technical snow mountain carrying a weight of 18-20kg of rucksack and crampons. It was windy and snowing in Glencoe area however it has formed absolutely breathtaking memories for us. I felt like I was climbing Everest, it was exactly what I have seen in many documentaries of Himalayas. Near the top of Glencoe, we dug a large snow hole and slept in it overnight. It was an amazing experience inside the snow hole. No one could imagine being in a king-sized, memory foam bed but we had a great night sleep inside the snow hole. In my opinion very few millionaires can have had such an incredible experience.

Day five: We got up early in the morning finding our exit hole was about to be buried by snowfall. We quickly cleared that and had breakfast then headed towards the ski resort area where we met our very highly regarded Saheb (Brigadier Ian Rigden) who is the sponsor of this very successful expedition. He was also accompanied by another two, Brigadier Sahebharu and a journalist. They joined us and had fun ascending and descending the snow covered hill. Our instructors also taught us different types of improvised snow anchoring systems just in case we have to belay someone. During all this we had a good conversation with the Brigadier Sahebharu. They were really impressed with our commitment and enthusiasm to climb Everest.

The Winter Mountain Foundation course became an inspirational engine for us and it energised everyone's dream towards summiting the world's highest peak, regardless of any potential fears and dangers."

Cpl Yam Gurung, 10 QOGLR.

Clearly the squad of 'hunewalla summiteers' have learnt a number of very valuable skills, furthering their experience during the week's winter training in the Cairngorms. Only a fool would underestimate the challenges presented by the Scottish winter. From Cpl Yam's account above, the most observant will have worked out that there was also concurrently, another meeting of the Gurkha Everest Steering Committee in Inverness Barracks on the middle weekend of the training camp where further planning and discussions took place.

The next event currently in the planning pipeline is the period of Alpine training in the French Alps to take place in June 2014, where the team will further build on the skills developed in Scotland. This will be a good opportunity for them to gain further climbing experience. They will develop their rope work, crampon and ice axe skills and become more comfortable working and moving together whilst roped-up. A good deal of confidence and competence will come from this extended period climbing a number of challenging alpine peaks.

This will then be quickly followed by a high-altitude expedition to Nepal in October 2014. This has been dubbed the 'Mission-Rehearsal Expedition'; it is hoped our team will join forces temporarily with the Joint Services Expedition to the SE Ridge of Makalu, with the aim of training the team on Peak 3 which is an integral part of the ridge, pushing up as far as Camp 3 (if not further?) which will give them altitude exposure close to at least 7,500 metres. This is crucial to set conditions for the Everest Expedition deploying in March 2015 for a summit bid in May or June, weather window dependent. The final team will consist of 12 members from across the Brigade of Gurkhas, there will be minimum of eight serving Gurkha soldiers, the aspiration is to have as many as possible on the summit team.

"Climbing Mount Everest is like living in a dream for us, those who are lucky to be chosen to climb to the summit in March 2015... will be part of the history of the Brigade of Gurkhas. Train hard fight easy is what the candidates have been doing and hope they will succeed on it...it's a great way of celebrating the 200th year of Gurkhas in the British Army."

Cpl Bhupendra Gurung, QGE.

The aim of G200E is to deliver a milestone event in the wider G200 commemoration in order to help raise sponsorship, promote the Brigade of Gurkhas in the hearts of the British and Nepalese people whilst reinvigorating mountaineering across the Brigade. We are well on the way to achieving this, but there is still much work to be done.



Britain Commemorates The Indian Army

By Major General Kamta Prasad MC (Retd) 4 GR

Extract from the Gorkha Brigade Journal 1970 - 71

I was fortunate enough this year to go to Britain where there were a number of functions to commemorate that country's association with the Indian Army for two centuries, up to the partition of India. Up to that time this Army, led largely by British officers, had taken part in every major campaign in Asia and Europe - with the exception of France and Germany in World War II, Not only had this Army fought but it earned a distinction for its high performance and great sacrifices under varying conditions of terrain and climate.

The first function was held at the Royal Military College at Sandhurst on Sunday 21 June 1971. It began with a parade of cadets in front of the Old Building. The guest of honour was, appropriately, Field Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck, the former Commander-in-Chief of India, who at the age of 87, was looking remarkably fit and energetic in his uniform and baton, as he went past the cadets on foot, having a word with some of them. There were a large number of former British Officers of the Indian Army and their wives present on the occasion and I met a number of old friends who, despite the passing years, were full of good cheer and we exchanged a good deal of 'gup-shup' of days gone by.

It was a fine and colourful parade and though there was a slight drizzle at the beginning, the weather held for the parade! After this we proceeded to the Indian Army Memorial Room for the window unveiling ceremony. It is a large hall decorated with paintings of battles, of gallant men and former Commanders-in-Chief. There are also some old uniforms and weapons. The hall is beautifully carpeted and in the dome hangs a most magnificent chandelier. First Field Marshal Auchinleck made an address recalling the achievements and valour of the Indian Army in the many campaigns, some of which were under his own leadership as its Chief. He paid a great tribute to the "jawan" and its officers and said that the great reputation of this Army was born out of the love and respect which the officers had for their men. After his speech General Sir Robert Lockhart spoke and gave out the details of how the idea of having this memorial was started and the people who contributed towards it. After this Field Marshal Auchinleck unveiled the three stained glass windows.

The first window portrays the deeds of the Indian Soldier in the First World War. The lower central panel shows an Indian soldier in action in France and Flanders. The Central panel at the top depicts Gorkhas storming the Sai Bair Ridge at Gallipoli. In the lower side panels are, respectively, a mounted lancer in Palestine, and an infantryman in Mesopotamia, subsidiary operations in Egypt, East Africa, Aden, Trans-Caspia, and the North West Frontier. The second large window commemorates the period to 1939 between the two World Wars. The lower

central panel beneath it depicts the third Afghan War, and below it are some typical fortified villages with their watch towers in Waziristan. The upper central panel shows Indian Mountain Artillery in action in Waziristan in 1919 and 1937-1938. The figures in the two side panels commemorate service in the Shanghai Defence Force in 1927 and in Kurdistan in 1923. The Arab Rebellion in Iraq of 1919-1930 and operations on the North West Frontier are also included. The design is completed by the coats of arms of the four former Commanders-in-Chief, Field Marshals Rawlmsen, Birdwood and Chetwode, and General Cassels.

The third window covers the period 1939 to 1945. The central panel shows an infantryman in Burma supported by a Sherman tank and supplied from the air by Dakota aeroplanes escorted by fighters: an important feature of the Burma campaign. The panel at the top shows an attack supported by Matilda tanks at Side Bahrain in North Africa; one lower side panel depicts the fighting in Eritrea and the other the operations in Italy with a portrayal of the Monastery of Monte Casino; Syria, Iraq, Malaya and Hong Kong are also included. A badge of the 14th Army, as well as Corps and Divisional signs together forms a colourful feature of the window. The design is completed by the coats of arms of Field Marshals Wavell and Auchinleck.

The large colourful stained glass windows are real pieces of art and have cost a fortune. The contributions have been made largely by British Officers of the Indian Army and some major British Companies. They are a very fitting tribute to our old Army.

After the inauguration the guests proceeded to various anterooms for drinks and to meet old friends. It was a very lively gathering. This was followed by a lunch in the Old College dining room where I estimate there were over 500 guests with a band playing old favourites. Meeursault Bouchord '67 and iced Lager were served and we sat down to an excellent meal of chicken curry and pulses, chutneys and pickles followed by lychees and grapes all very reminiscent of India. During the lunch Field Marshal Auchinleck went around and met many of his old officers and exchanged some pleasantries or memories of his Indian Army days. The whole series of functions was extremely well organised and went off so smoothly in the typical informal British manner. It was a unique occasion and the impact of meeting old comrades on such a historic occasion was most memorable.

The second main function was held at St Paul's Cathedral in London on Friday 25 June 1971. I estimate there must have been over 2,500 former officers and their families present on the occasion. There were to be seen also a few officers from India who had come especially for this occasion, and our Military

Attaché in London. HM The Queen arrived punctually at 12 noon when the Service commenced. The Cathedral is really beautiful and spacious. The lesson was read by the Archdeacon of London, followed by the Hymn "Now thank we all our God" at the conclusion of which HM The Queen, the Bishop of London and Field Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck moved towards the memorial tablet and which the Queen unveiled. The tablet commemorates "201 years of service by British, Indian and Gorkha Soldiers who as Comrades served in the Indian Army". The tablet goes on to give a very brief history of this Army in the two centuries of service here commemorated. "This was a volunteer Army." It was again a very fitting tribute paid by the British Sovereign and her people to this great association of fighting peoples.

After the service HM The Queen received representations of the former Indian Army and thereafter the gathering dispersed. Outside the Cathedral were hundreds of people who could not be accommodated inside and yet they must have felt that they were part of the ceremony.

Immediately after this function, were held a number of Regimental lunches at the Hurlingham Club and I was fortunate enough to be present at one of these - the 14th Punjab Regimental Association. Here again it was a splendid meeting with old officers with whom I had served. There were about fifty officers present. The President of the Association is Brigadier G Pigot MC who was a GSO 1 at the Indian Military Academy from 1934-1937 and later on was my first Commanding Officer. The whole atmosphere was so friendly and informal.

The lunch was barely over when the Annual Indian Army reunion Tea Party began at 1600 in the club's beautiful building and its extensive well laid out lawns and garden. The music was played by the Band of the Corps of Royal Engineers. There were about 750 officers and their wives present on the occasion and I understand several officers had to be refused tickets because of the lack of space. Again I was able to meet old friends and make new ones, in that lovely atmosphere of friendliness and beautiful surroundings. The party went on about 2000, when drinks were being served!

I also attended the 4th Gorkha Memorial Service at Stoke Poges, with a lively little Church and garden of outstanding beauty. I liked the service and the lesson which was so much to the point today. Afterwards we walked around the lovely garden and the 4th Gorkha Memorial. Incidentally the famous poet, Thomas Gray wrote the immortal "Elegy" at this place and is buried in the churchyard of Stoke Poges.

Thereafter we had lunch and tea at the Stoke Poges Golf Club where many 4th Gorkhas and their families were present. The Golf Club is excellently maintained and surrounded by the most beautiful grounds. That night I attended the Annual Meeting of the 4th Gorkha British Officers' Association held at the English speaking Union Club in London. The meeting was followed by a formal "stag dinner" at which 72 officers were present. The President of the Association, Colonel A M L Harrison is a most lovely and humorous personality. I do not know of any other Association which has a stronger bond than that of the 4th Gorkhas - and I am not bragging - and this is entirely due to the active presidents we have had. After the dinner and the speeches, there was drinking and 'nauches' until 2.30 am. I finally got home around 4 am.

I saw the British Gorkhas at two functions. First it was at the Royal Tournament at Earls Court where the Band of the Brigade of Gorkhas performed to a very appreciative audience. Judging by the applause they received, they were obviously very popular. I again saw their band play at the Three Counties Show at Malvern at which they performed very well. I managed to have a word with some of the boys and they appeared happy and seemed to have adapted themselves to the rather different surroundings of Britain. My fluent Gorkhali was a surprise to them and they were not convinced that I was a 'Burha'. I do not know whether it was by circumstances or by arrangement, but I always had a very pleasant British Gorkha Officer around!

I carried with me an impression of the overwhelming generosity of my British Friends which exceeded anything which I expected or have ever received from anywhere before. The British retain their qualities of integrity of consideration for others and their extreme politeness. It was a pleasant experience to be with them again.

My Visit To The British Gurkhas In Hong Kong 1970

By Brig M K Balachandran

Extract from the Gorkha Brigade Journal 1970 - 71

Introduction

As Commandant of the 58 Gorkha Training Centre in 1963-64, I had the opportunity to receive Major General Pugh the Colonel of the 2nd Gurkhas and show him the various activities in the Centre. The 58 Gorkha Training Centre is accommodated in the lines previously occupied by the 2nd Gurkhas. The 2nd Gurkha War Memorial located in our lines was maintained well. In fact considerable effort was devoted to improving the appearance of the edifice by erecting decorative gates and floodlighting. General Pugh was impressed by our sincerity in taking such good care of the 2nd Gurkha War Memorial and the excellent way we were keeping up the traditions of the Gurkhas in the Indian Army. He extended an invitation to our officers to visit the British Gurkhas whenever they got a chance. I was fortunate to get a chance to go to Hong Kong on eight days leave in September 1970 and visit the British Gurkha Brigade there.

The Brigade Of Gurkhas In Hong Kong

To keep the Gurkha entity and also due to the peculiarities of the logistical problems of the Gurkhas, the British Army has a Headquarters, Gurkha Brigade in the Island of Hong Kong with a Major General Gorkha Brigade, a Colonel, Brigade of Gurkhas and a Colonel A/Q and other staff. Major General DTT Horsford CBE DSO, is the Major General Brigade of Gurkhas (MGBG). He has served in 1 Gorkha Rifles and he commanded 4/8 GR for a month before 1948. Colonel E D Smith DSO MBE is the Colonel Brigade of Gurkhas. He is from the 7 GR.

48 Gurkha Infantry Brigade is the main Gurkha fighting formation located in Hong Kong. This Brigade operates under the command and control of Headquarters Brigade of Gurkhas which for all practical purposes function as a divisional headquarters. The Headquarters, Brigade of Gurkhas has under command a transport company with Gurkhas, local Indians and Pakistanis and Chinese enrolled drivers, and a Gurkha records office. In Malaya, when the British had a Gurkha Division, all the artillery, engineers, signal, medical, supplies, transport and repair and recovery elements were Gurkha units. With the run down of the Gurkha strength in the British Army from 15,000 to 6,000, the British Brigade of Gurkhas will eventually have only five infantry battalions, a brigade headquarters complete with a signal company, elements of transport and repair and recovery services, the Gurkha depot and record office. 6 GR and 7 GR each had two battalions. These have now been amalgamated and each regiment has only one battalion. 6 GR and 7 GR battalions are now serving in Hong Kong with 48 Gurkha Infantry Brigade.

One battalion of 10 GR again as a result of amalgamation of two battalions is in North Malaysia. Two battalions of 2 GR are in Borneo. Gurkha depot is now in Malaysia. It is likely that the two 2 GR battalions may not be amalgamated. By 1971 the entire Brigade of Gurkhas in the British Army may be concentrated in Hong Kong. With the Conservatives coming into power in the United Kingdom, some of Gurkha units may as well be located in Malaysia or Singapore. The Headquarters Brigade of Gurkhas have definite orders to move the Gurkha depot from Malaysia to Hong Kong by the middle of 1971. They have not received any firm orders about the move of the two battalions of 2 GR and one battalion of 10 GR.

The Headquarters, Brigade of Gurkhas is located on Island of Hong Kong. 48 Gurkha Infantry Brigade and all the Gurkha units are located in the New Territories on the Mainland of China ceded by Chinese to the British on long lease.

Visit to a British Gurkha Battalion

My wife and I stayed at the Imperial Hotel in Kowloon on the Mainland. As arranged earlier, a major from the 7 GR now serving in the Headquarters Brigade of Gurkhas with the staff car of the Commander of 48 Gurkha Infantry Brigade reported to me at our Hotel at 0900 hrs on 19 September 1970 and took me and my wife to the lines of the 6 GR in New Territories. The journey took nearly 30 minutes. The major explained the activities of the Gurkhas in Hong Kong. The CO Lt Col R N P Reynolds MBE, Mrs Reynolds and the Subedar Major received us in front of the CO's office. The British Gurkhas call the Subedar Major, Major Sahib. A Queens Gurkha Officer (QGO) is the equivalent of our JCO. The CO took me to the office area, the lines, training areas, cook houses, dining halls and stores. Mrs Reynolds took my wife to the family lines, Nursery School, welfare centre and the family clinic. The Major Sahib was with me and the CO.

The office area, barracks, education class rooms, the dining halls and cook houses were spotlessly clean and tidy in real Gurkha tradition. The men are provided with ceiling fans. The barracks do not have long halls. The men live in big rooms, each room accommodating about ten men. Each man is provided with a wooden half-hanging cupboard, a spring bed and fibre mattress. Plastic chairs and steel tables are

provided in the dining halls. The cook houses have the latest kitchen equipment - steam and electric cooking appliances. They do not use firewood, coal and coke. The rations for the QGOs and GORs are excellent. They are given bread, butter and two eggs for breakfast and plenty of mutton, fish, rice and vegetables for lunch and dinner. They are not given any free liquor in Hong Kong. However the NAAFI (the Navy, Army and Air force Institute) sells whisky, brandy, beer and Jamaica Rum at duty-free prices. The British Gurkhas generally prefer to drink beer. The NAAFI provides indoor recreational facilities including billiards and cinema for the GORs and QGOs. Each unit has a British Education Officer with the rank of captain. The classrooms have got magnetic boards where various figures, letters and words can be displayed without wasting time in writing with chalk. The classroom has a 16 mm projector with a tape recorder synchronised on to it, utilising the latest audio-visual techniques of education. The language classes are conducted with the tape recorder which gives a few words and sentences which are repeated by the men attending the classes. Simultaneously a 16 mm projector shows the object or word on the screen. The men who have become surplus due to reduction are being given training in subjects like accountancy, correspondence and shorthand typewriting in English. Some of the men are being given training in carpentry, metalwork, agriculture and dairy farm. The men are not happy to go back to Nepal on reduction of their establishment. But they are being given good resettlement training and are given handsome compensation which is worked out at approximately 2/3rd of the pay for each year of the balance of service the man would have served had he continued in service. The personnel are entitled to normal pension after completion of the qualifying period of 20 years for riflemen.

There were approximately 300 families in the 6th GR. The regimental medical officer looks after families. There are two 'dais' assisting the medical officer. There are facilities for pre-natal and post-natal treatment in the family clinic. The families go to the military hospital for 1st and 5th deliveries because these are more complicated. The second, third and fourth deliveries are attended to by the regimental medical officer and the dais in the unit family clinic which has proper labour room and surgical facilities. The family lines are of a very high standard, they have got hot and cold water, gas cooking and decent furniture. Each GOR has got two rooms one living room and one bedroom in addition to a kitchen and bathroom.

I visited the QGOs mess and had drinks with them. It is well furnished and they have Gurkha cooks and waiters. A mess havildar is authorised for the QGOs mess. The mess has got billiards and other indoor recreation facilities.

The officers' mess is maintained in very luxurious style. They have Persian carpets in the anteroom, dining room and bar. The bar is air-conditioned. There is plenty of silver and lots of trophies presented by the British Royal Family: The 6th GR is Queen Elizabeth's Own Regiment and the colours presented by the Queen are displayed in the Mess. The anteroom, dining room, bar, kitchen and pantry are on the ground floor and the officers living quarters are on the 1st floor. At present out of 20 officers, 9 are dining in the Mess. There are two Sandhurst trained Queen's Commissioned Gurkha officers of the rank of major holding the appointments of company commanders in the 6th GR. They are treated and paid just like the British officers. Both officers are married and their families are staying in Hong Kong with them. The officers' children have got good school facilities in Hong Kong. Free transport is provided. A white painted civilian type bus is provided to each battalion for taking children to school.

Visit to Officers of HQ Brigade of Gurkhas

On 19 September 1970, Colonel Smith, Colonel the Brigade of Gurkhas, entertained us to dinner at his house. He had invited many other officers from the Brigade of Gurkhas including the Colonel A/Q of the Brigade of Gurkhas. Colonel Smith explained about those Gurkhas who were due to return to Nepal before completing their full service. He gave me the brochure giving an appeal to all British citizens to help the Gurkhas.

Conclusion

It was gratifying to note that the morale and *esprit-de-corps* of the Gurkhas are maintained at a very high standard in the British Army despite the reduction ordered by the British Government. The officers of the British Brigade of Gurkhas did not conceal anything from me. This proves that the age old amity and friendship with in the Gurkhas still exist.

My wife and I were really touched by the affection shown to us by all ranks of the British Brigade of Gurkhas in Hong Kong. On behalf of our Brigade of Gurkhas, we extended our invitation to the officers passing through India to visit our centres and units. General Horsford definitely will come to Delhi and he has some plans to visit the 1st and 8th Gorkha Training Centres.



The Royal Gurkha Rifles

RGR Battle Honours

History

Amboor, Carnatic, Mysore, Assaye, Ava, Bhurtpore, Aliwal, Sobraon, Delhi 1857, Kabul 1879, Kandahar 1880, Afghanistan 1878-80, Burma 1885-87, Tirah, Punjab Frontier

The Great War - **La Bassée 1914, Festubert 1914, 1915, Givenchy 1914, Neuve Chapelle, Aubers, Loos, France and Flanders 1914-15, Helles, Krithia, Suvla, 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 India 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 I, 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, Gaiana 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, Kyaukse 1942, 1945, Monywa 1942, Shwegyin, North Arakan, Imphal, Tuitum, Tamu Road, Shenam Pass, Litan, Bishenpur, Tengnoupal, Shwebo, Kyaukmyung Bridgehead, Mandalay, Myinmu Bridgehead, Fort Dufferin, Maymo, Meiktila, Capture of Meiktila, Defence of Meiktila, Irrawaddy, Magwe, Rangoon Road, Pyawbwe, Toungoo, Point 1433, Arakan Beaches, Myebon, Tamandu, Chindits 1943, 1945, Burma 1942-45**

Falkland Islands 1982

Regimental Marches

Quick March	Bravest of the Brave
Double March	The Keel Row
Slow March (Band)	God Bless the Prince of Wales
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 OMAK QSO NPC ADC

Colonel

Brig J C Lawrence CBE MSc FRGS psc+

Regimental Secretary

Maj (Retd) B McKay MBE



RGR Roll of Officers

RGR Staff List (as at 31 December 2013)

Serving Late Officers RGR

Brig	J C Lawrence CBE MSc FRGS psc+	Late RGR	Chief, Election Support Cell, HQ ISAF
Brig	A J P Bourne OBE BA(Hons) MA MPhil(Cantab) psc j (j) +	Late RGR	Director Plans, Army HQ
Brig	I N A Thomas OBE psc+	Late RGR	G2 Chief, ARRC PHQ
Brig	I A Rigden OBE MA psc	Late RGR	Hd Land & Research, DCDC
Col	G A C Hughes OBE psc	Late RGR	British High Commission, Cyprus
Col	N D J Rowe psc	Late RGR	Assistant Director Plans, HQ APHCS
Col	J G Robinson psc(j)+	Late RGR	Col BG, HQ Bde of Gurkhas
Col	G M Strickland DSO MBE BA(Hons) psc(j)	Late RGR	A/Dir Org, Plans Directorate, Army HQ

Officers of the Regiment

Lt Col	A G Alexander-Cooper MBE psc(j) MMS BA(Hons) ph	RGR	A Block, MOD
Lt Col	J N B Birch MA MDA psc(j)	RGR	CO, 2 ITB
Lt Col	C N A Crowe BA(Hons)	RGR	SOI DG Cap, Army Headquarters
Lt Col	J P Davies MBE MA(Cantab)	RGR	SOI CTG, OPTAG
Lt Col	A W A Forbes BA(Hons) osc(FR) (sq)	RGR	Deputy President, AOSB, Westbury
Lt Col	A G Jones sq	RGR	SOI Crisis Mgt Pol I Nepal (MOD)
Lt Col	I St C Logan MA BSc(Hons) psc(j)+	RGR	CO, MCTC
Lt Col	G M O'Keefe MA BSc psc(j)	RGR	SOI Joint CBT, Shrivenham
Lt Col	J C Murray BLE(Hons)	RGR	SOI Comd Programme, Army HQ
Lt Col	F J Rea LLB MA psc(j)	RGR	MA to Comd FDT, Army Headquarters
Lt Col	M H Reedman B Eng(Hons)	RGR	CO, 2 RGR
Lt Col	D M Rex BA(Hons)	RGR	CO, Sandhurst Support Unit
Lt Col	D J Robinson BA psc(j)	RGR	CO, 1 RGR
A/Maj	R T Anderson BA(Hons)	RGR	OC, Gurkha Coy, ITC Catterick
Maj	S A Archer SA sq(WV)	RGR	SO2 (W), ITDU, Warminster
Maj	N J Aucott MA	RGR	Bn 2IC, 2 RGR
Maj	B G Birkbeck	RGR	SO2 C JOTD, Coll Trg Gp Warminster
Maj	C R Boryer MBE BA(Hons)	RGR	Bn 2IC, 1 RGR
Maj	J M L Cartwright BA(Hons)	RGR	SO2 G5 Plans/Ops, HQ 20 Armd Bde
Maj	G Chaganis BSc(Hons)	RGR	OC B Coy, 2 RGR
Maj	SW M Chandler BA (Hons)	RGR	OC C Coy, 1 RGR
Maj	C P L Conroy BSc(Hons)	RGR	OC A Coy, 2 RGR
Maj	A M S Hellier BA(Hons)	RGR	OC C Coy, 2 RGR
Maj	W J Hughes MBE MSc MRPharmS	RGR	Resettlement
Maj	M J James BSc(Hons)	RGR	SO2 DT Architect Abbeywood, DES Andover
Maj	N R Lloyd BSc	RGR	ICSC (L)
Maj	S C Marcandonatos B Eng	RGR	SO2A Ops Reqts, Army Headquarters
Maj	A R C Mathers MA	RGR	SO2 Ops Plans, HQ Sp Comd
Maj	E P Oldfield	RGR	SO2 G3 Plans, HQ ARRC
Maj	DT Pack	RGR	OC, A Coy, 1 RGR
Maj	T W Pike BEng(Hons)	RGR	COS, HQ Bde of Gurkhas
Maj	Chandrabadahur Pun	RGR	OC HQ Coy, 1 RGR
Maj	Rambahadur Pun	RGR	GM, 1 RGR

Maj	Bhupjit Rai	RGR	Resettlement
Maj	Dhyanasprasad Rai MVO	RGR	OC, GCM
Maj	Yambahadur Rana MVO	RGR	OC, GCS
Maj	L M Roberts BSc(Hons)	RGR	OC D Coy, 1 RGR
Maj	Dammarbahadur Shahi	RGR	GM, 2 RGR
Maj	H P S Stanford-Tuck	RGR	SO2 J5 Plans, SFSG
Maj	Chinbahadur Thapa MVO	RGR	QM, 4 MI Bn
Maj	A P Todd BSc(Hons)	RGR	SO2 G7, HQ FTC
Maj	T D Usher BA(Hons)	RGR	SO2 Joint Manoeuvre, JFC
Capt	Gajendrakumar Angdembe	RGR	2IC, A Coy, 2 RGR
Capt	J E Arney BSc(Hons)	RGR	OC, BG Pokhara, Nepal
Capt	C P A E Bairsto BSc	RGR	A Block, MOD
Capt	T J A Baker BA(Hons)	RGR	Int Offr, 1 RGR
Capt	BT Ball	RGR	Adj, OPTAG
Capt	A S Brown	RGR	External Course
Capt	J W Buckley BA(Hons)	RGR	Adj, 2 RGR
Capt	Dhalindra Khatri Chhetri	RGR	2IC, GCM
Capt	Jitbahadur Chungbang	RGR	PI Comd, Gurkha Coy, ITC Catterick
Capt	A C Colquhoun BSc(Hons)	RGR	A Block, MOD
Capt	Gyanbahadur Dhenga	RGR	2IC, C Coy, 1 RGR
Capt	R C E Evans	RGR	Trg Offr, HAC
Capt	Yubaraj Garbuja	RGR	HQ RSME/ L6M UK
Capt	A Genillard	RGR	OC BTT
Capt	N H Gross	RGR	SO3 G7, MSSG
Capt	Dilipkumar Gurung	RGR	Ops/Trg Offr, GCS
Capt	Dolbahadur Gurung	RGR	2IC, BGP
Capt	Kushalkumar Gurung	RGR	MTO, 1 RGR
Capt	Lalitbahadur Gurung	RGR	2IC, B Coy, 1 RGR
Capt	Liljung Gurung	RGR	OPTAG
Capt	Muktiprasad Gurung	RGR	QM (T), 1 RGR
Capt	Mukunda Gurung	RGR	PI Comd, GCS
Capt	Pitamber Gurung	RGR	2IC, HQ COY
Capt	Prakash Gurung	RGR	RCMO, 1 RGR
Capt	Prembahadur Gurung	RGR	2IC, SP Coy, 2 RGR
Capt	Rajeshbahadur Gurung	RGR	2IC, Gurkha Coy, ITC Catterick
Capt	Sherbahadur Gurung	RGR	2IC, GCM
Capt	P A Houlton-Hart BEng(Hons)	RGR	OC, Trg Team Brunei
Capt	J A E E Jeffcoat BA(Hons)	RGR	AMA, CGS
Capt	J A Lawson	RGR	RSO, 2 RGR
Capt	Kajiman Limbu MC	RGR	UWO, 2 RGR
Capt	Sachinhang Limbu	RGR	QM (T), 2 RGR
Capt	Tubendrabahadur Limbu	RGR	2IC, C Coy, 2 RGR
Capt	Nanibabu Magar	RGR	145 Bde, PRO
Capt	Rambahadur Malla	RGR	2IC, Gurkha Coy, ITC Catterick
Capt	ST Meadows BA(Hons)	RGR	SO3 Instr, ANA Officer Academy
Capt	Manoj Mohara	RGR	GM, BGN
Capt	N J Moran BA(Hons)	RGR	A Block, MOD
Capt	R E Morford	RGR	Ops Offr, 2 RGR
Capt	B E Norfield	RGR	Analyst, Defence Int, Whitehall
Capt	D P O'Connor	RGR	SO2, G7 Ex Planning, HQ ARRC
Capt	Mahendra Phagami	RGR	PI Comd, GCS
Capt	Jiwan Pun	RGR	2IC, A Coy, 1 RGR
Capt	Badrikumar Rai	RGR	2IC B Coy, 2 RGR
Capt	Bikulman Rai	RGR	MTO, 2 RGR
Capt	Dillikumar Rai	RGR	PI Comd, GCS
Capt	Maniram Rai	RGR	2IC, GCS

Capt	Milanchandra Rai	RGR	PI Comd, Gurkha Coy, ITC Catterick
Capt	Raghubir Rai	RGR	Resttlement Officer, 2 RGR
Capt	Rajkumar Rai	RGR	DCMO, APC Glasgow
Capt	Ramkumar Rai	RGR	Trg Offr, Gurkha Coy, ITC Catterick
Capt	R I Roberts BSc(Hons)	RGR	Ops / Coord, BG Pokhara, Nepal
Capt	Kishorkumar Roka	RGR	2IC, CSS Coy, 2 RGR
Capt	R W A Roylance BA(Hons)	RGR	Adj, 1 RGR
Capt	C E F Russell	RGR	PI Comd Instr RMAS & RGR Rep
Capt	Hemkumar Tamang	RGR	RCMO, 2 RGR
Capt	Sureshkumar Thapa	RGR	QGOO, HQBG
Lt	M Addison-Black	RGR	PI Comd, 1 RGR
Lt	B C Burrows	RGR	IO, 2 RGR
Lt	A C Connolly	RGR	Career Break
Lt	BA Cork	RGR	Sp Coy, OC Recce, 2RGR
Lt	J Devall	RGR	IO (Des), 1 RGR
Lt	J J England	RGR	IO, 3 PARA
Lt	M W Evans	RGR	RSO, 1 RGR
Lt	J R Gartside	RGR	OC Recce, 1 RGR
Lt	P Lambert	RGR	SO3, DA Sp, Rabat
Lt	T E B Latham	RGR	PI Comd, ITC Catterick
Lt	S R Nightingale LLB MA	RGR	OC FSG, Sp Coy, 1 RGR
Lt	W A Plumley	RGR	OC Mortar PI, 2 RGR
Lt	M B Reardon	RGR	PI Comd, C Coy, 2 RGR
Lt	A Rose BA MA	RGR	OC Mortar PI, 1 RGR
Lt	C J Schroeder	RGR	PI Comd, A Coy, 2 RGR
2Lt	C Boote	RGR	PI Comd, A Coy, 2 RGR
2Lt	R Cassinni	RGR	PI Comd, 1 RGR
2Lt	C L J Collins	RGR	PI Comd, B Coy, 1 RGR
2Lt	C F D Diamond	RGR	PI Comd, A Coy, 1 RGR
2Lt	H H Gardner-Clarke	RGR	PI Comd, B Coy, 1 RGR
2Lt	C R Jones	RGR	PI Comd, C Coy, 1 RGR
2Lt	W Louw	RGR	PI Comd, 1 RGR
2Lt	J A Millar	RGR	PI Comd, C Coy, 2 RGR
2Lt	W J D Patrick	RGR	PI Comd, B Coy, 2 RGR
2Lt	J K Armstrong	RGR	OC Atk PI, 2 RGR

Attached and Seconded Officers 1 RGR

Maj	A Biggs	R ANGLIAN	OC Sp Coy
Maj	P McCarthy	SCOTS	QM
Maj	M B Cameron-Smith	RAMC	RMO
Capt	C Arrowsmith	RDG	Trg Offr, A Coy, 1 RGR
Capt	S A F Greenwood	AGC(SPS)	RAO
Capt	Ashwin Rana	GSPS	Det Comd
Capt	E Darling	AGC(ETS)	Edn Offr
Mr	Shankarmani Nepal	Civilian	Religious Teacher

2 RGR

Maj	W Scarse	RIFLES	OC Sp Coy
Maj	J D McCallum	SCOTS	OC CSS Coy
Maj	Karam Gurung	AGC(SPS)	RAO
Maj	C Trow	RAMC	RMO
Capt	Jitendra Shakya	GSPS	Det Comd
Mr	Bhishmaraj Niraula	Civilian	Religious Teacher



First Battalion

Newsletter

The First Battalion has now arrived in Brunei and is settling in to its South East Asian 'home from home' once again. As we consolidate from another successful operational tour of Afghanistan and take up the mantle as the British Army's jungle specialists and acclimatised force in the Far East, I wanted to take this opportunity to tell you a little about our achievements over the last year and our plans for the immediate future.

To begin with, it is worth recapping the experiences of each Company during Op HERRICK 17. The tour represents a huge achievement for the Battalion, in which all ranks can take justifiable pride. It was markedly different from our previous tours in that, whilst the threat was as great as ever, we were able to be part of a real sea change in the direction Afghanistan is taking, with the resumption of responsibility by the Afghan authorities and security forces becoming a reality. I RGR found itself not deploying as a whole Battle group, but instead operating as sub-units attached to various other Battle groups, including the BAG and PMAG. Gurkhas were therefore found across the whole area of operations in Helmand, in a wide variety of roles, operating alongside or as part of British units. British units were able to see first hand how our men earn their reputation, and for our soldiers, many on their third or fourth tour of the country, the experience was a gratifying one.

Key highlights and tasks over the six month period of the tour included the arrival and subsequent training of the new recruit intake. This comprised 40 new soldiers who were inducted into the battalion by completing a four week cadre, followed by a Khasam Khane parade. The ROG also hosted a number of high profile visits from, among others, CGS and Comd 3XX. The VIPs were given a tour of the camp, witnessing day-to-day training and were then hosted for lunch in the Officers' Mess where they were joined by the wives and children of those deployed. Another key task was the organisation of battle casualty replacements (BCRs), which was done as a staged deployment of a BCR group or 'pulse' at four to six week intervals. The work of the welfare team in particular was deeply appreciated by our families.

Although the IRGR was split up, the boys were able to do a wide range of jobs, in a large number of places, working alongside multiple units. The experience this brought was invaluable for I RGR, whilst the professionalism and high standards shown by the Gurkha soldiers won a huge number of friends and admirers across the Task Force.

The Battalion having recovered, and taken POL, Friday 28 June witnessed the Op H17 Medals Parade. The day was of extra special significance because it also marked the disbanding of D (Kandahar) Company and celebrated the Regimental Birthday. Presenting the medals was Brigadier Bruce, Commander of 4 Brigade. Brigadier Bruce had become a familiar and much respected face on tour and during the preparatory training. It was particularly appropriate that he should present the medals after having shown such appreciation and respect for the Gurkhas throughout his command. This was a proud moment for all, especially those receiving medals after their first tour of Afghanistan, but it was also a time for contemplation and remembrance. Every man present thought of LCpl Siddhanta and Lt Drummond-Baxter who were there in spirit. They were also remembered by senior officers and VIP guests at the wreath-laying which followed the parade.

As part of the much needed rest and recuperation following the tour, the Battalion embarked on a number of Adventure Training Expeditions. Following the Gurkhas' increasing enthusiasm for sailing, A Coy launched an ambitious voyage around the Greek Islands, where despite some heavy weather, the troops enjoyed some great conditions and improved their skills hugely. A Company also visited Yorkshire-based 4 Regiment RA, whom they had fought alongside on both Op HERRICK 12 and 17, for a sports tour of volleyball, basketball and football. Around 50 RGR soldiers also took part in climbing and hill-walking in Snowdonia, organised by arch-outdoorsman CSgt Narbir Galami of A Company. B Company deployed on an arduous trek of the Annapurna Circuit, taking in Jomsom and Mustang. Of the many challenging routes they covered, the 5415m altitude Thorong La pass was particularly memorable both for difficulty and for its astounding vistas. C Coy opted to conduct their AT in Cornwall, where they undertook surfing, mountain biking, rock climbing and coasteering - the latter proving nearly as daunting as the operational tour had been!

The Battalion appointed its new Gurkha Major, Rambahadur Pun on 21 December 2012. Maj Ram took over from Maj Dhyanasprasad Rai. The new GM journeyed to Afghanistan in the January to visit the deployed personnel. He was accompanied by the Hindu pandit, Mr Bhismaraj Niraula and the Buddhist religious teacher, Mr Keshang Ghale. GM Saheb had had a very busy period, as he continued his roles as OC ROG and RCMO right the way through until June. In the same month, a traditional farewell programme was held for Maj Dhyana, and Capt Prakash took over as RCMO at the same time.

With the return to the UK, the Battalion was also able to throw itself into a number of important competitions, both military and supporting. Ever keen to defend our fine reputation at Bisley, this year's team had put in an enormous amount of hard work on the ranges. It paid off; IRGR took the Metheun Cup (the inter-unit contest) and the Infantry Champion Trophy. The team also took the Queen's Medal for the best individual shot (Sgt Sombahadur Chhantel Magar).

IRGR also managed to take both first and second places in the hotly-contested inter-services taekwondo championship in July. As luck would have it, our two contestants, Rfn Roshan Khatri and Rfn Sushil Thapa (both previous Army taekwondo champions) were drawn in different groups within the eight fighters who had made it to the championships. The IRGR soldiers only fought each other in the event final. After a tough match, it was Rfn Roshan who clinched victory, triumphing over the Royal Navy and RAF's finest. Taekwondo is a sport in which our soldiers have traditionally excelled, and with its reintroduction to the Gurkha Company Catterick syllabus, we have seen a surge in interest. IRGR has now re-established a taekwondo club and will be looking to defend our title.

In July and August, the Battalion threw itself into the huge task of preparing for, and conducting the Arms Plot Move from the UK to Brunei, exchanging our posts with our sister Battalion, 2RGR. With our four year absence from Brunei, all ranks are looking forward to getting back into the trees and renewing our hard fought reputation for jungle warfare whilst also re-acquainting ourselves with all that South East Asia has to offer.

Jai IRGR!

The First Gurkha Colour Sergeant Instructor at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS)

By CSgt Jiwan Gurung / RGR

The aim of this short article is to give readers some insights into, firstly the Instructor selection process and secondly my experience to date as an Instructor at the world-renowned Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS), also commonly known as Sandhurst.

I am proud and honoured to have been nominated as the first ever Gurkha Colour Sergeant Instructor at the Academy to take up this challenging opportunity. To be nominated for this prestigious role was an achievement in itself but to be selected out of some top 60 Colour Sergeants (CSgt)/Staff Sergeants (SSgt) nominated from various cap badges of the British Army was a real challenge.

Instructors Selection Process

Prior to deployment on Op HERRICK 17 to Afghanistan in 2012, C Company was in Sennybridge, Brecon for pre deployment training. I was to stage pallet demo on night vision capabilities where Brigadier IA Rigden OBE, then Colonel Brigade of the Gurkhas (Col BG) was

amongst the spectators. The Brigadier must have been impressed and had given the seal of approval to my OC's vision of me being the first Gurkha Instructor at Sandhurst in its 200 year history.

When I joined the Brigade of Gurkhas in 1998, my aspirations were high like anyone else's. From the onset, I found myself well adapted and tuned with the norms of Army life. My first dream was realised when I was able to win the Overall Champion Recruit Kukri and have never looked back since. I am proud to have won most coveted prizes such as Parish Trophy, Top student in Junior Leadership Cadre (JLC), Top Student in Section Commander Battle Course (SCBC), Distinction in Platoon Sergeant's Battle course (PSBC) and the recipient of Prince of Wales Kukri from His Royal Highness Prince Charles. Even though the best part of my career so far has been with MOD A Block, Sandhurst was another opportunity for me. I wanted to push the envelope further and Sandhurst had something special about it because of its brand and uniqueness. I knew it was not going to be an easy task but I wanted to seize this opportunity for my cap badge and me. As I could be the first ever Gurkha CSgt to get this job, I was under immense self-generated pressure. Securing a place as a Sandhurst instructor meant another milestone in my career. The training team in Sandhurst consists of CSgts and Officers from all different cap badges representing their units. We always had a Gurkha Platoon Commander, a Captain rank from RGR as a cap badge representative but never had a Gurkha CSgt.

The Sandhurst Instructor selection cadre date was scheduled May 2013 but I was to be deployed in Afghanistan with my Battalion in September, 2012. I returned early in order to complete the mandatory courses, which all candidates need to attend the cadre. This comprised Pre-Cadre (Look on Life), Medic course, All Arms Drill course and CBRN course while other courses like SCBC and PSBC were already under my belt. The Pre-Cadre is designed to give an insight into life in Sandhurst for potential instructors. There were sixty potential CSgts/SSgts from different cap badges on the cadre knowing only half will get selected for the job. The cadre was designed to test the physical and mental aptitude of individual instructors. My operational and military experience gave me an edge over others in self-discipline, perseverance, humility and always setting high standards. Instructors' performances were closely observed throughout the cadre taking into consideration the core values such as Courage, Discipline, Respect for others, Integrity, Loyalty and Selfless commitment. Over the years, the Army has seen many changes and one of the biggest is the way of instructional technique. The old rigid style approach exists no more, but has been superseded by modern agile approach. The potential Instructors were assessed for the agile instructional techniques. The instructors' selection cadre was four weeks in duration in which potential instructors were assessed vigorously with the view to selecting the best thirty. Overall results were announced on the final day of the cadre.

My Experience as RMAS Instructor

The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst is the epitome of all military academies around the world. Few also call it the military version of 'The Hogwarts'. The motto of Sandhurst is "Serve to Lead" and core values mentioned above evolve around it. The

Army Officer Selection Board (AOSB) in Westbury, Wiltshire, initially identifies potential officers. Then they step into Sandhurst for the 44 weeks long regular army commissioning course. 44 weeks are broken down into 3 terms; Junior, Inter and Senior Terms and each term is three months long. Nearly 80 per cent male, 10 per cent female and 10 per cent of overseas OCdts comprises every intake and around 80 per cent are university graduates. The Reserve Officers and Potential Qualified Officers (PQOs) courses are shorter, as they already come from professional backgrounds i.e. doctors, lawyers, and nurses. At the end of the commissioning course, OCdts who are going in the Regular Army Units march up the steps of the Old College to be commissioned at the Sovereign's Parade.

The etiquettes of Sandhurst seemed uncharted waters for me as a Gurkha. Now I have completed instructing a term, and in hindsight, all I have done is simply teach basic military skills but with character. It gives me immense pride and pleasure to be involved in the development of the future leaders of the British Army and to pass on my 15 years of experience of basic soldiering skills to OCdts. My mantra to OCdts is "Basic drills done right". It is great to be on the sharp end and have the better understanding of the commissioning process. In the young OCdts, I see the making of our British Officer Sahebs. Here in Sandhurst, OCdts are academically gifted and hence there is a high calibre audience. Their thirst to learn and assimilation of information is incredible. Teaching OCdts is always a pleasure. Sometime in the classroom we go off on a tangent when they start asking questions about Gurkhas. The quota for joining the Royal Gurkha Rifles (RGR) is always very limited. Many show their interest to join the RGR but they know that they have to come at the very top in their intake to get a place in RGR. Now the 200th Anniversary of Gurkha service to the Crown is imminent, OCdt Subash Gurung from 1 RGR will make further history after nearly 30 years. He will be the latest Gurkha to be commissioned from



CSgt Jiwan Gurung

Sandhurst after being a serving soldier. His performance has been outstanding and will be commissioned March 2014 to join 2 RGR.

The Gurkha Company Sittang (GCS) plays an important role in the training of OCdts in Sandhurst, which is highly appreciated by all. My two years in Sandhurst as an instructor will be assigned in the first year as the instructor in the Dismounted Close Combat Wing (DCCW) and in the second year, as Platoon CSgt in the college. It is still early days and I still have a lot to soak in and have a lot to offer to Sandhurst. I will give the best of my abilities in the training of OCdts and to uphold my cap badge and make way for the future potential Gurkha instructors.

My huge appreciations go to Maj AP Todd, Retd Capt Junkaji Gurung, Capt Dol Gurung, Capt Gyan Dhenga, Capt Jamie Gartside, Capt Sandy Nightingale, WO2 Kiran Pun, CSgt Bikash Gurung, Sgt Dan Somare, Sgt Lil Gurung and Gurujis and Bhaiharu of C Company IRGR who have played an instrumental part in my being selected for RMAS and with whom I would like to share this accomplishment.

Intake 2013 - Induction & Attestation Parade

By Cpl Sunilkumar Gurung, (Queen's Truncheon Escort)

A fresh batch of 28 newly-trained Riflemen, ('Reinforcements') from Intake 2013 formally joined 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles, at the time-honoured Kasam Khana (Oath-Eating) attestation parade on Friday 08 November 2013. Attestation marks the solemn welcome and acceptance of the young soldiers, into the Battalion after the successful completion of their recruit training in ITC Catterick.

Following this lengthy and rigorous nine months training under the expert supervision of our esteemed colleagues in Gurkha Company, Induction cadre and Attestation parade set a milestone towards finally becoming a Rifleman of IRGR. The scorching sun and extreme humidity of Brunei makes Induction cadre even more demanding, especially since it includes a plethora of outdoor physical activities such as the personal fitness assessment, Advanced Combat Fitness Test, military swimming test and Annual Combat Marksmanship Test - the latter held in the infamously searing temperatures of Binturan ranges.



Training riflemen were also given various lessons of IRGR rules and regulations, security, culture, equality and diversity and introduction of Brunei as a part of Induction cadre. After almost two weeks long Induction cadre, comes the Attestation parade.



Attestation parade is when new Training riflemen take their oath of allegiance to IRGR and the Brigade of Gurkhas by touching the Queen's Truncheon in front of Gurkha major and Commanding officer. The Queen's Truncheon is an integral and crucial part of the Brigade of Gurkhas allegiance to the crown. The Queen's Truncheon was presented to 2nd Gurkha Rifles (The Sirmoor Rifles) in 1857 by Queen Victoria for their excellent service during the Delhi Mutiny. Since then it has been used in the Attestation parades of new Gurkha training riflemen.

Before the ceremony, new training riflemen had to endure long drill sessions under the blistering sun of Brunei to be perfect for the parade. As Gurkhas our culture is to never give up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time thus the boys gave their best to become perfect in drill for Attestation parade. Finally the day arrived when new training Riflemen took their oath of allegiance to IRGR and the Brigade of Gurkhas in the presence of The Queen's Truncheon and huge numbers of spectators. The whole parade went flawlessly with new training riflemen finally becoming Riflemen and proud members of IRGR.

Jai I RGR!

Sari Bair Day

By 30085705 Rfn Subash Pariyar

Sari Bayir Muharebesi, also known as the August offensive was the final attempt made by the British in 1915 to seize control of the Gallipoli Peninsula from the Ottoman Empire during the 1st World war.

1/6th Ghurkha Rifles stepped over the peninsula in April, 1915. The Ghurkha surged forward and took the fight to the Turks with rifles, bayonets and khukuri, but the main weapon they had was courage and bravery which made the enemies bend their knees.

Our forefathers, the 1/6th Ghurkha Rifles lost lots of brothers. Their sacrifices brought one of the historical images in today's world. We salute those fathers who fought until their last breath, to respect their courage and bravery. IRGR, B Coy holds the battle honour as SARI BAIR and remembrance parade held on the 08 August every year. Unfortunately, the company celebrated "SARI BAIR" day on the 20 September 2013 because of the movement disturbance from UK to Brunei and other commitments.

Remembrance parade started as the WO2 Giriprasad Gurung, CSM B Coy reported to the Capt Lalitbahadur Gurung, 2IC B Coy and Maj L M Roberts, OC B Coy respectively. B Coy personnel along with families were on the parade because it was the big day for the company and the Battalion. Right after CO, GM and RSM Sahebs laid the "wreath" with posse of poppy flowers on the three different memorials company had a silent parade for a couple of minutes where the sound coming from bugle impressed the heartfelt condolence of the whole battalion to our late heroes.

After the parade, company had a presentation on the "SARI BAIR" by the B Coy OC Saheb, which made our understanding more clear about the war. The company also had some events like football and functional party.

Football was organised inter platoon, which was won by 4 platoon, B Coy. After the sports, the company looked forward to evening entertainment. Lt Col D J Robinson Saheb was the main guest of the party. The party was memorable because of the entertainment programme which was led by Cpl Nissan Guruji.

Finally, the party came to the end after few cocktail dances with all guests. Whether, it was 08 August or any day in the years, those late brothers are always in our heart may their soul rest in peace.

**Jai "SARI BAIR" B Coy
Jai I RGR**



Battlefield Tour to BAREO and PA-LUNGAN, Ex ARAWAK SCHOLAR Malaysia 23-27 September 2013

“The weight of the history and a fine reputation rests on our shoulders”

By Rfn Yaman Singh Gurung / RGR, A (Delhi) Coy

Decades have passed by since the end of the Borneo Confrontation in 1966. From that day, a priceless page in the illustrious history of the Brigade of Gurkhas was added to the already impressive reputation of our forefathers. As history tells us, the confrontation was an undeclared war with most of the action in the border area between Indonesia and East Malaysia on the island of Borneo (known as Kalimantan in Indonesia). However, Sabah and Sarawak were ethnically, religiously and politically diverse and there was some local opposition to joining Malaysia that Indonesia attempted to exploit, with very little success.

Gurkha troops (1st Battalion and 2nd KEO Gurkha Rifles) were the first to be used in an operational role at the outbreak of the Brunei Revolt in 07 December 1962. The battalion was alerted and air landed in Brunei the following day. There followed four years of continuous operations against the Indonesian Regular Army in Sabah and Sarawak in which every unit of the Brigade of Gurkhas took part. As they did in the Malayan Emergency, Gurkha units again provided the bulk and the continuity of the British Army's contribution to this campaign. It was in November 1965, that Lance Corporal Ram Bahadur Limbu of the 2nd Battalion, 10th PMO Gurkha Rifles won the Victoria Cross.

It has been 50 years since that day and to recognise the achievements and success made by our forefathers, members of A (Delhi) Company, made the long and arduous journey all the way to Pa-Lungan in Bareo, Malaysia from our Barracks in Tukur Lines, Brunei on 23 of September 2013. In short, this battlefield tour was not only to recognise our forefather's achievements; it was also to reconnect with the people in Bareo as well as to conduct TEWT (Tactical Exercise Without Troops) in the jungle terrain.

Prior to the initial move, a recce party consisting of 3 NCO's, 1 SNCO and 1 Officer conducted a recce in Miri, Bareo and Pa-Lungan to allow the main body to move without problems. The

recce party deployed during the summer break for four days, finding out hotels to book, routes leading to Pa-Lungan, places to visit and prepare TEWTs.

Day 1: 23 September 2013: 22 Members of A (Delhi) Company including the Coy 2IC, Captain Jiwan Pun, travelled for two hours on a coach to Miri, arriving in the evening where we left our luggage in an Inn and immediately headed off to the local town where we had dinner together. It was great experience roaming around the town, enjoying the sights and sounds of the nightlife in Miri, a stark contrast to the nightlife in Brunei.

Day 2: On the early morning of day 2, we flew from Miri Airport to Bareo, an isolated village that would take 12 hours to drive by vehicle. It took us about an hour on a plane. On our arrival at Bareo Airport, we were warmly welcomed by our advance party and by the owner of the Homestay. We had lunch and were led on a guided tour of Bareo village and the places where British Army and Gurkhas used to operate and live. The local people were friendly and happy to see us in their village after 50 years. Meanwhile, 3 x Advance Party personnel left on foot from Bareo to Pa-Lungan for some last minute recce for the TEWT sites. At a local pub, we had a quick break followed by a Question One lesson and TEWT led by Sgt Trajan. After the TEWT, in the evening we had some leisure time, singing songs and cracking jokes followed by a great messing.

Day 3: 19 Members of A (Delhi) Company left Bareo on foot to Pa-Lungan in the early morning. Pa-Lungan is approximately 15 km or three hours away from Bareo. The only means of transportation from Bareo to Pa-Lungan is by foot, travelling through undulating terrain and dense jungle vegetation. Again we were warmly welcomed in Pa-Lungan Homestay. The owner was about 60 years old and she was so happy to welcome Gurkhas after 50 years. She was just six years old during the Confrontation. After lunch we visited the village and places that used to be the battlefield. There we found old trenches, bunkers,



Members of A (Delhi) Coy IRGR conducting a TEWT near BAREO, Sarawak



Members of the Company moving through the dense jungle near the village of Bareo



Marching through thick undergrowth to view the terrain from the enemy's point of view

defensive positions and defensive lines from where the Gurkhas used to operate. During the visit, we were able to feel how hard it would be 50 years ago. One of the local people told us that they found a grenade around the British bunkers. In the afternoon, we were treated to exciting stories from local people. We were all intrigued to hear about our forefathers. Meanwhile, OC Saheb arrived during the late afternoon with the rear party of two to join us in Pa-Lungan. After dinner all the local people gathered at the Homestay where we were staying and they welcomed us individually. We really appreciated the respect they have shown towards us. They also entertained us with their traditional dance. We enjoyed a lot with them, singing our songs and talking with them. Finally they presented us with a handcrafted memento for the Coy.



Members of the Company pose next to local villagers at Pa-Lungan Homestay

Day 4: Early in the morning, we deployed as a whole company to a nearby high hill, one of the hills used during the confrontation, in order to conduct the TEWT led by OC Saheb. During the TEWT we had some exercise on how to command and to plan based on the scenario of the Indonesia Confrontation. We moved through the dense jungle receiving sites used by our forefathers and seeing how difficult it is to move in the jungle, which really made us appreciate the sacrifices they made 50 years ago. After lunch we moved back to Bareo walking again for three hours. When we were back in Bareo, we were served messing with deer and wild pig, prepared by our G4 team. After dinner we visited a Long House in Bareo. We

were all astonished and amazed at how long this house was. It was about 150x100m and approximately 100 people resided in the Long House. Again, we were treated to another round of traditional dancing by the local senior women and we joined them as well. The programme lasted for about two hours and during the short time, we really enjoyed it.

Day 5: On the final day of the tour, we extracted from Bareo in three chucks to Toker Lines via Miri. It was a real privilege to be able to go on this Battlefield tour and understand the importance of the sacrifices made by our forefathers.



A Company forms up on the outskirts of Bareo on conclusion of the Exercise.

Exercise ANNAPURNA KHUKURI

By 30142419 Rfn Shreebahadur Pun

On Op HERRICK 17, first time when we heard that B (Sari Bair) Coy to deploy to Nepal on Exercise Annapurna Khukuri, adventure training expedition as a part of the Rest and Recuperation phase, we had a little skip of excitement. After successfully completing the Op tour, we went on post operational tour leave. The Ex Annapurna Khukuri started right after the leave. It was a level 3 adventure training expedition based on the Annapurna Circuit, Tilico lake and Phu Gaun trekking which took place between 30 May and 18 June 2013 in the pre-monsoon period in Nepal. The main aim of the Ex was to conduct physically arduous expedition in high risk and remote area, allow for the development of individual mountain skills, leading to the award of recognised qualification to facilitate further unit Adv Trg and allow personnel deployed on Op H17 the opportunity to conduct fun and exciting development training and recuperation after deployment.

As per the early plan, those who were selected for the adventure training were gathered at Pokhara Camp in the afternoon on 29 May 2013. OC followed by QMSI and all instructors briefed on the programme for the next coming days i.e. activities, routes, risks, weather, roads, trekking conditions etc and issued mandatory kits for the adventure training.

On 30 May 2013, total 30 personnel departed Pokhara Camp for Besi Sahar on a coach. From there, we changed our ride coach to 4x4 jeeps to travel to Syange. Travelling on Jeep was quite challenging because of congested seats, very poor road and the nature of landscape made that approximately three hours journey a life time memorable for us especially OC, PC and QMSI sahebs. At Syange we met our guides, porters and sorted out the campsite, where we would sleep, by the bank of Marsyandi River. At this height it was quite warm despite raining hard and there were plenty of mosquitoes and leeches.

The next day on 31 May 2014, we got up early, had breakfast, packed our kits and started our first full day trekking lead by the guides. The weather was challenging as it was raining whole day with tropical feeling temperature. This first day was bit long and despite keeping up a good pace still took around six hours to arrive at Dharapani. However, a good opportunity to stretch legs and get bodies ready for what was to come. The tents were wet through so we stayed in a teahouse.

On 01 June 2013, we headed towards Koto. As we walked ahead we could see the real beauty of Nepal. Flawless Marsyandi river, unaccounted enchanting water falls, untouched green forests, old typical Nepali houses and local people there; they all were helpful and didn't give us a single chance to feel like we were alone somewhere in the unfamiliar territory. The significant change in weather reduced the number of mosquitos and leeches considerably, which made life in general more pleasant. We spent that night in Tea House in Koto.

The following day on 02 June 2013, we stepped towards Meta which was an extremely long and tough day. We covered approximately 20 km with a net altitude increase of around one km. The climb to Meta was very steep which took a large

proportion of the day. The altitude also began to have a visible effect with headaches, falling appetites. All were exhausted after around eight hours of hard trekking. Next day on 03 June 2013, in the morning we managed to catch few glimpses of beautiful Himalaya ranges. After having breakfast, we headed towards Khyang. This was a shorter day but nonetheless contained some steep climbs which the altitude made quite tough and slow going. Khyang itself is a seasonal stone settlement of a dozen houses that are used by Yak herders when they bring their animals down in the winter.

On 04 June 2013, we marched towards Phu Gaun. On the way, we explored the stunning view of the Rocky Mountains. As we went up we could see the changes in human culture, geographical difference, vegetation, climate and many more which made our trekking more adventurous. High mountains on each sides of our way, fascinating view from the top of the hills, interacting with locals, their warm respect and hospitality, consuming delicious local foods are still memorable to us. We stopped in Phu Gaun to have a look around, eat lunch and drop off kit, as this is where we would spend the night. Phu Gaun has a lot of interesting builds and places to explore. It is the last village of Nepal towards North side. In the afternoon, we set off towards Himlung Base Camp in order to acclimatise high up before returning down to sleep. Again, as we walked higher we could see and feel the changes in weather and vegetation. It wasn't easy to be there in Phu Gaun because already some of our friends were suffering from altitude sickness.

On 05 June 2013, we went back towards Nar Phedi. Original plan for this day was to go to Nar but one of the members had started to show symptoms of severe altitude sickness. So we changed the plan in order to allow him to sleep as low as possible. There was a newly built monastery (Buddhist Temple) at Nar Phedi which



will soon be inhabited by monks and was fascinating to visit. The following morning, unfortunately the casualty's condition did not go well. Thus, the decision was made to evacuate the casualty as soon as possible so that he could receive hospital treatment. In the end, the casualty was simply carried piggyback style, which was safe and comfortable for him and allowed rapid and efficient changes. That was the most dangerous, challenging and memorable moment for all of us because we were doing casualty evacuation. When we arrived in Koto, casualty was sent straight on to hospital in Pokhara. In Koto, we had a small farewell party because we have to leave half of the porter's friends behind as we will be staying in Teahouse onwards.

From Koto we moved out for next destination Lower Pisang on 07 June 2013. On the way, we stopped at Chame, the district capital of Manang. There are a number of shops including medical centre staffed by a doctor and holds bottled oxygen. We spent a night at Lower Pisang. Next morning, we headed towards Manang. This beautiful village lies in along the round Annapurna circuit route a whole world's as well as Nepal's a popular trekking destination. The lifestyle of the village truly reflects an exotic living cultural tradition handed down through countless generations. The social life of the village is full of interesting rituals, as well as a lively tradition of music and dance.

On 09 June 2013, we went to Tilicho Base Camp and spent a night. Following day, we headed towards world's highest lake (4,949 mtr) called Tilicho Lake. The route was quite challenging and about 800 mtr zigzagging up steep. Finally, we all reached the summit, touched the water and enjoy the breathtaking views. Some of the guys swam in the lake even though the water was freezing cold. After spending few hours, we went down to base camp and spent that night there. The next day on 11 June 2013, we marched towards Letdar and reached there in the evening. From Letdar, we went up to Chulu Base Camp. This was the last opportunity to go high and sleep low in order to increase acclimatisation before heading over the Throng La. We returned to Letdar and spent a night there. On 13 June 2013, we headed towards Thorongla Phedi.

The teahouse at Thorong La Phedi was large and particularly well appointed with room for over 100 guests.

After spending a night at Thorong La Phedi we woke up early in the morning and headed towards Thorong la Pass so that the hard climb up to the pass could be completed before the weather at the top got worse. We all were excited as we are going through the world highest pass at the height of 5,416 mtr. On the way, we all were started to have altitude sickness as we were gaining the height and the weather was gloomy with few scattered showers as well. No matter how hard it was, we kept marching towards the summit. Finally, after three hours we arrived at the summit but weather was still poor. We didn't manage to enjoy the view though captured few snaps there. We stayed there about approx 20 minutes because of the cold and poor weather. Then, we headed down towards Mustang and reached there by afternoon. We visited the Muktinath, one of the divine place of pilgrimage for the Hindus. We had a quick wash beneath the 108 Taps (Dhara) which confiscates all the grime and bad luck. After having lunch at Mustang, we travelled to Jomsom by Jeep and mini-bus where we stayed the night. We visited local shops to buy local handcrafts and famous local wines. Following early morning, we headed to Pokhara by 4x4 Jeeps. We stopped at Tatopani where spent some time in the extremely natural hot water bath and for lunch. We reached Pokhara Camp around 1800, dropped all our kit there and went out to lake side restaurant for a wash-up party and bid farewell to the guides. We all enjoyed the party and dispersed around 2230 by exchanging thanks and good luck.

In summary, Exercise Annapurna Khukuri was demanding but very enjoyable. It tested all involved on remote and difficult terrain and under arduous conditions. It was also an excellent opportunity for us to see parts of our country and experience aspects of their culture and enhance our knowledge about our own soil.

Hami Garchaun!
Jai B (Sari Bair) Coy





Second Battalion

Newsletter

Summary. Over the past year 2RGR has focussed upon its role and position within Brunei and the wider region. With 2011 dominated by our deployment to Afghanistan, the past 18 months have been about a return to jungle soldiering; re-honing collective skills, reinvigorating relationships with our Bruneian partners and reinforcing the role of the resident Gurkha Battalion in the post-Herrick era. The SE Asian environment offers challenging, diverse and attractive soldiering opportunities to the Army. British Forces Brunei (BFB), the small but agile Garrison which operates shoulder to shoulder with an Islamic ally, is well-placed to meet the demands of the Army's return to contingency. The force is also becoming an increasingly important lever of influence in this region - 2RGR have been heavily involved in such activities; with bilateral capacity building and regional defence engagement work now at hitherto unseen levels. Consequently, the opportunities to project the Gurkha brand, display value for money to our Bruneian hosts and demonstrate our utility and jungle excellence have increased. Today it is assessed that our standing with the Bruneians has been significantly enhanced, and with negotiations for the 2015 renewal of the Brunei Bill now underway, these efforts can be easily placed in a strategic context. Throughout it all, the Battalion has not lost sight of its men or families - at a time when the spectre of redundancy and cuts has loomed over us all, 2RGR has worked hard to bolster our 'Firm Base'. This report highlights those efforts.

The Past Year. Over and above the beat of internal training, recruit inductions and junior leadership cadres there have been several notable firsts over the past year. The 'Chindit Trophy' was a section-level deep jungle 'find' competition with an international slant. Over a ten day deployment our JNCO's pushed themselves and their teams to the limit against a free-playing enemy with trackers and dogs. The efforts of our men, and our guest team from the GCSPF, were exceptional; the tenacity and resilience of the Gurkha in the jungle to the fore. Whilst our Garrison team fared less well, C Coy emerged victorious with the GCSPF in a highly commendable 2nd place. Other firsts came in the shape of a revamped Bukit Teraja race; an OTX in New Caledonia, and a short training deployment to Tonga. But the most significant first has been the amount of bilateral work achieved over the past 12 months; voices of experience, TTB course attendance, school-house exchanges, table-top exercises, joint jungle exercises, skill at arms meetings, staff training and capability demonstrations have been reinforced by formalising our sporting and social calendars. Meanwhile, the Ex Pacific Kukri series has continued, this year B Coy deployed to Australia. The 2RGR Champion Coy Competition saw Sp Coy emerge as winners; whilst the inaugural

Krishnabhadur Dura Trophy¹ was won by the Officers on the RGR birthday, and more recently by the JNCO's Mess: a splendid piece of silver has been commissioned. In external competition the Battalion has also been active. We missed the Queen's Medal at Bisley in 2012 but were the Major Unit Champions, winning seven individual and a further eight unit trophies. Two teams are in competition at Bisley again this month. The 2RGR football team finished as runners-up in the Nepal Cup last year, and our endurance team came third in Trailwalker (albeit with only three men finishing). The Gurkha Lions cricket club have formed up and are fast becoming a force to be reckoned with - cricket is the fastest growing sport in 2RGR. Our rugby club - The Flying Kukris - have toured some five times this year, and 12 in total over the past four years. Their trophy cabinet has continued to grow. The Battalion sits well above mandated AT attendance figures. Perhaps most unexpectedly 2RGR are now double Army Canoe Water Polo champions; a paddler is also the Army Sprint and Marathon Champion whilst two 2RGR boats entered the Devizes to Westminster race. A silver medal on Cambrian and



The RGR Afghanistan Memorial Wall, Toker Lines, Seria, Brunei



GOC Sp Comd, Maj General C Boag CBE unveiling the RGR Afghanistan Memorial Wall with Gurkha Major 2RGR Maj Dammar Shahi, April 2013

¹ Dedicated to all ranks 2RGR who have fallen in Afghanistan - named after 21178855 CSgt Krishnabhadur Dura, KIA Op Herrick 9, 2009.

£33,000 raised for charities are other bright notes. Socially and ceremonially the Battalion has also been active - the Mess and our P&Ds have been put to good use. The band have deployed to Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam and the Philippines - they also marked the 50th anniversary of the Brunei Revolt. Regional Defence Attachés have been hosted at a formal dinner in the Mess; whilst some 11 Ambassadors and High Commissioners were hosted for a VIP lunch. GOC Sp Comd has visited, attending the BFB Open Day (Gurkha Fair) which attracted well over 2,000 local visitors. More recently 2RGR hosted CDS for a valedictory dinner, and HM The Sultan for a farewell visit to the Battalion ahead of the Unit Move. Later this month a team will deploy to Burma for a Staff Ride. We were delighted that 2RGR men won both the Toker Award and Prince of Wales Kukri this year. Finally, 2RGR has also produced a lasting memorial to our fallen RGR soldiers; the RGR Afghanistan Memorial Wall in Toker Lines is a fitting tribute to our Officers and men who gave their lives on operations.

The Future. 2RGR has now completed the Unit Move from Brunei back to UK, ready to enter the operational training cycle. The Bn has been warned to deploy to Kenya in February 2014. 2RGR looks back at four years in Brunei with great pride and no small amount of affection. In challenging times for the British Army writ large, significant progress at every level has been made in Brunei.

The conditions are set for 1RGR to continue such progress; securing the Army's footprint in SEAsia whilst demonstrating the capabilities of the Gurkha on a regional stage.

Adventurous Training Exercise GUNING MULU

By Captain Prembahadur Gurung

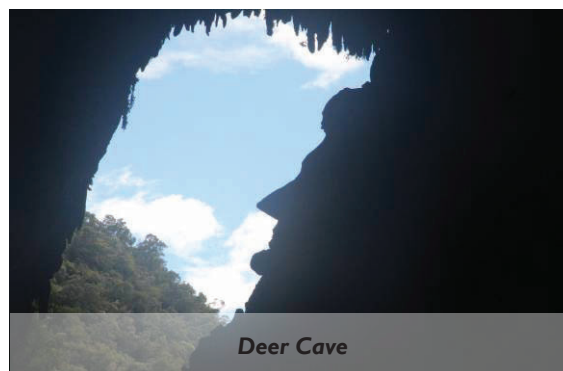
The four years of a far eastern posting in Brunei were rapidly coming to an end for 2RGR in 2013. Despite the time we spent in Borneo the truth was that many personnel were oblivious to the island's natural attractions. Many of us never appreciated the reasons why people from all around the world were flocking to Brunei to take up the challenges offered by this beautiful wonderland. Eventually Sp Coy 2RGR had come up with an idea to mark their four year posting on the island of Borneo by taking up the Coy flag to the summit of Mt. Gunung Mulu, a majestic mountain proudly standing at 2,376m in the heart of Sarawak state of Malaysia.

Mt. Gunung Mulu means 'mountains up the river' in Malay. It was opened as a national park back in 1974 and is also a world heritage site. It has a mountainous equatorial rainforest and is famous for its limestone caves and karsts.

Most of the caves are of limestone sediments and it is believed to have formed 17-40 million years ago when Asia and Australia got separated through movement of the tectonic plates. It has one of the world's largest cave and underground river systems. There are still many more unexplored landscapes within this national park. It truly owns a breathtaking landscape without rival.

On the morning of 01 May 2013, 48 members of Sp Coy departed for Team Building EX GUNUNG MULU. Members were divided into four groups, each headed up by SNCO. The activities included were summiting Mt Gunung Mulu, visiting the caves within the National Park and visiting the collection of limestone pinnacles (45m high). All groups had completed the activities in turn, organised and guided by the national park guides.

My group visited the caves first; our first visit was Deer Cave. Deer Cave has the largest cave passage in the world, it was discovered in 1978 during an expedition, it is a limestone sediment cave 174m wide and 122m high at the highest point with a total distance of 1.5km. Walking into the cave was not only exhilarating but also equally alarming. Modern architects would find it hard to believe that nature had sculpted the huge columns. One of the eye catching configurations was the face of the late American president Abraham Lincoln. It also housed an estimated three millions bats. At dusk these bats would burst out of the cave in search of food. It was truly magnificent to witness the mass exodus of bats from the cave, spiralling high overhead, ascending into the sky. Every cave that we visited had a unique character which was dramatic and splendid to walk around.



Time had arrived to hoist the Coy flag on the summit of Mt Gunung Mulu. The summit trail was divided into four legs. We started our trek at 0630 with all of the essential kit that would sustain us for the following two days in the gruelling and unforgiving tropical rainforest. The first 5.5k to camp one was flat and easy going through the rainforest. From camp one to two the route saw us going through undulating ground with irregular ups and downs. Then the real challenge started from camp two to three. The going was steep uphill for 3k. At places the track was as narrow as six inches with a sheer drop either side. As it was a team building exercise, we confronted the challenges as a team. At times torrential tropical downpour made our ascent far more complicated. The trek from camp three to four was a gentle uphill slope. We were relieved to see off the steep uphill section. However nature turned against us. I never imagined a swamp at 1,300m. The going became harder and harder as we were fighting our way through the spider web roots of tropical forest in knee high swamp. It was a real man test. Eventually we arrived at camp four at 1630 and ended a difficult day. Exhausted but relieved to see the glimpse of the summit. By this point we had trekked 22.5km. After an early breakfast of Mee Goreng we set off for the final leg at 0600. The going, as expected became tougher, through a narrow ridge of steep uphill for 4km. With the help of ageing ladders and crumbling ropes we were slowly but steadily closing the gap towards the summit. After three hours



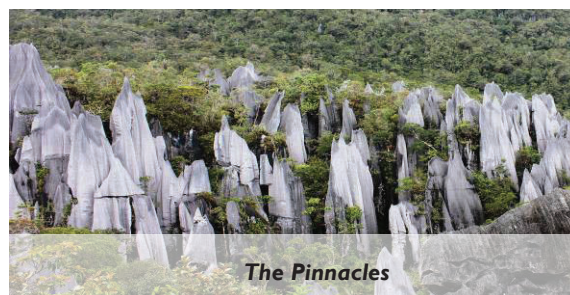
Mt Gunung Mulu

of herculean effort, the summit was reached. A sense of achievement was felt by all as we stood hoisting our Coy flag on the summit of Mt Gunung Mulu above the clouds. After basking for 45 minutes in the glorious sunshine the time had arrived to start our decent back down to park HQ.

Our next activity was to visit the Pinnacles. The route to the Pinnacles started aboard a long tail boat for an hour along the river Melinau. From the dock we walked 12km through the tropical rainforest to camp five. It was nestled on the col of the mountain, the start point of the famous "head hunter trail". We woke up early in the

morning and started our trek to the viewing point of the Pinnacles. The trek was a steep uphill route with razor sharp edged rocks jutting out from the ground for every step. Although the ascent was just 2.4k it was extremely challenging however the sight of the Pinnacles was something I will truly never forget. The Pinnacle of Australia is one of the natural wonders of the world but nevertheless, this one was equally impressive. After an hour on the viewing point we made our way down which proved to be even more difficult than ascending. This team building exercise tested the champions' team spirit, cohesion and jungle fitness to the limit but as a team we endured.

Jai Sp Coy, 2RGR.



The Pinnacles

Ex KHUKURI CATALAN (14 - 30 July 2013)

By Lt P Lambert 2 RGR

Exercise KHUKURI CATALAN (KC) was an Adventure Training, Mountain Biking tour of the South West region of France, taking place between the 15 and 30 July 2013. 13 pax totalled the nominal roll, including three instructors from Engineer and Marine Units and ten Gurkha personnel from the Second Battalion the Royal Gurkha Rifles (2 RGR). The exercise was designed and led by Lt Philip Lambert (2 RGR), OC 5 Platoon in B (Gallipoli) Company.

The initial concept of KC was to cycle across the Pyrenees Mountain range from the Atlantic coast in the West, to the Mediterranean coast in the East making 2RGR the first British Army Unit to do so on a Mountain Bike, and more importantly within 12 days. The Pyrenees Mountain range itself is split into its north (French) and south (Spanish) versants, and our planned itinerary would predominantly aim to follow the infamous GR10 trail to the north of the border. The reasoning for this was that it contains far more 'village activity', and areas of cultural interest for the young Rifleman involved. Indeed, all nine of the RGR contingent, were fairly untravelled, and would themselves admit a complete lack of general knowledge about this part of the world.

The Pyrenees are home to a large number of distinctive social groups, from the Basque people of the Western region, around the Béarn, and the Bigore, to the Catalonian peoples of the East in the arid settings of the Cerdagne and Capcir highlands, Andorra, and the picturesque and steep foothills of the Roussillon, where the Pyrenees plunge into the Mediterranean sea. North Catalonia is an intriguing part of Europe, as its people

wish to see it become independent from both French and Spanish administration at the earliest opportunity. This made for a lot of interesting conversations with the local people, and gave the boys a chance to practice their Catalan, 'Si us Plau' and all.

To begin with, the initial training phase saw us fly out of Brunei with the Arms Plot Move Advance Party which turned into an epic 40 hour ordeal, with long delays and diversions.

Although exhausted on arrival, the Rifleman still insisted on meeting their new Instructors, headed by SSgt Simon Fudge, closely followed by Sgt 'Tarks' Jones, and Marine 'Marilyn Munro', whose excitement was palpable. The boys were issued with their protective kit and clothing, but also 'Splendid' Mongoose and Claud Butler Mountain Bikes by the lead instructor. Ssgt Fudge then issued his safety brief to all cyclists, emphasising the respect of basic drills and actions for any technical difficulty. These safety precautions would be the focus of the next four days spent in Bedgebury Forest, to the south of Ashford, only an hour's drive from Sir John Moore Barracks. Bedgebury Forest allowed the guys to progress from a very basic level all the way up to a tough 13 Km loop on which we ended up racing one another. With the instructors impressed and satisfied with our proficiency, we headed back to SJMB for a final weekend of admin before flying out to Perpignan.

On Saturday 13 July, the Instructors left Folkestone in our Support vehicle, packed to the rim with all our supplies for the two week expedition. After crossing the channel, they drove

through the night to our start point on the Basque coastline. The next morning, the rest of the team flew from Stansted to Perpignan, and then covered the final five hour drive to meet the Support vehicle in Hendaye. Our hostel greeted us with the traditional local dishes of Menestra and Bacalao, introducing the boys to some true Basque cuisine. While they enjoyed their food the boys seemed more keen to have their photo taken with the 'gite' owner, Senora Cristina, who caught their eye as soon as we arrived.



The next morning, after the obligatory scenic photo on departure, we set off from Hendaye Beach at a fast pace, as if we would 'contre-la-montre' (sprint) all the way to Collioure. After a couple of hours climbing the GR10, and with a blazing sun beating down on our necks, some of the group were starting to feel the effects of the steep ascent and we made the decision to carry our 'Mongooses' until the terrain got a little more manageable. Finally, with the Col de Mandale (574m) behind us, we sat back and enjoyed our first portion of serious downhill, descending into Vera de Bidasoa. Unfortunately, Rifleman Nir came off his Mongoose quite seriously in one of the chicanes, and the decision was made to call for the Support vehicle and take lunch at the foot of Mount of La Rhune (905m). That afternoon, we cycled on to Ixassou, but it had become clear that to follow the GR10 would be extremely technical, and far too irresponsible. That night, the first edition of KC messing was formidable, with the generator fueling both the rice cooker and stove to our hearts content. I had after all been warned, 'the boys will need their rice'!



The next day, we followed only small village roads, to cover some ground and to avoid detracting from crossing the Pyrenees in no more than twelve days. This decision proved to pay off, as we found ourselves crossing some of the most outstanding scenic terrain, such as Bidarray and Oyaltchipiko. To the boys' great relief, we came to a halt alongside the Apateko Erreka river, and soothed our sore legs in some ice cold water, before feasting and messing once more.

Despite some damp and nippy early starts, thanks to some valley dew and cold morning breeze, we grew more acclimatised to the routine, and as time went on, the boys perfected their camp SOPs. This basically meant that reveille crept closer and closer to sunrise. The instructors were extremely impressed by the camp discipline, and this was a vital part for our crossing, as the last thing we wanted to do was to upset the locals by littering or leaving too much sign.

The next six days were spent covering some impressive lengths of mountain road, which meant we gained vital time from our initial itinerary, so that we would have more freedom to venture along more technical and gruelling sections towards the latter part of the crossing. The middle section of the GR10 remains totally unachievable for cyclists, as the gradients go through the roof, so we skirted along the foothills of the highest peaks such as Pic D'Aneto and Pic Negra, towering well above 3,400m and reminding some of the hill-boys amongst us of their homeland. One of the days saw the KC team cover over 95Km, an incredible feat of endurance, where some of the more challenged riders really dug deep to stay with the pack. Towns such as St Gaudens, Barthe-sur-Neste, and Lourdes were blessed by our brief crossing of their market squares and we always managed to find a welcome spot by a flowing river, to rest, recover and continue messing some more, before going on our way the next morning.

Our crossing took us through the little village of St Giron, where by complete coincidence, the glorious Top 14 Rugby Union sides of USAP (Perpignan) and Bayonne faced each other in the tiny village stadium. Here, the boys had the opportunity of watching a true man's game being played at its highest level, with a fanfare band playing in a corrida cacophony, and of course the sidesteps and dump tackles to match the game's reputation. Astonished at the sheer size of some of these players, the general consensus on our way back to camp was that 'rugby is definitely not for us sahib'. I still very much disagree.

Our crossing continued onto the southern areas of Toulouse, where we faced a choice of which route we would take to begin climbing the high roads towards Andorra. The decision was made to follow the small but challenging route through Foix, and that night, we set up camp alongside the powerful and unpredictable Ariège river. As gusts of air from crashing rapids kept us cool, we lay in our sleeping bags, suspended above the torrent on a sturdy rafting centre's teaching platform. At this point in the crossing (eighth day) we all knew that the hardest part was yet to come, with a huge

climb up across the high plateaus of Cerdagne and Capcir over the next couple of days.

The next morning, the boys put in a huge effort to get up to Andorra, and with some commendable encouragement and strong efforts from all three Instructors, we arrived at Porte Puymorens, somewhat exhausted. As we had covered such a considerable distance, and found ourselves ahead of schedule, we would attempt to climb Mount Carlit (2,975m) the next morning, which would give us the opportunity of free-riding some of the best downhill in the area.

Avid to give it our best shot, we set off very early the next morning, and made some impressive progress towards the Carlit summit, with a healthy lunch break along the Lanoux estuary at 2,300m. That afternoon, we kept going, but at 2,600m, with the summit within almost arms length, and with some seemingly unsafe parts of the climb left, the chief Instructor Simon and I agreed to cycle back down to our original starting point in Porte. This turned out to be an incredible afternoon of technical downhill we will all no doubt never forget.

After a good night's sleep in Latour-de-Carol, we took a scenic train journey on the 'petit train jaune' to a better starting point, before kitting ourselves up for what would be an all-day downhill affair on some of the steepest roads in the Pyrenees. The cycle took us through some 15th Century Military Fortifications designed by Vauban for the Sun King Louis XIVth in the now Catalan towns of Mont-Louis, Vinca, and Villefranche. These towering fortresses enclosing small hamlets, fascinated the boys and added a lot of value to this already exhilarating downhill, towards our next campsite in Ceret.

From this birthplace of Impressionism, we climbed through the border towns of Les Cluses and le Perthus, and with soaring temperatures of 35 degrees Celsius and above, we struggled to maintain any sort of decent pace up towards the col du Perthus. With some surprisingly high levels of morale, the boys kept going however, and after a 22Km ordeal, we finally reached an old Chalet outside which we would camp. Thanks once again to the Support vehicle's finest selection of LIDL pork shoulder and *herbes de provences*, probably some of the best Messing was devoured here amongst the large oak trees of the Neulous Forest.

The next morning, we all felt a sense of relief, that the worst was finally behind us, and that all that remained was a small climb to the Pic Neulous (1,256m), followed by two final days' worth of incredible descent to our finishing point on the Mediterranean coast.

After a tough but manageable effort up to the top of the Alberes Mountain range, we paused for a little while to recover and replenish our depleted sugars and salts. With cramps and general fatigue evident, the Instructors made sure they reminded the boys to 'just dismount' if unsure of any of the steep portions of boulders and gravel up ahead. The next two days now seem like distant blur of trembling forearms and

screaching brake-pads. I think all of the KC team will agree that the chosen route left the best for last. After a windy night's sleep, we woke to an overpowering beam of sunlight. There were no more mountains to hide its heat, only the vast sea 620m below us.



Under the shadow of the watchful Tower of Madeloc (656m), high above our finishing point of Collioure, all three instructors were presented a Khukuri as a token of our appreciation for their support throughout the crossing. After a small sip of champagne, we cycled like a pack of Armstrongs fleeing the media, to our finishing point in the iconic Bay of Collioure.



Fully recovered two days later from some well-deserved RnR, we enjoyed an end-of-tour feast at the famous Neptune restaurant, before leaving for Barcelona the next morning. In the Catalan Capital, we visited the enormous Nou Camp Stadium, and even saw some of Gaudi's fabulous architecture. All in all, Exercise KHUKURI CATALAN offered a team of fit, robust and determined Gurkha Riflemen the opportunity of discovering a culture foreign to theirs. With a distance equal to that of crossing Nepal from West to East, and by challenging themselves in a new sporting venture, the Pyrenees represented a feat of epic proportion.

Tulo Syabas Bai Haru



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.

67 Gurkha Field Squadron Royal Engineers rose at Kluang, Malaya in October 1948. Re-designated 67 Independent Gurkha Field Squadron in September 1994. Disbanded on 31 December 1996 in Hong Kong.

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

69 Gurkha Field Squadron rose at Sungei Besi, Malaya on 1 April 1961. Disbanded in Hong Kong on 17 August 1968.

69 Gurkha Independent Field Squadron reformed 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 13 September 1994.

70 Gurkha Field Park Squadron rose at Sungei Besi, Malaya on 1 April 1960. Disbanded in Singapore on 31 July 1971.

On 6 August 1982 Support Squadron re-designated 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.

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

Colonel of the Regiment

Maj Gen T R Urch CBE

Staff List

Officers of the Regiment (as at December 2013) RHQ QGE

Lt Col E G Robinson	Commandant
Maj Ekbahadur Gurung	Gurkha Major
Capt J Charlton	Adjutant
Capt Buddhibahadur Bhandari	GRCMO

Field Officers

Maj M Hendry	OC 69 Gurkha Field Squadron
Maj M A S Baker	OC 70 Gurkha Field Squadron
Maj Yogprasad Thapa	HQ Sp Offr, 63 Works Group RE
Maj Rajen Gurung	Ech Comd 70 Gurkha Field Squadron
Maj Bishnu Ghale	SO2 J5 Ops Plans
Maj Devkumar Gurung MVO	SO2G7, 170 (Infrastructure Support) Engineer Group

Captains

Capt H Crosby
Capt F Rizzuti
Capt H Engelbrecht
Capt B J Marsh
Capt S A Mayland
Capt Meenjang Gurung
Capt Yambahadur Pun
Capt Ashokkumar Gurung
Capt Mohan Gurung
Capt Dirgha KC
Capt Bishwabahadur Rai
Capt Kamalbahadur Khapung Limbu
Capt Purnasingh Tamang
Capt Ganeshprasad Gurung

Subalterns

Lt C Marris
Lt D Waddington
Lt J Hawkes
Lt R B Richardson
Lt Redding
2Lt Bass



Standing (L to R)
WO2 Sunil Rai GSA
Capt Buddhibahadur Bhandari GRCMO
Capt J Charlton Adjt

Sitting (L to R)
Maj A Benn Deputy Comdt
Maj Ekbahadur Gurung GM
Lt Col E Robinson Comdt QGE
WO1 (RSM) M R Ashley

The Commandant Queen's Gurkha Engineers Report

By Lieutenant Colonel E G Robinson

At the time of writing, it has been almost two years since I was appointed Commandant The Queen's Gurkha Engineers. I have prepared for, and commanded, QGE soldiers on operations in Afghanistan in a Counter-IED role and visited them on construction exercises in Kenya and Canada. I have been thrilled by their tales of adventurous training exploits and enjoyed with them their sporting successes. As Comdt QGE, I have championed the interests of the QGE and maintained a weathering eye on those serving in small groups or singleton posts in various location in the UK and overseas. All are making a significant contribution and during my many visits, I am forever delighted to hear of the high level of praise they receive. The opportunity to command such fine soldiers has been a huge privilege and honour.

A real highlight of my tenure has been to personally command QGE soldiers as a part of the EOD & Search Task Force on Operation HERRICK 17. The Regiment's presence in Afghanistan has been uninterrupted throughout my tenure in the Counter-IED role with each Squadron taking their turn. The last of our Advanced Search teams are now deployed from 70 Gurkha Field Squadron with current plans expecting them, and the Regiment's involvement, to conclude by June 2014; safe home!

Beyond operations, 69 Gurkha Field Squadron has completed a very arduous and successful adventurous training exercise in Nepal. They also led for QGE in the Nepal Cup, TRAILWALKER, and all of the main social events, including birthday celebration and Dashain, in 2013 and in early 2014 will deploy on a construction exercise to Canada. 70 Gurkha Field Squadron led the Regimental Shooting team and retained the Corps of Royal Engineers unit champion at CORPS OSC2013. They have also deployed on a challenging construction exercise to Kenya, which presented fantastic adventurous training opportunities with most of the Squadron summiting on Mount Kenya.

In the past year with Army 2020 and Basing announcements, some organisational changes for the Regiment are being implemented. With the QGE's future secure their size, with an RHQ and two Field Squadrons embedded within 36 Engineer Regiment, remains little changed. Thankfully the Regiment's home also remains Invicta Park Barracks, Maidstone, Kent, where very strong community relations have grown since the early 1990s. Presenting many opportunities, the Regiment's role is transforming to Force Support and all are refocussing on our core sapper skills as we step back from Afghanistan and the Counter-IED role. This was marked and initiated with vigour by a fabulous parade on the occasion of the Regiment leaving 29 EOD & Search Group to join 12 (Force Support) Engineer Group on 01 October 2013. Synchronised with this, QGE temporary manning at 24 Commando and 26 Engineer Regiments has now returned to Maidstone.

Since 2008, a good number of QGE soldiers have transferred to the Corps of Royal Engineers on promotion and some have level transferred to other Corps. This has reduced the numbers that might have been made redundant and has been very good for our young and enthusiastic Gurkha sappers who now promote The QGE brand serving in the wider Army. The QGE has been fortunate to weather redundancy better than most: Tranche one took 13, Tranche two took 22 (including five volunteers) and Tranche three will see the departure of a further nine (including four volunteers). The final Tranche four is expected in 2014/15. Although this has been difficult, I am very pleased with the dignified and positive attitude that everyone has taken towards redundancy. All will forever remain a much-valued part of our QGE family. The Regiment's full support will always be provided to any that choose to transfer, or to those who are selected or volunteer to leave the Army. I am also very grateful to the ex-QGE who have offered support and advice to those in transition to civilian life.

Such great times always fly by far too fast; I leave this appointment in July 2014. I conclude on The QGE soldier: they have a versatile and legendary work ethic, and take great pride in their professionalism and achievements. I now know the QGE soldier very well - they will continue to seek and exploit every opportunity; they know this matters and it will, as it has in the past, continue to safeguard their future. Their kaida and unique strength of brotherhood is something that can never be removed; it is as spiritual as it is physical. I will forever be touched by having served in the Brigade of Gurkhas and will always be a part of the QGE family. Having made so many close Gurkha friends and had the very great privilege to command such a unit, I will always follow the QGE's future with close interest.

Jai QGE!

69 Gurkha Field Squadron

69 Gurkha Fd Sqn has been extremely busy during 2013 with a hefty commitment to Operations, supporting training and exercises. In preparation for the Regiment's re-role from Search to Force Support, coming under command of 12 (Force Sp) Engineer Group, the Sqn has deployed on Combat Engineering exercises carrying out a variety of tasks. In January 2014 the Sqn will deploy on Ex WAR PAINT 14, a three month Joint Force Enabling Exercise (JFEE) to Canada carrying out essential repair and maintenance construction tasks in support of BATUS.

As usual, there have been a number of personality changes in the Sqn. On successful completion of a two and half year tenure, the OC, Maj Andy Gooch and 2IC, Capt Ed Thompson both posted; to 3 RSME as Regtl 2IC and to 1 RSME as the Engineer Recruiting Liaison Officer respectively, having served in

69 Gurkha Fd Sqn with a distinct quality and were instrumental in the Sqn's success. We were immensely privileged to welcome back Major Mark Hendry as the new OC, having previously served in the QGE as a Troop Commander, 2IC and as the Projects Officer in Nepal. We also welcomed the new 2IC, Capt Fran Rizzuti, for his first taste serving in the QGE. WO2 Govinda Rana took over as SSM from WO2 Manjit Gurung, who left the Sqn on retirement. Capt Purnasing Tamang posted to the DEMSS Regt in Bicester as Training Officer, Capt Bishwo Rai posted to 3 RSME as a Tp Comd and Capt Luttig and Capt Snook both posted to Training Regiments. The Sqn welcomed Capt Dirgha KC in the post of Support Tp Comd, Lt Richardson as G Tp Comd, Lt Redding as H Tp Comd and Lt Marris as I Tp Comd.

Following the Sqn's return from Op HERRICK 17 and as part of POTL, Capt Bishwo organised a two week AT expedition to Nepal - Ex FOUR POINT TIGER, for 56 members of the Sqn. This comprised trekking in Dolpa, Mustang and Solo Khumbu and a bike ride to Pokhara. This exciting and exhilarating expedition package was a huge success and served as a good opportunity for Sqn personnel to experience the cultural and geographic diversity of their own country that they may have never explored before.

This year's TRAILWALKER, a 100 km race over the South Downs Way, took place on 27 - 28 July 2013. The event was organised through a combined effort by Oxfam GB and the Queens Gurkha Signals (QGS) in support of Oxfam and the Gurkha Welfare Trust. I Tp led by Lt Marris manned one of the checkpoints under SSgt Subash in support of the race. Two teams from the QGE, Team ISHWOR (consisting of LCpl Santosh, Spr Amber, Spr Bal and led by Spr Sureen) and Team BALARAM (consisting of Spr Nishan, Spr Champak, LCpl Dil and led by Lt Redding), took part in this mentally and physically challenging event. SSgt Narendra and his team provided pivotal support to the competing teams. Despite the pain and exhaustion both teams did extremely well, not only did they complete the race in a good time but also finished in third and sixth positions respectively, a great achievement from the QGE.

On 09 September 2013 the Sqn, as nominated by HQBG, was to provide a Honour Guard to honour the Nepali Army CGS, Gen Gaurav SJB Rana as he visited the Gurkha Memorial at Horse Guards Avenue. Lt Marris with assistance from WO2 (SSM) Govinda led 32 personnel from the Sqn and presented the guard of honour in true QGE fashion. Additionally the Sqn provided a Sect to complete a Military Aid to Civilian Community (MACC) task led by Cpl Judda Limbu for the construction of a 'big cats' enclosure and road surface at the Wildlife Heritage Foundation (WHF) in Ashford, Kent. This has helped foster good relations with the local community where the Sqn, once again, were able to display their professionalism and versatility.

Despite hectic Regtl life WO2 (SSM) Govinda led a team of four and took part in Ex THREE PEAKS CHALLENGE GURKHA WAYS, a charity event where the aspiration was to carry 35

kg in a Doko (a bamboo basket) and climb the three highest mountains in the UK; Ben Nevis (Scotland), Scafell Pike (England) and Snowdon (Wales) all in under 36 hours. The main aim of this event was to raise money for charity for the Gurkha Welfare Trust and to promote the Gurkha 200 Celebrations in 2015. The team completed the challenge in a record breaking time of 26 hrs and 35 mins and rose over £3,000 to date.

69 Gurkha Fd Sqn took the lead in organising the 65th QGE birthday celebrations on 28 September 2013. Lt Redding led the event with assistance from SSgt Khelendra and his team. In addition to the birthday celebration the highlights were the official inauguration of the newly extended Mandir and farewell to the Colonel of the Regiment, Lieutenant General Sir David Bill KCB. This also meant a perfect opportunity to welcome Major General Tyrone R Urch CBE as the new Colonel of the Regiment. The proceedings continued with the presentation of the Bowring Trophy, presented to the LCpl who in the opinion of the Commandant, has shown the best example of leadership and discipline throughout the year. The worthy winner of this trophy was LCpl Santosh Goley of 70 Sqn and the runner up was LCpl Lilaram Rai of 69 Sqn. The event undoubtedly was a great success.

In October the Dashain and Tihar festivals dominated the QGE calendar. The Dashain 2013 event was successfully led by Capt Dirgha. Unlike previous years, this year it was displayed in rather interesting yet traditional fashion. This could not have been possible without the ingenuity and great support from SSgt Narendra and his team. The Tihar festival was organized by I Tp with Lt Marris taking the lead with tremendous support from SSgt Subash and his team. Keeping the cultural and traditional values alive, the festival of Tihar 2013 was celebrated in style and could not have been better, as witnessed by everyone in the QGE.

With the social calendar ensuring the Sqn was kept frantically busy, a team of seven led by Lt Richardson and assisted by Cpl Bhim took part in the Army Operational Shooting Competition (AOSC). The team won Best Corps Unit and Best Engineer Unit. There were some great individual achievements in the team with Spr Bijaya and Spr Minkumar both securing 19th and 34th positions in Army 100 and have both been selected for the British Army Shooting Team. Other events included the OC, 2IC and Lt Redding competing in the Original Mountain Marathon in Wales and a 36 Engr Regt team competing in Ex SNOW STAG, a snowboarding exercise in Austria, led by Lt Redding which saw the novice team come 3rd overall in the Corps Snowboarding Championships.

This has been a year of sporting success for the Sqn. Recently all three messes; Cpls' Club; WOs' & Sgts' Mess and the Offrs' Mess have been taken over by the committee from 69 Gurkha Fd Sqn which has kept them extremely busy organising several social events and functions including not least the Christmas Balls. Looking forward to 2014, the focus now firmly shifts to Ex WAR PAINT 14 in Canada.

70 Gurkha Field Squadron

Refreshed from Christmas Leave and putting a hectic 2012 behind us the Sqn's focus for 2013 was split between the joint goals of OP HERRICK 19 Mission Specific Training (MST) and Ex SAILFISH 13/14. For a week, at least, there seemed to be some boys in camp before they started heading off to the next round of training...

K Tp, nominated for OP HERRICK 19, formed in February on completion of individual High Assurance Search (HAS) courses, and MST kicked off in earnest with the main element seeming to be driver training; inevitably it wasn't the main event, just the most difficult to juggle! At the same time individual courses were booked to get the guys prepared on radio equipment and appointments with men in white coats to get everyone's biometric data to ensure they wouldn't end up being arrested by the Afghan Police.

After Easter things spiced up on the Search front with a myriad of training serials to get the teams working together and honing their Search skills. All this built up to their deployment to Jordan on Ex PASHTUN LINKS 6. A return to Jordan for some, but this time in the role of exercising troops: out in the heat of the sun doing demanding Search training whilst someone else worried about keeping the training camp running!

Meanwhile the bulk of the Sqn was gearing towards deploying to Kenya to carry out construction tasks as part of a new HQ British Army Training Unit Kenya infrastructure development and, as it turned out, play a bit of cricket! Again, before Easter this involved plenty of individual courses building to Collective Training in Chatham and some 'in camp' improvements, including the foundations of a Mandir extension.

Ex SAILFISH saw the bulk of the Sqn, with attachments, deployed for ten weeks to construct a secure BOWMAN/CIS building as well as the groundworks for an LEC accommodation and welfare facility. This was a fantastic training opportunity in the light of the Sqn's upcoming re-role with a wide variety of the Sqn's artisan trades exercised fully. None more so though than the ME Bricklayer and Concreters who had to complete a huge area of concreting using low grade Kenyan material and were then required to build a reinforced concrete ceiling for the secure BOWMAN block!

Outside of the main tasks the Sqn found time to complete some community engagement activity, most notably the construction of a cricket ground for the Maasai Warriors Cricket team. This clearly had to be opened with a match between the local team and the builders, and in September the Maasai team managed to make a return visit to play the Sqn on home turf in Maidstone, Kent!

A trademark performance from the Sqn's HAS teams in Jordan saw two teams deploy on OP HERRICK 19 in August, one with the challenge of supporting the Brigade Reconnaissance Force; quite an accolade over other more experienced teams. A/Cpl Sunilkumar Rana also deployed as a member of the EOD and Search Group Training Team to teach RSOI and the Afghan Security Forces.

For the rest of the Sqn, however the re-role to Force Support Engineering came further to life by breaking out the combat engineering PAMs and heading down to Weymouth for the Sqn's first bridging camp since 2007! Elements of the Sqn then rolled on to Ex JORVIC LOOK, the Regt's first Force Support exercise, providing engineer support to 2 Medical Brigade to build a fully functioning Field Hospital; testing much new medical equipment and preparing for contingency deployments. Within 12 hours the section was tasked to provide mobility support by laying trackway as well as providing electricity and ablutions; these skills were nearly tested again in the Philippines, although in the end the Sqn was not deployed.

Away from work the Sqn has managed to find time for personal development, Adventurous Training (AT) and Sport. In February the Sqn managed to escape to Cornwall, in unseasonably good weather, for a spot of multi activity AT; with no rain to speak of the boys managed to have a taster of sea kayaking, mountain biking and abseiling. In March, Lt Waddington Saheb took 71 boys from the Sqn to France and Belgium on a Battlefield Study. Picking off a number of key Gurkha and Royal Engineer WWI sites, the team managed to gain a real sense of what it was like fighting in that war supported by excellent briefs from Maj(Retd) Corrigan Saheb 6GR.

On the sporting front, Cpl Raju led a primarily 70 Sqn team to win the Royal Engineers Corps Operational Shooting Competition (CORPSOC) for yet another year. Spr Sujan Jwarchan helped the Regt to victory in the RE and Divisional Squash championships this year with the final against Army HQ. After a thrilling five set match Spr Sujan finally got the better of Maj Gen Urch (Col Comdt QGE) to win the team final. Spr Sujan was also the Under 25 Singles Runner Up, won the Plate contest and has been selected for the Army U25 Squad.

Looking to the future, the pace of life does not look to be slowing. The Sqn will deploy in February on a field exercise to hone its Force Support skills and a Troop will be heading home to Nepal in March to carry out two community project tasks and squeeze in some Adventurous Training. The projects will aim to develop relations between the ex-serving BG community in Nepal, local Nepalese communities and the serving BG by exercising Sapper skills in our home country.

Exercise SAILFISH 13/14

by Lt J Hawkes

On 27 April, Gurkha Field Squadron (Search) departed for Kenya, deploying on Ex SAILFISH. Two weeks prior to this I had been thrown out of the nursery pool that is the Royal Engineer Troop Commanders' Course and into the deep end of Regimental life.

On arrival in Kenya we spent a day moving up to Nanyuki, where our Joint Force Enabling Exercise (JFEE) was to take place. During the move we crossed the equator - back from the bad side to the good - and were accosted by many a knickknack vendor. Some succumbed to their Sirenic temptations, others stayed firm. Nanyuki itself harbours Laikipia Airbase (LAB), on the side of which a small British Army camp is attached. Within this camp the Royal Engineers have been tasked to construct a Forward Mounting Base (FMB) for exercising troops, and a small tented camp exists to one side to provide us with a home for the next three months.

Puffing Billies, paper plates, and plastic track-way adorned the camp, and we learned to get along with them. Before long, the camp was awash with the QGE Cap badges as 70 Sqn made a house their home. Camp improvements complete, we set to work on the task site.

The two main projects 70 Sqn was tasked to complete were the groundworks and foundations of a LEC Welfare Facility and block walls and roof of a BOWMAN/CIS Facility, but a number of legacy tasks also existed from JFEEs past.

J Troop was given the task of constructing the LEC Facility, and our build was to start on virgin earth. We had to dig down to remove the 'Black Cotton' topsoil and replace it with the harder 'Murram' earth from deeper in the ground. This done, we would build to formation level and start the concrete foundations of the building. The BOWMAN/CIS Facility, given to L Troop, already had its foundations in place, so their role was to build up from there and turn the plot into a building.

Plant tore away at the earth for the first few weeks, digging holes, moving earth, and putting the POMs in high spirits. After that we turned our hands to batching concrete and pouring foundations. This taught us many lessons about the quality of local resources when we had to remove some of our work as it failed a concrete cube test.

As part of the exercise there were plenty of opportunities for AT in Kenya and with Mt Kenya on our doorstep it was an obvious choice. Leaving camp in an almost weekly cycle teams of 14 headed for the heights. With a schedule and to package it all into a one week turnaround the teams had a punishing schedule. After a morning of travel, the afternoon consisted of a four hour slow walk at the pace of the guides, to the first camp, known as Old Mosses Camp. Situated at 3,300m above sea level, acclimatisation and a poor night's sleep followed.

To avoid the midday sun we started walking early on day two uphill and down dale, we arrived at the Liki North Valley at 3,993m. It was raining all night, but exhaustion sent us to a sound sleep in our tents. The next day, we headed for our highest camp: Shipton Camp. Situated at 4,200m, we arrived for an early lunch before heading off for a much longer acclimatisation walk than on previous days. With another 800m to the top of the mountain we climbed the first 400m to give our bodies a taste of what was to come.

On day four we woke at 0200 for breakfast. After a little preparation, at 0312 we headed uphill towards Point Lenana in the pitch black. The path was steep and progress slow in the cold pre-dawn. After what seemed an age we finally reached Mt. Kenya at 0600 at an altitude of 4,985m. This allowed us to see the sun creep over the horizon as we soaked up the African vista.

Alas, a few group pictures later and we were heading back to Shipton's Camp to pick up our bergans to make our way back down to Sirimon Gate. After another six hours of walking, we finally arrived back at the Gate, where we got picked up by a truck arriving back at the JFEE camp at 1700.

Back in camp we faced many problems from Plant breakdowns to snake attacks but also found time for some sport and to complete some smaller community engagement tasks. One of these tasks was to build a cricket pitch for the Maasai cricket team, which, with a sporting edge, attached meant it would only be right to play the inaugural game against them! The link was then returned in September when on a tour to the UK the Maasai team were able to play us on our own ground; for the deciding match. All round a valuable exercise for the Squadron, and an amazing start to my Army career!

Exercise THREE PEAKS Challenge Gurkha Ways

By WO2(SSM) Govindabhadur Rana (Team Leader)

Ex THREE PEAKS CHALLENGE GURKHA WAYS is a charity event which was conducted over the weekend of 21-22 September 2013. The event was four members of the Queen's Gurkha Engineers to complete the national Three Peaks Challenge carrying a 25kg load in a bamboo basket (DOKO). The team completed the challenge in 26 hours and 35 minutes with the much needed support of a seven man strong team and the occasional cheer from a passer by. The aim of the event was to raise money for the Gurkha Welfare Trust and to promote the 200 years of Gurkhas serving in the British Army (Gurkha 200) which will be celebrated in 2015.

The national Three Peaks Challenge is conducted on the three highest mountains in Scotland, England and Wales: Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Snowdon respectively. It entails walking approximately 42km of trails, ascending 3,000 metres and driving 744km of roads between the peaks. The charity based challenge is normally completed within 24hrs, however, due to the DOKO (bamboo basket with 25kg load) the Ex THREE PEAKS CHALLENGE GURKHAS WAYS was planned to be completed in 36 hours.



Early morning on 20 September 2013, the team left Maidstone for the 13 hour journey to Fort William, Scotland. Once established in the Fort William Backpacker Hostel the team set about their final preparations of the DOKOs and the ICs issued their briefs before getting some much needed rest. At 0650 on Saturday 21 September 2013, the team stepped off on the challenge, starting the familiar route by crossing the foot bridge and crossing the car park of Ben Nevis Information Centre. It was a fantastic atmosphere; people asked so many questions like 'why are you carrying a basket' and 'what the numbers at the front and back mean?', which we do duly answered with the little extra breath we had. The numbers at the front and back were the original numbers that individuals were given during the central selection in Pokhara, Nepal. Those that didn't know that we were Gurkhas when they first saw us did by the time we had left them, allowing us to realise our second aim of promoting Gurkha 200. After a long but pleasant walk uphill the team reached the summit in three hours. After some important pictures, the team headed down to the transport, on the way passing a few hundred more climbers and well-wishers. Ben Nevis was finally completed in five hours and 25 minutes, an extremely good start to the challenge which was almost in line with a 24 hour finish. The support team was ready for our return and promptly sat us in the mini bus and supplied us with food before setting off for the Lake District and Scafell Pike without delay.

The team was made up from BRIMSTONE 42, a High Assurance Search Team who concluded their six and a half month deployment on Op HERRICK 17 in March 2013. The team was led by WO2 Govinda Bahadur Rana who had the idea to conduct a challenge in the UK to raise money for the Gurkha Welfare Trust. He set up the JustGiving and Facebook page to reach as many people and raise as much money as he could. During POTL, the team leader brought DOKOs, NAMLOs and KHAKANs from Nepal. After preparation of the DOKOs, which included a 25kg sandbag filled with pebbles from Dover beach, the team started their training around Maidstone. The magnitude of the Challenge was fully realised when during Summer Leave, the team managed to carry out recces on all three mountains. After some training and a final team selection meeting the team was made up with the following:

Participants:

- WO2(SSM) Govinda Bahadur Rana (Team IC and MLT)
- Cpl Rojan Rai (Team 2IC)
- LCpl Rajkumar Thapa
- Spr Rajendra Rai

Supporters:

- SSgt Subash Rai (IC Support and MLT)
- Sgt Chandra Pun (Photographer)
- LCpl Iswor Thapa (Driver)
- LCpl Basanta Gurung (Driver)
- Spr Siddha Gurung (Driver)
- Spr Ujjal Glan (Driver)
- Spr Nabindra Gurung (Driver)

The journey of 255 miles took seven hours due to a traffic incident so we arrived at Wasedale Head at 1915 in darkness. This darkness, along with poor visibility due to a low hanging mist meant an extremely difficult start to the second climb which required some scrambling carrying the 25kg DOKO supported by a NAMLO. with an aid of head torch in cold and windy weather. Despite the challenges of moving my torch light and the strong, cold wind it was a fantastic experience for everyone; testing navigation, resolve and physical strength. After a gruelling uphill climb the team finally reached the summit in two hours and 45 minutes before climbing down the treacherous steps from which they had come with countless trips and falls. Finally the team completed Scafell Pike in four hours and 45 minutes, returning to the resting members of the support crew in the early hours of Sunday 22 September 2013. The now well drilled crew had again prepared food and drink for the team so without delay the team set off for North Wales, hoping to catch some sleep prior to climbing Snowdon



After five hours and 15 minutes of driving, varying from sheep infested single track roads to an open M6, the team arrived at Pen-y-pass for the final leg. The team set off at 0525 on Sunday 22 September 2013 following the miner's tracks. Although it was still dark, the first part of the track was wide and the team made good progress until the foot of Snowdon, next to the Glaslyn. From this point onwards the climb was a pain for everyone. From the previous two climbs our bodies were tired, painful and stiff. After much scrambling with the DOKOs in the second part of the climb, the team finally reached the summit in two hours and 15 minutes. Despite another epic downhill track and clear fatigue the team kept their morale high and received encouragement from onlookers. Some people had been moving with the team from Ben Nevis and Scafell Pike on their own Three Peaks Challenge but most of them passed the team and the DOKOs for the first time. Right on cue the temperature rose and the sun came out just as the team arrived at the finish point at 0925.

The team finally completed Ex THREE PEAKS CHALLENGE GURKHA WAYS in 26 hours and 35 minutes, a record time for completing the Three Peaks Challenge carrying a 25kg load in a bamboo basket. The huge relief was clear to see with all of the team members, all participants could now feel a huge sense of achievement. With the support team now commencing the recovery phase, the team quickly stopped for big breakfast!!! at Bets-y-coed before commencing the long drive back to Maidstone.

As is so often the case with these events the pain and stiffness of the body remained for a few days but the sense of achievement along with the countless congratulations received from followers and well-wishers will be remembered for a long time to come. People know how difficult it is to organise and complete the Three Peaks Challenge but with the added burden of a 25kg DOKO, the effort required is multiplied ten fold. The team is still working hard to reach its target of raising £5,000 with Facebook, JustGiving and twitter still up and running along with using QGE events and word of mouth for further promotion. The team has now raised over £3,000 at the time of writing this article but there is still work to do. Please support the team by donating to the JustGiving page or by contacting the team using the means below. All support will go to the Gurkha Welfare Trust that enables Gurkha ex-servicemen and their dependants to live out their lives with dignity, primarily in Nepal but increasingly in UK and elsewhere.

Lastly, it was a huge privilege to get such an outstanding supporting team led by SSgt Subash Rai where photographer, Sgt Chandra Pun covered almost twice the distance of the route and Drivers extremely intent support throughout the challenge. In the last leg of the challenge, two young troop commanders joined the team which added an extra morale to finish. A huge thank you to the support team and sahebharu!!! The team would also like to take this opportunity to thank all donors who have donated money via JustGiving page or in person for this good cause and would also like to thank in advance all who are willing to support in near future.



Queen's Gurkha Signals

History

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 Royal 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 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, which date 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.

QG Signals Recent Operations

Iraq/Kuwait	OP GRANBY	January 1991
Turkey	OP RESINATE NORTH	May 1991 - April 2003
Balkans (Bosnia/Croatia)	OP GRAPPLE/RESOLUTE/PALATINE	April 1992 - April 2004
Saudi Arabia	OP JURAL	August 1992 - February 2003
Rwanda	OP GABRIEL	October 1994
Congo/Brazzaville	OP DETERMINANT	March - April 1997
Kuwait	OP RESINATE SOUTH	Nov 1997 - February 2003
East Timor	OP LANGAR	October - December 1999
Macedonia/Kosovo	OP AGRICOLA	March 1999 - 2002
Sierra Leone	OP BASILICAS/SILKMAN	June 2000 - August 2002
USA	OP VERITAS	October 2001 - Ongoing
Ivory Coast	OP ORACLE	2002
Afghanistan	OP SAPPHIRE/FINGLE	February - Sep 2002
UK	OP FLAK	April 2003
UK	OP MEDWAY/BASILISK	2000 - 2005
Iraq/Kuwait/Qatar	OP TELIC/GRIMES	March 2003 - August 2009
Kosovo	OP MERCIAN	March - April 2004
Afghanistan	OP HERRICK	October 2004 - May 2005
Lebanon/Cyprus	OP HIGHBROW	July - August 2006
Afghanistan	OP HERRICK	August 2010 - January 2011
Italy	OP ELLAMY	April - Nov 2011
Libya	OP ELLAMY	April - Nov 2011
UK	OP OLYMPIC	July - August 2012
Afghanistan	OP HERRICK	November 2012 - May 2013
Somalia	OP BACKWELL	October 2012 - Ongoing
Afghanistan	OP JanuaryA	April - Sep 2013

The organizations and units which currently comprise Queen's Gurkha Signals
Regimental Headquarters Queen's Gurkha Signals (Bramcote)

246 Gurkha Signal Squadron	(York)
248 Gurkha Signal Squadron	(MOD Stafford)
250 Gurkha Signal Squadron	(Bramcote)
11 (RSS) Signal Regiment	(Blandford)
Brunei Signal Troop	(Brunei)
Nepal Signal Troop	(Nepal)
Alpha Troop 217 Signal Squadron	(MOD Stafford)

Also personnel are serving in RMA Sandhurst, Gurkha Coy/Language Development Wing ITC Catterick, 15 Sig Regt, 18 (UKSF) Sig Regt, HQ Sp Comd, HQ Brunei Gar, RSME, HQ BGN, HQ DG Cap, EPISKOSPI Cyprus, BGSU and 11 EOD Regt.

Affiliated Corps:	The Royal Corps of Signals
Affiliated Regiment:	32nd (Scottish) Signal Regiment (Volunteers)
Regimental March Past:	Scotland The Brave

Staff List

Colonel of the Regiment

Maj Gen NAW Pope CBE

British Officers of the Regiment

Lt Col N M Stokoe OBE	Comd	RHQ QG Signals
Maj M Barratt	OC	246 Gurkha Signal Squadron
Maj S Smith	OC	248 Gurkha Signal Squadron
Maj J Malcolm	OC	250 Gurkha Signal Squadron
Capt H R Ayres	Ops Offr	246 Gurkha Signal Squadron
Lt P C Rowland	Ops Offr	248 Gurkha Signal Squadron
Capt S M Watts	SO3 G6	HQ Brunei Garrison
Lt MT Kearney	Tp Comd	246 Gurkha Signal Squadron
Lt C J Gordon	Tp Comd	246 Gurkha Signal Squadron
Lt A J Morphet	Tp Comd	248 Gurkha Signal Squadron
2Lt R J Griffiths	Tp Comd	248 Gurkha Signal Squadron
Lt J Fraser	Tp Comd	250 Gurkha Signal Squadron
2Lt P S Limbrick	Tp Comd	250 Gurkha Signal Squadron

Gurkha Officers of the Regiment

Maj Yambahadur Rana	Gurkha Major	RHQ QG Signals
Capt Ganeshbahadur Gurung	Gurkha Adjutant	RHQ QG Signals
Capt Ambar Gurung	RCMO	RHQ QG Signals
Capt Lokbahadur Gurung	2IC	246 Gurkha Signal Squadron
Capt Teshar January Gurung	Outgoing 2IC	248 Gurkha Signal Squadron
Capt Amritkumar Gurung	2IC	248 Gurkha Signal Squadron
Capt Omprashad Pun	2IC	250 Gurkha Signal Squadron
Capt Hebindra Pun	OC DST	11 (RSS) Signal Regiment
Capt Kedar Rai	OC 3 Sqn	11 (RSS) Signal Regiment
Capt Shankar Gurung	OC	Brunei Signal Troop
Capt Rajeev Shrestha	OC	Nepal Signal Troop
Capt Surendrakumar Gurung	Tp Comd	248 Gurkha Signal Squadron
Capt Bharat Shrestha	Tp Comd	250 Gurkha Signal Squadron
Capt Dhirbahadur Khokaja Pun	Tp Comd	217 Signal Squadron
Capt Nimbahadur Garbuja Pun	Pl Comd	Gurkha Coy, ITC Catterick
Capt Vishal Pun	Tp Comd	246 Gurkha Signal Squadron
Capt Rupkumar Gurung	Tp Comd	250 Gurkha Signal Squadron

Gurkha Officers holding E1/E2 Appointments

Maj	Hitman Gurung MVO	AMA Defence Sect	British Embassy Nepal
Maj	Dhanbahdur Gurung MVO	BGSU 2IC	Blandford Garrison
Maj	Nirmalkumar Bhattachan	Snr Instr	Comd Sp Branch RSME
Maj	Narayanbahadur Bhandari MVO	Station QM	Episkopi Cyprus
Maj	Buddhibahadur Gurung SO2	IS Plan	HQ Sp Comd
Maj	Prembahadur Ale	QM	15 Signal Regiment
Maj	Tolbahadur Khamcha	2IC	RMA Sandhurst Support Unit
Maj	Purna Gurung	SO2 GI/SSO	HQ Brunei Garrison

Colonel of the Regiment's Notes

By Major General N A W Pope CBE

For much of the last two years I have ploughed on a commuter train to London, a two hour 'door to door' experience which now is thankfully in the past. But the daily grind did at least reconnect me with the joy of literature...

My current read is *A Child at Arms* by Patrick Davies. The author was posted towards the end of the Second World War as a 'hostilities only' officer to a veteran Gurkha battalion. 4/8th Gurkha Rifles had 'fought for about as long as troops can fight and remain a recoverable unit' during the desperate campaigns in Burma as part of General Bill Slim's 'Forgotten Army'. The narrative talks to the fears, triumphs, discomforts and tragedies attendant on battle. It also provides a rare insight on the relationship between the British officer and the Gurkha volunteer, and of the insidious drain on stamina and courage that all men face during prolonged exposure to battle.

I was particularly struck by the following passage in which the author talks about serving with Gurkhas:

I knew that I was glad to be in this situation with Gurkhas. Identification with them was complete, unclouded by the smallest doubt that I might be happier elsewhere. It was always a pleasure, and often a joy to be among them. They possessed many good qualities, and two which for me made them unique.

*First, they had an apparently inexhaustible fund of **humour**. This was not subtle, but contained a quick sense of the ridiculous that spared no one, neither their Colonel, nor themselves nor me. I found Gurkha humour, with its cheerful deflation of the pompous, endlessly refreshing. It was good for all of us. None of us could forget that he was a fallible human being. None of us could dwell on a personal misery for long. None could escape from the developed Gurkha art of mimicry.*

*Second, Gurkhas were **honest**. In a world where grand and petty larceny were habitual, distortion of the truth and self-deceit commonplace, the honesty of Gurkhas seemed unique. This honesty was a quality of mind that permeated all of their actions and reactions, a natural integrity, an inborn frankness. Gurkhas were quick to detect hypocrisy; they scorned equivocation,*

despised perversion of the truth. It was easy to command such people. It was a privilege to be allowed to do so. Living with them sharpened one's own character.

*To humour and honesty must be added **courage** (the quality that Gurkhas themselves prize most highly), **loyalty** and **toughness**. Some Gurkhas had more courage than others as you would expect; all of them had a great reservoir of it.*

*As for **loyalty** this has to be earned. We were loyal to our men and, in this giving of loyalty, earned theirs. It was a natural process for me, for we were encouraged by every means to take care of our soldiers, and this always seemed to me the only justification for being a regimental officer.*

*The **toughness** of the Gurkha race is well known. They led a tough life in their homes which well fitted them for the hardships of active service. They could march fast and far, and dig hard at the end of the day.*

Fast forward 70 years, and after a decade of the British Army campaigning in Afghanistan, I am struck by how little has changed 'at the cliff edge' of human emotions. Yes, technology has moved on apace. Yes, the Terms and Conditions of Service within the Brigade have matured immeasurably. And yes, our perceptions about what is 'right' and what is 'wrong' are studied through a different lens. But I think that the qualities that Patrick Davies identified are still as important today as they were in Burma some three generations ago. If we stick by them, I think that the Regiment, and our soldiers in it, will continue to prosper.

On a separate note I want to highlight one weekend this year which meant a great deal to me. The Regimental Birthday in Bramcote was a splendid affair. It culminated in the closure of a unique chapter in our history as Andrew Carter and Paddy Verdon decided to hang up their boots after a long and distinguished of unparalleled service to the Regiment and Association. Their contribution has been enormous; the friendship valued by one and all; and their sage advice will be sorely missed. Jai Paddy; Jai Andrew.

On the following day, and with slightly heavy heads, a few of us travelled to Harrow Football Club in London for the Regimental Birthday Mark 2. I did not really know what to expect. What I certainly did not anticipate was that I would be greeted by some 300 ex-members of the Regiment and their families, who had travelled from the far flung corners of the country (well, York, Colchester and Aldershot) to celebrate our special day. For me this was special. This was the ultimate trip down memory lane. I dug deep into my memory banks to put names to faces of characters - some of whom I had not seen since the mid 1980s in Gun Club in Kowloon. After much gaff saph, some of us gathered on stage for an 'Alpha Troop 248' reunion photograph. I did not realise at the time that the Troop consisted of over 100 personnel! If anyone has a copy of the photo, I would dearly love to have a copy!

So as the serving Regiment continues to forge its own identity in the Army of the twenty-first century, I am delighted that we now have a firm Gurkha foundation in the United

Kingdom upon which we can build with confidence. I am more convinced than ever before that our future is secure.

My wife Jo and our numerous offspring join me in sending all members of the Regiment, serving and retired, our deep affection and very best wishes for the coming year.

Jai Queen's Gurkha Signals

Nick

After Note: It is with regret that Major General R Benbow CB died on 09 January 2014 after a short illness. He served with distinction for three tours in Queens' Gurkha Signals; for his final tour he was Comd Gurkha Signals, Comd R SIGNALS and CO 27 Sig Regt from October 1972 to March 1975. He went on to serve as the Commandant of the School of Signals, as the Signal Officer in Chief (Army), was Colonel of the Regiment from 1985 to 1989 and was awarded CB in 1985.

Commanders Newsletter

Returning to Queen's Gurkha Signals has been a particular joy. Since first joining the Regiment in 1994, much has changed. Not least of which that my ex Tp Sgt and ex Tp Cpl are both Majors! Over these 19 years, the Regiment has gone through considerable change. QG SIGNALS has reduced to a Squadron and then continued to expand to an establishment that includes three Field Squadrons, training elements Blandford and Catterick as well as Troops in Brunei and Nepal. Finally a recent edition of ten posts with 18 (UKSF) Signal Regiment, gives our soldiers the opportunity to serve with Special Forces and the Regiment to grow a cadre of such personnel within its ranks. In short therefore times have been hard, but the future is one of great opportunity for those remaining.

The Regiment continues to excel and whilst it retained neither Nepal Cup nor TRAILWALKER, it has competed across the piece. It remains operationally committed, with 246 returning from Afghanistan in the summer and elements of 250 and 248 deployed in support of contingent operations in Africa and the Levant.

Manning and Redundancy

The Regiment is now 522 strong including 22 recruits in Bramcote and will reduce to its A2020 establishment of 481 strong including 18 x ReM figures over the next year. T3 redundancy hit the Regiment hard with some 31 personnel selected for redundancy. Fortunately for some there has been the opportunity to transfer, either to R SIGNALS or to the wider Army, whilst for others the transition to civilian life is continuing apace and their future welfare remains at the forefront of RHQ's mind.

Promotion

It has been an excellent year for promotion in the Regiment. With an increase in WO2 liability, so comes a requirement for more to be promoted to fill these posts and the space behind. As a result, there have been 100 promotions this year; Capts Om and Ganesh's promotions to Major were 99 & 100 respectively. Such pull through requires a career model much more like that of UKTAP soldiers and RHQ's major task from me is to ensure that we understand how this will look and what is required to implement it by summer 2014.

Regimental Updates 246 Gurkha Signal Squadron

246 Gurkha Signal Squadron deployed to man and run the HICSSS in September 2012 for a period of six months. During this deployment the Squadron achieved a 99.5% availability of Communication Information Services throughout Helmand and successfully conducted 13 Base Closures setting the conditions for the upcoming withdrawal. The Squadron also completed nine major projects and 281 Requests for Changes. Since returning to the UK in May, 246 Gurkha Signal Squadron has conducted multi-activity Adventure Training in Wales and trekking in the USA. The Squadron has also supported Race the Sun, the Lanyard Trophy and was the lead Squadron for training and team selection of the Regimental TRAILWALKER team this year. Currently re-rolling from a Campaign Signal Regiment to a Multi Role Signal Regiment (MRSR), the Squadron will commence Hybrid Foundation Training to prepare for worldwide deployments from December 2014.

248 Gurkha Signal Squadron

248 Gurkha Signal Squadron have completed another demanding year in support of HQ ARRC and contingency operations. Principally focussed on the delivery of FALCON as a viable ICS capability in support of ARRC exercises in Cornwall and Corsica. In addition, the mission configurable communications equipment 'Magpie' has been developed as a Defence Wide capability. We now have a number of SMEs who have been heavily relied upon to train a number of R SIGNALS units which included 30 Signal Regiment and 3 (UK) Div Signal Regiment. These same SMEs deployed to support JFHQ deployments to Cyprus over the summer period as well. Such practice and deployments enable the Squadron to consider itself well placed to continue developing and delivering the Regimental ICS capability.

250 Gurkha Signal Squadron

Whilst the Main Effort for 250 Gurkha Signal Squadron, this year, has been the successful introduction of Falcon into Service, the Squadron has supported operations in Somalia, Tampa (USA) and Afghanistan. At this time there remain individuals deployed in Somalia and Afghanistan. Additionally, the Squadron continues to provide ICS Headquarters to the Air Assault Task Force and the Aviation Task Force, maintaining the contingent capability that will become ever more important as HERRICK draws down. The next challenge for the Squadron is to take on board another brand new ICS system in the form of Magpie thereby underlining their new role which has been set as the Mission Configurable ICS Squadron within 30 Signal Regiment.

RSS Blandford

A great year for the Blandford Camp Gurkha Community personnel has seen continued to achieve excellence in trade and military training courses with many achieving the top student award. Our permanent staff have been equally impressive in their delivery of top quality instruction across the board by utilising previous trade experience and newly acquired skills as a result of Evidence Based Training. Soldiers continue to support the local community and various charity events in support of Army Benevolent Fund and Gurkha Welfare Trust.

Brunei Signal Troop

Brunei Signal Troop continues to deliver a robust and reliable CIS Support to British Forces Brunei Garrison. The CS Engineers have been particularly busy maintaining the Defence Communication Network (DCN) 021 which remains the main communication network connecting Brunei with the rest of the world. In addition Brunei Signal Troop personnel have deployed on overseas exercises and taken part in the Tokyo marathon and adventure training activities in the Philippines.

Nepal Signal Troop

Nepal Signal Troop continues to deliver reliable and robust CIS/ICS throughout Nepal; to principal population centres as well as some 18 AWCs across the country.

A technically busy, complex and satisfying year, the Troop played a prominent role in the installation of the Long awaited, DII (F) in HQ BGN, Kathmandu and VSAT terminal with Promina node at BG Pokhara. HF radio replacement project has been successful with the arrival of 25 x new HF ICOM radio sets to replace old and ageing CODAN, ORION and BARETT radios. Another project to join BGK and BGP with fibre optic cable is at the end stage, with further improvements planned for 2014.

Alpha Troop, 217 Signal Squadron

Alpha Troop has been extremely busy over the past 12 months providing NATO ICS at High Readiness and on exercise in support of HQ 16 AA Bde as part of NATO Response Force (NRF) and Air Assault Task Force (AATF). During this hectic period the Troop also assumed the responsibility for introducing the Magpie system into service. The Troop was also heavily involved in a series of ARRC ICS exercises on Ex ARRCAD WARRIOR, CHARGER and FUSION. It is anticipated that the Troop will maintain similar level of tempo in the future.

Sporting Success

This year saw personnel from the Regiment taking part in AT activities in Nepal, USA, Peru, Philippines, various parts of Europe and the Tokyo marathon. Whilst our shooting teams (30 Sig Regt) wiped the board on the Theatre Troops Operational Shooting competition (formerly known as CORPSAAM) the Regiment teams were not as successful as in the previous years at Army Operational Shooting competition. It is the intention of the Regiment to compete with vigour and determination next year to regain our rightful place at the top of the rostrum. This year's TRAILWALKER was highly successful in the organisation and in conduct our teams competed fiercely and were narrowly beaten by a strong QOGLR team (there were just seven mins separating 1st and 2nd place). We fielded a Regiment team (entirely made up of members of 250 Gurkha Signal Squadron) in the Lanyard Trophy for the first time and finished credible overall fifth position and we plan to enter the event with more preparation next year. The Nepal cup team narrowly lost in the semis to the eventual winners 2 RGR this year. The Regiment has the strength and depth to be crowned again therefore planning is underway in earnest and it will be my top priority for next year. In boxing, during a match between 3 (UK) Div HQ & Signal Regiment and 30 Signal Regiment, LCpl Mabin Gurung, LCpl Sul Pun and Sig Arjun Limbu put on an excellent performance on the night. Sig Arjun won in his weight category.

Social and Charity

It would be impossible to talk about social events and not mention this year's Dashain party. At final count, some 700 people attended and it was the best party I have seen in nearly 20 years. The Col of the Regt has already mentioned the dining out of Cols Andrew and Paddy; that evening was a particular success with the Verdon-Carter trophy presented for the first time. It will now be an annual presentation to the Sgt or SSgt judged to have been the best Senior NCO in the Regiment. The inaugural recipient was SSgt Jagatram Rai. Charity was dominated by TRAILWALKER as ever. The weather was kinder to us (although the evening rain was horrendous), with most competitors finishing dry for once. Attendance was down as some thought that last year's cancellation, due to OLYMPICS, represented the end of its' running. However a total

of more than £1 million was still raised and we look forward to full participation next year.

Summary

In my first six months as Commander, I have seen much that reminds me of the unique place that the Regiment occupies in R SIGNALS, the Bde of Gurkhas, and the wider Army. We are growing our links with the past too and will improve upon our attendance at the Harrow 'bhela' this year. It is therefore a positive message that reflects upon 2013 and takes us into 2014. Our new structures have ensured a bright future for the Regiment and we look forward to it eagerly.

Jai Queen's Gurkha Signals

Reflecting Back Whilst Looking Forward!

Maj Yam Bahadur Rana Gurkha Major QG Signals

Before I write a short note about the regiment in the current context I thought it would be prudent to reflect how it all started as we are approaching 200 years of loyal service to the Crown. Much has been written about Gurkhas, not by themselves but by either independent writers or by British officers who work closely and, in most cases, commanded them. There are various types of written records ranging from Regimental newsletters to personal memoirs to books written by researchers and admirers of Gurkhas. To understand a Gurkha we have to go back to our roots deep into the villages across the country from where they Gurkhas are recruited. The life they live and hardship they endure in daily basis make them physically tough and simplest of minds in their behaviours. Much has changed demographically in the recent years that more people are flocking to the towns as Nepal has not been left alone by Globalisation through mass media. The challenge now therefore is whether the present generation can uphold the values and the traditions that our ancestors thrived upon that inspired affection and found special place in the British hearts. Present Gurkha soldier requires a combination of physical toughness and intelligence to understand the wider context to adapt in modern western society. In QG SIGNALS we require educated soldiers to learn and use complex technical skills in a finite period of time. Physically, recruit selection is rigorous as ever with renowned "doko race" which invariably differentiates men from the boys. However education is also just as important part without which modern Gurkha soldiers will struggle to adapt to the training and the technologies in the present 'high tech' western society. Therefore a balance has to be struck.

Both my father and grandfather were First and Second World War veterans. When I was growing up I used to ask my father about his experiences in the Army especially during Second World War. He used to describe how he travelled from Bombay, fought through Middle East and North Africa into

Italy, as part of the 8th Army, where he was seriously injured. When they joined the British/Indian Army they were unaware that war was in progress. They had to walk for days to the Indian border town of Sunauli before getting onto any form of motorised transport to reach recruiting depot Gorakhpur yet acceptance into the Army was not guaranteed although the chances are higher than now; after all there was war going on. Strength of the Brigade, as you can imagine, was much higher than what it is now due to the demand. My father and grandfather were, in fact, very lucky they returned home albeit severely injured but many of their comrades did not make it back. It is to them who we owe our deepest gratitude that we have the opportunity to serve to this day. You only have to visit the cemeteries in various parts of Italy, Burma, France, Belgium and Turkey to understand how young and oblivious they were of wider context of the war yet they made the ultimate sacrifice. The tally for VC recipients is 13 for Gurkhas but had they been awarded before the First World War, I assume, the number definitely would be much higher.

The challenge is different now to make our ancestors proud and secure a place for the next generation as the battlefields are different and we live in a completely different world to that of last World Wars. Present day warfare is to counteract asymmetric attacks where the enemies could be everywhere especially by the threat posed by terrorism and rogue nations. Recent cases in Afghanistan reminded us that enemies could be living amongst us, within the barracks, in an out of area environment where enemy infiltration is easier. We all agree that it would be much easier to fight a visible enemy. For us the most important thing is to be operationally effective, at our best, at all times which is the key to maintaining our status quo. It has been very difficult for the Bde to justify our existence in the time of global recession and downsizing of the British Army under SDSR. There are other factors that will affect our future

but they are out of our hands therefore we can only focus on what is within our control. We must not forget the past that taught us valuable lessons. One that comes to mind is adaptability and integration. Our forefathers were recruited from the hills of Nepal and served all over the world during two world wars and many battles before that. They had to adapt to the new environment, language, climates and people that was so strange to their system and that has not changed for us either. We should, in fact, be better at it as we have the opportunity to attend school and college before joining unlike our forefathers. Nepal is not an isolated country as was 50/60 years ago. History tells us that education was only for elite few in Kathmandu in those times which is not the case now although the quality may differ.

Last couple of years has been particularly difficult for the BG due to redundancy. Our culture is such that it is a job for life for us, and there is much expectation from the family for us to do well. My father used to tell me his friends who went to join the Army, but rejected, did not return to their villages but disappeared in the vast Indian subcontinent for years not telling their families where they were. Returning to villages meant letting the family down which they could not bear. To certain extent it applies to this day. The Gurkha household mindset is different therefore I feel for those young soldiers who were recently made redundant. It is tough to find any employment in Nepal; almost non-existent for a growing workforce. The economy of Nepal primarily survives on remittances from more than two million migrant workers abroad. In this climate getting a place in the British Army is a huge prize therefore the expectation of the families is no less. Having said that, situation and opportunity now is better compared to that of Hong Kong and Malaya redundancy days. I remember Hong Kong during the drawdown and many of my colleagues were made redundant but they had no job prospect. Almost all of the welfare pensioners in Nepal now are redundees from Malaya in the 60s and 70s.

In this climate of global recession and economic downturn MoD has not been spared and we have to share the burden; redundancy was forced upon us. Many historic British Regiments have been disbanded despite outcry from the public and, I think, they were tough decisions. The BG and its units are under severe pressure to bring the Brigade's number down to 2,475 from 3,398.

Compared to most of the BG units QG SIGNALS has done well in terms of retaining current structure and strength of the Regiment in the climate of cuts and rationalisation. Three field squadrons are embedded into three R SIGNALS Regiments and a Troop each in Brunei and Nepal. The hard work invested over the years integrating fully into R SIGNALS may have been taken into consideration whilst making decisions. Our soldiers and the officers have proved time and again our operational effectiveness delivering the highest standard of Communication and Information Services on operations as well as to the 1 and 3 Star Headquarters.

Things would have been different if the trust had not been won over the years. Establishing first Gurkha squadron in 1990 as part of 30 Sig Regt was seen as a monumental challenge then. However after deployment of Gurkha signallers during 1st Gulf war, this quashed any doubt on the ability of our soldiers as communicators in the forefront. The Regt never looked back and recently many operational deployments as a Squadron or detachments have cemented the trust of the hierarchy.

As I write, three field squadrons are fulfilling very important responsibilities delivering CIS capabilities. 246 Sqn, having returned from recent Op deployment, is restructuring for Multi role signal squadron. They will deploy soldiers to BATUK, BFSAI and to enduring Afghanistan footprint in the near future. 248 Squadron has been given a role to support ARRC headquarters. They have been stood up for NRF high readiness role for ARRC for 2013. 250 Squadron has been given the responsibility of introducing FALCON into service, a very important task that is the future of secure trunk communication in the Army and the RAF. It is also undergoing restructuring to become the configurable ICS squadron.

Both 248 and 250 will use the latest technology equipment MAGPIE and FALCON where 246 will also have Bowman and FALCON under its role. It goes to show there is much to look forward in the coming years in terms of tasks and type of equipment that our soldiers will get their hands-on. Our soldiers continue to get high grades in trade and military trainings in School of Signals, Blandford. However it is felt that we may have to invest time to revise our military skills at times to prepare our soldiers for CLM courses. Whilst we are continuously getting top student accolades in those courses we occasionally get strugglers especially on BCCS phase which we are addressing now with additional pre-training before attending the course.

Brunei and Nepal Signal Troops are delivering sterling service of delivering information and communication services to BFB and BGN respectively. Challenges in the future is that as technologies advance, some of the current tasks are less manpower intensive. However we have taken this as an opportunity to refine services we provide to both locations.

Arguably, there is no unit in the BG more integrated to the British Regiments than QG SIGNALS. In addition to three field squadrons embedded into three different R SIGNALS field units, we also have smaller detachments integrated into the R SIGNALS units in 11 and 18 Sig Regts. We are currently established for 2+18 in 11 Sig Regt where most of them are filling instructor posts. There are 10 posts in 18 Sig Regt under A2020 where there are our three SF qualified signallers currently employed. We are sending more soldiers for the SFC selection course in the future and the aim is to qualify as many as possible. Recent announcement of retention of "A" troop in 217 Sqn in 22 Sig Regt has positive impact on T4 redundancy. In addition to this we have a soldier in 11 EOD Regt who is currently deployed on Ops. Until recently we had a SNCO in DHU where he was qualified as the advance agent handler

who worked with them for 5 years. This shows the versatility of our soldiers across the piece not only on communication field which is necessary in the current climate. This is good not only for the Regiment but for the Brigade.

Challenge now is not limited on the battlefields but in the barracks and in the training environment to shape Gurkha soldiers for the 21st century asymmetric warfare. This includes combat support roles of Engineering, Communication and Logisticians where the half of the Bde is spread. We should be proud of our history and march forward in the future keeping our unique identity and reputation. Nepalis, wherever they are, must be reminded every now and again that there are only three things that put Nepal in the world map; Mt Everest, Birthplace of Buddha and the Gurkhas. And the latter is the most important as the reputation is built through sheer hard work and then history was written in true Gurkha blood.

To sum up, I recall a quote from Dalai Lama; “**open your arms for change but do not let go of your values.**” We need to be agile mentally and physically to survive in new environment but must not forget our roots, tradition, ethos and values that our ancestors taught us over the years which has been a mantra for our success. Modern day Gurkha soldier need to be innovative, intelligent and smart and understand mission command and achieve desired operational effect through the application of Gurkha KAIDA; a key ingredient of a true Gurkha soldier. The meaning encapsulated by the word KAIDA is immense but its simple meaning is the way things are done. Gurkha KAIDA is the way things are to be conducted in the true tradition of the Gurkhas. Loyalty, hard work, commitment and dedication are synonymous to Gurkha therefore they are, I would say, what makes up Gurkha KAIDA. Once truly embraced it will help us achieve the professional superiority then the current Brigade slogan - **no one is quite like us** - will be justifiably true.

QGS TRAILWALKER - 2013

By Sgt Bharatmani Chongbang Limbu

Trailwalker UK 2013 took place across the South Downs Way trails over the period 26 - 28 July 2013. The trail is from Queen Elizabeth Park, Petersfield, to Brighton with stunning panoramic views across to the channel. Trailwalker is a 100 kilometre walk/run for teams of four people, civilians and military, with a 30-hour time limit. The fastest time so far, recorded by a Gurkha team, is 9 hours 50 minutes.

246 Gurkha Signal Squadron (GSS) was tasked to conduct Trailwalker training for potential runners from different squadrons and select the best two teams to take part and attempt to be the winning team this year. With that in mind the squadron focussed on co-ordinating three phases of training starting with identifying individual runners from each unit. The second phase consisted of squadron level centralised training with local Physical Training Instructors to bring everyone up to standard. Phase three was ‘Ex SOUTHERN TRAIL 2013’ which

was conducted in various training locations in and around England over the period 01 June - 24 July 2013.

The first week of the centralised training was held in York/Catterick training area which gave the runners a foundation to progress further. Under the strict supervision by two PTIs, **LCpl Nirmal Rai** and **Sig Kiran Limbu**, 18 runners commenced their training with a gentle 12 km run on the local route in York. This was followed by progressive runs in Catterick where the routes consisted of rugged terrain, steady uphill and downhill and overgrown tracks.

Weeks two and three of the training in Cannock Chase, Stafford and South Downs Way trails were the crucial part of the training which gave us a clear indication for selecting teams for a further four weeks training on the actual route. At this stage, because of the intense endurance workouts,



QG Signals Team A and B at the Start Point

a couple of runners sustained minor injuries and joined the support crew. With two spare, ten strong elite runners formed Queen's Gurkha Signals team A and B and moved on to do more concentrated training on the South Downs Way route.

The two teams with the support crew spent almost five consecutive weeks in Fort Block House, Gosport, completing every checkpoint twice in South Downs Way in order to complete the training. Every day the runners carried out a routine run, alternating between a 20 km run and a short recovery run. Fortunately no one picked up any injury during the 55 km final 'acid test' run in which the team built a solid confidence in them to achieve the best results.

After a hard earned week of rest, the QG Signals Teams faced the ultimate moment of truth - the Trailwalker event itself! With the mighty and inspiring speech from the dignitaries from both QG Signals and Oxfam UK, followed by an undulating sound of the horn, the race for the fast runners began at 0800. QG Signals Team A led from the start up to checkpoint seven but unfortunately one of the team members picked up a knee injury in between checkpoints 6 and 7. He had to drop out, leaving no option but for QG Signals Team 'B' to follow QOGLR team who were four minutes ahead of them. QG Signals Team

'B' led by **Sig Pratikcha Chamling** tried their best to counter attack the leading team and never gave up till the end. However heat, blister, exhaustion and endless pain came up against their will and shattered their hope of reaching first at the finishing line. While both QG Signals Team A and Team B crossed the finishing line at the same time proudly displaying the regimental flag, they received a hero's welcome. With a tremendous effort, both mental and physical determination from runners and a sterling performance from the support teams, QG Signals Team 'B' managed to bag the prestigious second place out of 500 teams (more than 2,000 runners) shortly after QOGLR team finishing the line.

2IC, 246 GSS **Capt Lokbahadur Gurung** and **Sgt Bharatmani Limbu** were responsible for selecting the best two teams from Queen's Gurkha Signals this year. The team would not have achieved this success without the help and financial support from RHQ QG Signals and the squadrons. On behalf of QG Signals Trailwalker Team, I would like to convey my gratitude to them. I am going to end this by borrowing a quote from GM Sahib 'Never mind guys, there is always next time'. We are already focussing on how to win next year.

'Jai Queen's Gurkha Signals'

QGS 64th Birthday Celebration & Association Dinner Night

By SSgt (SQMS) Gyanendra Rai

Queen's Gurkha Signals, with a historic lineage beginning from Malaya, celebrated its 64th Regimental Birthday on Saturday 21st September 2013 at Gamecock Barracks, the home of Queen's Gurkha Signals.

As in previous years, the Regiment formed up at the main parade square under Gurkha Adjutant, Capt Ganesh Gurung. Families, Association members and guests were also present to celebrate the special occasion. In absence of the Colonel of the Regiment, Maj Gen NAW Pope CBE, Commander QG SIGNALS, Lt Col N M Stokoe took the parade.

The birthday speech, "By your badge men shall know you. By your loyalty, by your behaviour, and by your technical skill, they will judge you as men, and measure your efficiency as soldiers..." which was read by the then Major General Brigade of Gurkhas, Maj Gen Perowne CB, CBE on the occasion of Cap Badging Ceremony, was read out in English and Nepali by OC 250 Gurkha Sig Sqn, Maj J Malcolm and GM QG SIGNALS, Maj Yambahadur Rana respectively. This was followed by the cake cutting ceremony and the Regimental annual awards. The following awards were then presented to the proud recipients in recognition of their outstanding performances throughout the year:

The Best All Round Performance of the Year	Sig Deephan Limbu
The Best Sportsman of the Year	Sig Pratikcha Rai
The Best Shot of the Year	Sig Pradeep Gurung
The Best Piper of the Year	LCpl Omprakash Limbu
The Best Trainee of the Year	Sig Radin Rai

The whole parade concluded with a fascinating display from the Regimental Pipes and Drums and an inspiring speech by Commander QG SIGNALS highlighting the major achievements of the Regiment over the past months, the importance of maintaining our 'Kaida' and the challenges that lies ahead for the Regiment.



Comd and GM QG SIGNALS assisting Mrs Stokoe in cutting the Regimental 64th Birthday cake

The second phase of the day was even more eventful as the soldiers and their families took part in various sporting activities that included Inter-Squadron Football, Basketball, Volleyball, Tug of War competition and potted sports for the ladies and children. It was a very intense and exciting competition where the Champion Squadron was only decided by the final pull of Tug of War. After a gruelling and pulsating match, 246 Gurkha Signal Squadron came out victorious as the Champion Squadron for 2013. This was followed by medals and Champion Trophy presentation to the winning teams.

Later in the evening, the Queen's Gurkha Signals Association Dinner was held in the Officers' Mess in the presence of the Colonel of the Regiment, Maj Gen N A W Pope CBE. It was



Inter Sqn Sports. 250 Gurkha Sig Sqn Tug of War Team giving their best

a splendid evening to meet and greet so many 'buros' (retired members) still enthusiastic about the Regiment and eager to meet their old and new friends. Their dedication and loyalty is a perfect example for all to see which has never faded with time. The evening also included yet more awards presentations; the Manning WO, WO2 Madan Rai was presented with GOC Sp Comd Commendation for his outstanding work as an Assistant Welfare Officer during his last post in HQ BG Nepal and Sgt Jagatram Rai was awarded with the very first 'Best All Round Performance WOs and SNCOs Award' (Verdon & Carter Trophy) for his outstanding contribution to the Regiment throughout the year.

As a whole, it was a very successful day where the serving and retired members and the families of the Regiment appeared to be even more committed with stronger dedication to move ahead together for the benefit and betterment of the Regiment and the Brigade as a whole. Long may this continue!

'Jai QG Signals'

Attestation

By Sgt Rajkumar Gurung (Trainees IC SNCO)

Long Service & Good Conduct Medal and Commissioning Parade 2013

After successful completion of nine months hard and arduous basic military training, followed by another two months Basic Signalling Skills Phase, the attestation parade for 22 QG SIGNALS Trainees Intake 2013 took place on Friday, 13 December 2013 at Gamecock Barracks, Bramcote.

I must say, we were lucky to have the reasonable weather in comparison to the previous full rehearsal day where we were soaked through the rain. All the VIPs, spectators, soldiers and their families across the Regiment were waiting eagerly to witness the parade which commenced at 1045. The parade RSM, WO2 (SSM) Khagendrakumar Pun reported to the parade

commander, Capt Ganeshbahadur Gurung, Gurkha Adjutant who then waited for the arrival of the Colonel of the Regiment.

Upon arrival, the Colonel of the Regiment Maj Gen N A W Pope CBE took the salute from the parade commander. The trainees then march smartly forward in groups of three and took oath by placing their hands on the Regimental Flag in the presence of the Colonel of Regiment, Commander QG SIGNALS, Lt Col N Stokoe and Gurkha Major, Maj Yambahadur Rana. This year Long Service and Good Conduct medals were presented to Sgt Nirakal Gurung and Sgt Netra Rai for their 15 Years of Loyal Services. The Colonel of the Regiment and

Gurkha Major then officially commissioned Capt Vishal Pun and Capt Rupkumar Gurung.

Although small in size, the QG SIGNALS Pipes and Drums put on an excellent display and kept everyone entertained throughout the parade. The Colonel of the Regiment gave an inspiring speech and welcomed all the new Trainees into the Regiment and congratulated them as well. He also wished them all the best for their new careers and said that they are the future of QG SIGNALS. The parade then concluded with the March Pass in-column of route by the attestation party who were later praised by all for their smart, swift and outstanding drill.

After group photograph, Commander QG SIGNALS, Lt Col N Stokoe, announced the trade allocation result to the Trainees. The trade allocation was carried out purely on the basis of individuals' best performance and potential identified during Induction Training. This year, out of 22 Trainees, 9 were selected as Communication System Engineers, 9 as Communication System Operators and 4 as Royal Signals Electricians. The day ended with delicious Gurkha Curry lunch in the Regimental gymnasium hall.

At the beginning of 2014, the Trainees will go to the Defence School of Communications and Information Systems (DSCIS) Blandford for their respective trade courses. All of us here at QG SIGNALS Pariwar wish them all the best for their bright future ahead.



Trainees taking oath in the presence of the Col of the Regt, Comd, GM and Pundit QG SIGNALS



Sgt Nirakal Gurung being awarded his LSGC medal by the Col of the Regt



Capt Rupkumar Gurung and Capt Vishal Pun being commissioned by the Col of the Regt and GM QG SIGNALS

Royal Signals Operational Shooting Competition 2013 Th Tps OSC

By Sig Vishnubahadur Gurung

The Royal Signals Operational Shooting Competition was held concurrently with Theatre Troops Operational Shooting Competition (Th Tps OSC) at Ash and Pirbright ranges during the period 12- 19 April 2013. We conducted a series of grouping and zeroing and some practice shoots for the final team selection at Kingsbury range and headed towards Brunswick camp on 2 April 2013 for pre-competition training and competition.

This year's team comprises some very good and experienced shooters, however for majority of us, it was a first time experience. We were really anxious to perform well and learn from those experienced ones. The first few days during training were nervy and we had some ups and downs where we could not perform to our own expectation, however; with every passing day, it started to get better and better with careful guidance and support from the training team. Every little tip and technique to shoot effectively had been a key factor in developing our shooting skills and raise our confidence. The weather throughout the training weeks was quite frenetic; as opposed to nice and sunny spring days, we were showered with heavy rain, wind and snowfall at times. This made me realise that it is not an easy joyride to prepare for this competition contrary to my initial imagination when I first volunteered to take part.

The TA competitions were conducted over the weekend of 13-14 April 2013 and it was not until the morning of 15 April 2013 when the Regular units geared up for the first shoot of the competition. It was a completely different environment by this time as the ranges were heavily crowded with competitors representing their units and the weather was getting sunnier. Over the next few days, we were busy reporting to various ranges and shooting different competition matches. Everyone gave their best to perform well in hope of achieving both

personal accolade and unit championship. With the passing of every single day, the team stats were looking extremely competitive. By 18 April 2013, all the rifle matches and team matches were completed.

At the end of the competition, the winners were presented with the trophies by GOCTheatre Troops, Maj Gen T B Radford DSO OBE. Sig Sudin Gurung from our team won both the Royal Signals and the Joint Corps Champion Shot award for this year whereas Sig Hom Prakash Yonga won the top Class B Shot to name some of the few trophies we managed to win this year. But above most, we managed to win the Major Unit championship and return home as the Champion Unit at R Signals OSC 2013.

Finally, the R SIGNALS OSC has been a very good experience for me and I hope it was for everyone involved as well. If the opportunity arrives, I will definitely be looking forward to participating in coming years.



Army Operational Shooting Competition

By Sig Rajendra Dangri

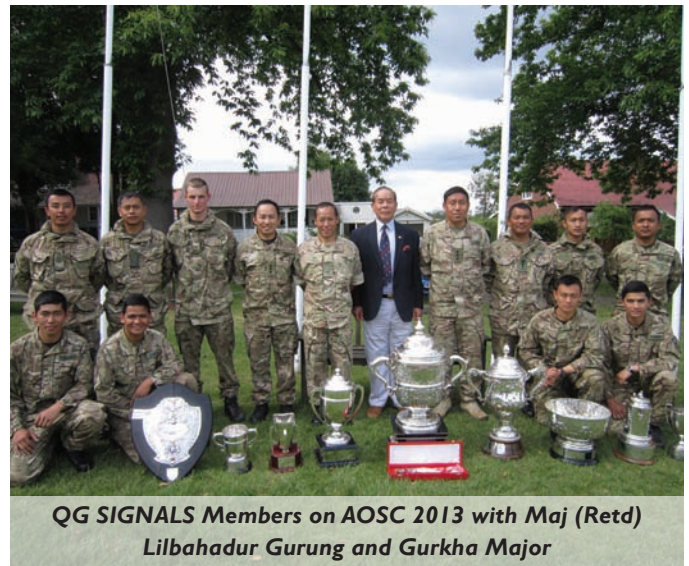
The Army Operational Shooting Competition (AOSC) is a British Army shooting competition which is conducted every year in Pirbright and Bisley ranges. The competition lasts for one week and the top hundred firers in individual matches get to wear the prestigious army hundred badge and the winner receives the conspicuous Queen's medal. The AOSC is a part of the Central Skill at Arms Meeting (CENTSAAM) based at the headquarters of the National Rifle Association (NRA) at Bisley camp.

Shooting is very important in the Army as you cannot defeat the enemy if you cannot shoot well. For a Regiment to qualify for AOSC it must do well in the Corps competition. The shooting for us at 22 Signal Regiment started with the training phase.

We went to Pirbright Camp on 19 June 2013. The moment we reached the camp, I realised how important shooting is in the British Army. There were soldiers from almost every Regiment and some international firers as well. The actual shooting competition started on 30 June which gave us ten days to practice and get ready for the competition. This year the team rules and composition were different from last year's competition. The team could only have one firer who had fired once already in previous years and three new firers. We had a very skilled and experienced team captain and team members who had seen many AOSCs. The competition consisted of individual and team matches. The individual matches determine the winner and army 100s whereas, the average of both individual and team matches

determines the champion unit. There were different matches to simulate a contact with enemy like the moving target, defence match, and section attack. I enjoyed FOB defence the most, in which we had to shoot from a house and engage the targets. The competition also consisted of pistol and machine gun firing, in which I was the team gunner. In team matches the gunner had a big role in team score as they had more rounds to fire than the rifleman. It was hard but I enjoyed it. On the last day after the last match the winner of the AOSC and the Queen's Medal became apparent. It was awarded to Cpl Som Bahadur Chhantyal from the 1st Battalion the Royal Gurkha Rifles. I also managed to receive four trophies for winning the machine gun match and the AOSC for 2013 finished with the final prize giving ceremony.

All in all, shooting is a key skill in the Army. The competition was challenging and very competitive. I have learned many new skills which will definitely help me in my further competitive shooting career and Army life.



QG SIGNALS Members on AOSC 2013 with Maj (Retd) Lilbahadur Gurung and Gurkha Major

246 Gurkha Signal Squadron (246 GSS) Newsletter

By Sig Krishna Gurung

Race the Sun 2013

Race the Sun is the 15 leg event which is to be completed between dawn and sunset. It is designed to challenge soldiers' physical stamina, their team work and their determination to overcome any difficulties.

Each year troops from across the Europe take part in a grueling race across North Yorkshire which is hosted by 2 Signal Regiment. The event is held every year and is open to members of the Armed Forces. The main aim of the event is to raise money for the charity and test military attributes for the soldiers.

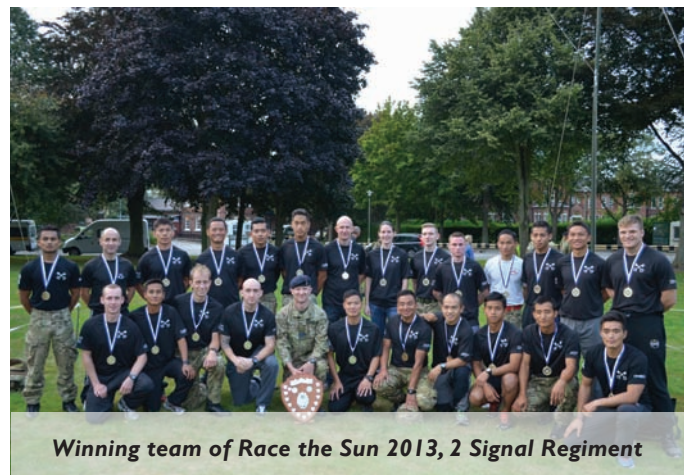
This year Race the Sun took place on the early hours of 5 September 2013. The race started with a run and canoeing on the River Ouse.

Altogether 25 teams of men and women took part in the competition. To name a few of the 15 leg course included at this year's event were a half marathon, cycling, swimming across the Great Lake at Castle Howard, forced march, forest run and finally stretcher race back at Imphal Barracks over a two mile course. Every event had two soldiers participating apart from Stretcher Race which required a team of six.

Our strong team of 25 started training and preparing for the event one month prior to the competition. We had sheer determination not to lose in front of our own college. That added an extra pressure on us to perform well as we did not want to let any one down. After a long and painful day for most of the competitors all eyes were on Stretcher Race which was the Grand Finale to the event. 2 and 30 SR were battling out each other in every leg and the rivalry was immense between two regiments

to come on top. Only a handful of points was separating the two regiments.

Winner of the major event was 2 Signal Regiment and 30 Signal Regiment had to settle for Runners Up. CO 2 Signal Regiment handed the prizes to the winners and congratulated each and every competitor who took part in the Race. The end to the event was with mouth-watering BBQ, live music and fun sports. Finally I would like to thank all the members from 2 Signal Regiment for supporting and motivating us through out the event. Without their support this event would not have been successful. I would also like to encourage more soldiers to come forward and take part in future.



Winning team of Race the Sun 2013, 2 Signal Regiment

Ex NORTHERN YANKEE

By LCpl Tshering Sherpa

After an exhaustive seven months tour of Op HERRICK 17, few members of 246 GSS acquired a chance to conduct two weeks adventure training in California, USA.

Prior to embarking on the adventure we were all issued kit from the loan pool and had to apply for our visas. We were a team of eighteen plus two other instructors, Cpl Mark Freestone (RAF) and OCdt Sam Turner (UOTC), all led by Lt Kearney Saheb. We departed York on 20 June and after a 12 hour flight, we finally landed in San Francisco. On arrival, everything began to fall into place. A hotel was already booked and two hired minibuses were waiting for us. We stayed the first night in San Francisco. During the day we managed to see city centre and later that evening we had delicious Chinese food in China Town. The next morning we went for a quick shopping in an outdoor shop before we began the long drive to our camping site in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. The base campsite was known as Horton Creek, which is a five minute drive from a beautiful small town called Bishop. We were briefed by the leader and divided into three groups for three main events, trekking, rock climbing and mountain biking.

My group began with mountain biking on the famous Buttermilk Trail southwest of Horton Creek. Although the trail was sandy and demanding, we covered about 18 miles and very much enjoyed the challenge. We had some thrilling experiences, coming across steep and sandy descents and had to carry the bikes through sections due to the dense vegetation and confusing tracks. The next day we did the Horseshoe Trail. This trail started from the beautiful mountain town of Mammoth and made a loop around a volcanic lake known as Horseshoe Lake. It was one of the best trails because it starts from town and ends in beautiful lake with wonderful scenery on the way. We then began rock climbing in an area northeast of Bishop, called Owen's River Gorge. It is one of the most popular locations for sport climbing in California, which offers a wide range of sport climbing across the various grades. We climbed three crags and learned a few rope techniques as well. We also went back to Horseshoe Lake for a climb. After four days of biking and rock climbing we spent the day preparing for the trek, with a little free time to play some golf, have some dinner in town and do some shopping.

After all the preparation and packing, the day came to go for a five day trek. With all the necessary gear packed, the load was quite heavy. Importantly, we each had a 'Bear box' which is used to prevent the bears from stealing food at night, as it was a remote five day trek through dense pine jungles and high altitude mountains. The black bear, known to be common in the area, can present a real menace. We started our expedition with steep uphill. After walking few miles, surprisingly we came across the Red Meadow resort with a small shop and huts. We wondered why it was there in the middle of nowhere until we hit the amazing rock formations named Devil's Post Pile. After a long 12 mile walk we finally reached the first camping site at Fern Lake. As it was near a river and a damp place, there was a ridiculous number of mosquitoes.

The next day we planned to camp by the side of the Isberg River, which was about 15 miles away from Fern Lake. We came across beautiful landscapes and rivers and rounded off the day with a campfire. We again moved off the next morning planning to stop near Isberg Peak at an altitude 10,000 ft. Although the route was short, it was all an uphill climb and proved exhausting. On route, we passed two beautiful Lakes, Sadler Lake and McClare Lake. The panoramic view from the peak was just awesome and mesmerizing.

As we were approaching the Yosemite Valley, the scenery just got better and better. Before we came to the finish point, we had a final campsite near some waterfalls. Due to the hot weather and sandy tracks, we saw few rattle snakes and nearly stumbled over one of them before it reared up at us. Finally, we arrived in the beautiful Yosemite Valley. The Vernal Falls and Nevada Falls were simply breath taking. The significant amount and size of rock faces found in the valley have made it legendary for the climbers around the world. Most famous among these are Half Dome and El Capitan (the largest vertical cliff in the world). Once our expedition ended, we drove back to the base campsite at Horton Creek and flew back home the next day.

Walking five continuous days, fighting the mosquitoes and despite feeling like a burning candle at both ends, we really enjoyed the adventure and learned a lot. The beautiful views, falls, lakes and rivers just made the whole two weeks feel like two days. Ex Northern Yankee was a lifetime experience for all of us.

Members of 246 GSS in front of the mighty El Capitan



Members of 246 GSS arrive in Yosemite Valley

248 Gurkha Signal Squadron (248 GSS) Newsletter

By Sig Sanam Rai

Ex-KHUKURI DRAGON-I With The Romans

Having just been permitted to join the others, I hurried to my room and began packing up things for three days and two nights up in Carlisle. Named Ex-KHUKURI DRAGON, this was a challenging pursuit of level 2 adventure training organised by **Sgt Narantak**, Oscar Troop. Hence its objectives were developing team work, leadership, physical robustness and gaining historical knowledge. 21 personnel from 248 Gurkha Signal Squadron took part in the event that took place over the period of 30 April - 03 May 2013.

It took us around five hours to reach our accommodation which was based at Cumbria Army Cadet Camp (CACC) inside Carlisle Castle. As soon as the accommodation was sorted out we headed towards the Roman Vindolanda and Roman Army Museum in Northumberland. Vindolanda, as we came to know, is one of the Europe's most important Roman archaeological sites where live excavations do take place annually. It used to be a key Roman military post when Romans extended their territory here some 2,000 years ago in about 78AD. The site had very precise remains from the past that spoke of the great Roman reign in the area. The other part not to be missed was Vindolanda Roman Museum which was an authentic and spectacular display of Roman legacy that flourished in the area after the Roman occupation.

The museum served as a high valuable piece of knowledge on Roman life that lasted for more than 300 years after the occupation. It had a very good collection of antiques like clothing, shoes, coins, weapons and many other items excavated from the site and along Hadrian's Wall. Even in those days Romans were very organised and civilised. Exhibitions showed us how Roman soldiers and normal citizens lived their lives. There were also visual displays and written information which made our visit a very interesting and memorable one. Learning about the Romans was exciting and thus our exercise had started on a good note. After achieving our first objective we returned to Carlisle Castle where we were briefed about the next day's programme.

On the second day of the exercise, we were divided into two groups. We were to conduct cycling and hill walking simultaneously along Hadrian's Wall in Northumberland National Park. Hadrian's Wall was one of the two heavily fortified Roman borders built in northern Britain which has been listed in UNESCO World Heritage since 1987. I was in the cycling group. All of us started at Steel Rigg car park. The route was about Seven kilometers along the national cycle route. There came a very steep road at the beginning which tested out physical stamina but soon the route became easier and we really had fun. Our finishing point was the Boatside Inn, a traditional countryside pub and restaurant located between the banks of River Tyne and wooded slopes of Warden Hill.

We waited for the other group to join us after they had finished their part of the day's event. My group had hill walking on the last day. The route that we were taking was the 15th National

Trail of UK known as the Hadrian's Wall Path so most of the time we were near the Hadrian's Wall. Our instructor Cpl Khem gave each of us a checkpoint to take us to so as to revise our navigation skill. Along the path we passed through some remarkable places like beautiful Crag Lough Lake, the Robin Hood Tree and the remains of Milecastle 39. The route was full of scenic beauty and we really enjoyed it. We finished at Housesteads car park and rejoined rest of the group at the Boatside Inn again as the previous day.

It was time for us to retreat back to Stafford. Since we were tired from the day's activities, most of us slept through the journey back. On reaching Stafford, we were debriefed about the exercise by Ex-Director Captain Surendra and he was happy that the main aims of the exercise were achieved. Also all the participating members expressed their satisfaction for having gone in this exercise and how they would like to do such kind of activities once again in the future.



Exercise ARCADE DEPLOY 2013

By Sig Sandeep Gurung

It was starting to get warm in the UK when 248 Gurkha Signal Squadron (GSS) was about to deploy for an exercise led by Lima Troop in Corsica. Corsica is a small island at the tail of France which is full of natural beauties with lots of impressive mountains, rivers, lakes and stunning beaches.

The main intent of OC 248 GSS was to enable deploying ARRC staff in support of AD13 by providing a robust communications network. The main effort of the 248 Deploy team was to provide MS FAS services to all staff users. In order to run the exercise smoothly, the whole Exercise was divided into four phases.

First phase was the preparation phase which took place from 29 April to 30 May in Beacon Barracks MOD Stafford. Having tested all the equipment, the build was the second phase where most of the equipment was deployed on freight through road movement to Corsica on 27 May.

The 248 Deployex personnel were deployed in two groups. The first group flew on C17 from Brize Norton to Solenzara after being delayed for a few hours. The second group were fortunate as they had a comfortable civilian flight from Birmingham to Bastia.

The third phase of exercise was to start exercising the FWD CP and ECCP over the period of 17 to 21 June. All the services were maintained by 248 Gurkha Signal Squadron personnel.

The final phase of Deployex 13 was the recovery phase which included a controlled close down of the services and recovery

back to Innsworth and Stafford after the completion of all phases. It included packing of all our kit and the recovery of all personnel.

In conclusion, it was a whole new experience for all of us. We managed to spare some time on the beach after long hard days of work. As a morale booster, a BBQ was organised which everyone thoroughly enjoyed. There were times when we had to work long hours solving some problems but we managed to provide the services effectively and efficiently. As a junior member of the Troop, it was a very interesting time for me and I look forward to being part of such exercises in future to gain more experience.



A group photograph with the Squadron OC

250 Gurkha Signal Squadron (250 GSS) Newsletter

By Capt Bharat Shrestha

Ex STONEY RUN 24 June - 12 July 2013

Ex STONEY RUN is an Overseas Training Exercise that took place at Grafenwoher Training Area, Germany from 22 June - 12 July 2013 alongside US 44th Expeditionary Signal Battalion.

Members of 250 Gurkha Signal Squadron led by Capt Bharat Shrestha were deployed on this exercise to conduct interoperability training with US and UK ICS. This exercise saw the first ever deployment of FALCON overseas to provide wide area communications for US CIS systems.

We have always worked with coalition partners in many past and current operations. This was an ideal exercise to conduct such training so that on future exercises or operations the communication footprint can be minimised thus reducing the logistics burden.

Sgt Raj Gurung from 250 GSS and Chief Kim from 44th Expeditionary Signal Battalion were behind the successful engineering of the network (pulling their hair out). All in all, it was a successful exercise developing US and UK ICS understanding and further enhancing UK and US relations.



Capt Bharat briefing Col Mangelsdorf (7th US Sig Bde Comd) during Ex STONEY RUN



Sgt Raj from 250 GSS and Chief Kim jointly solving problems

Exercise INCAS DRAGON

By SSgt (SQMS) Gopal Saru

Ex INCAS DRAGON was a level 3 Adventure Training trekking expedition to Ausangate Mountain in Peru, led by Exped Ldr, SSgt (SQMS) Gopal Saru and Exped OIC, Capt Om (2IC) of 250 Gurkha Signal Squadron over the period 19 May - 04 June 2013. Ten personnel from Sqn deployed on exercise in order to complete 58 km long remote and arduous high altitude trekking expedition around the Mt Ausangate followed by a cultural visit to Machu Picchu - one of the New Seven Wonders of the World. The main aims of the AT were to: (1) develop leadership, personal robustness, self-reliance and self-confidence (2) inspire the soldiers to gain their Summer Mountain Foundation (SMF) qualifications through Distributed Training (DT) and (3) to promote and develop administration, team work, cultural awareness and physical robustness.

The team departed from Bramcote on 19 May 2013 on a 16 hour flight from London to Lima via Amsterdam. After a 45 min domestic flight to Cusco (3,400m) from Lima next day there followed a two day cultural, educational and historical visit to Moray and Sacred Valley including Cusco City tour as acclimatisation phase. The final day of acclimatisation included a six hour walk up to an Andes high pass at an altitude of 4,170m.

The main trekking phase of the AT involved six days/five nights camping on the Ausangate mountain range. At 0500 on 24 May 2013 the group left Cusco for Pachanta (4,200m) where they were met by Condor travel staff. The arduous trek started



30 Sig Regt Team at Condon Pass with Mt Ausangate in the background

with natural hot spring bath and a first typical Peruvian meal served by the staff. The first campsite was Ninaparayo (4,800m) which was reached 1700. On day two, the group trekked for an eight hours to campsite 2 (Kilita 4800m) through the enthralling Campa pass (5,070m). During the trek, some members suffered minor altitude sickness. Day three of the trek started with an early morning breakfast followed by a long gradual uphill walk along a valley, experiencing breathtaking views of Andes Mountains. After four hours of long unrelenting slopes, the group reached the highest peak of the trek - Condor Pass (5,230m) and spent the night by lake Sibinachocha.



Machu Picchu, one of the wonders of the world

Day four of the trek included a long walk around the lake Sibinachocha followed by crossing of Yayamari pass (5,010m) and finished at Laguna Ccascana (4,820m). The penultimate day was a straight forward and much shorter walking day of around six hours to Phinaya (4,700m). This was the last campsite which was located next to a local school. The group was privileged to witness the children's cultural performance in order to fund school trip to a regional carnival festival. The staff organised a special celebratory dinner with traditional food (Pachamanca) to mark the successful completion of the trekking. On the final day, the group trekked for two hours before being picked up by a minibus for a trip back to Cusco.

On return to Cusco, the team visited Machu Picchu - a truly magnificent scene of Inca ruins. Machu Picchu is a 15th-century Inca site located at 2,430m and was built as an estate for the Inca Emperor Pachacuti (1438-1472). The group also enjoyed a day of white water rafting in Urubamba River and horse riding in the Sacred Valley. The final day of R & R was spent in Cusco discovering more Inca cultures and enjoying local cuisine before safely returning to the UK. Overall, the Ex was a challenging but worthwhile experience and thoroughly enjoyable; the memory will stay with all members of the expedition for many years to come. I would like to express my sincere thanks to all Exped members for their participation and support throughout the Ex.



Exped team visiting the Moray Agricultural Laboratory

Royal Signals School

Armed Forces Day - Romsey Military Concert & Sounding Retreat

Armed Forces Day was celebrated with great anticipation and enthusiasm on Saturday, 29 June 2013 throughout Great Britain. It was an excellent opportunity to raise public awareness of the contribution made to the country by the Armed Forces and also giving the nation an opportunity to show their support for the men and women of the Armed Forces including veterans, cadets and service families. Thousands of people across the country celebrated the Armed Forces Day at more than 300 events.

One such event was held at Romsey as a part of the official Armed Forces Day celebration for Hampshire. It was headed by Major General AEG Truluck CB CBE, Chairman of the Gurkha Welfare Trust (Wessex & South Region). The event consisted of a flag-raising ceremony, charity concert, fireworks and Sounding the Retreat.

It involved officers of the Skinners Horse, Queen's Gurkha Orderly Officers, the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas and also the Pipes and Drums of the 1st Battalion Royal Gurkha Rifles.

The responsibility of running and supporting this huge event fell to the members of the Blandford based Queen's Gurkha Signals which included phase two soldiers as well as permanent staff. Our tasks included managing the car park, meeting and conducting VIPs as well as public liaison and also conduct a parade.

The venue was chosen to be run at the beautiful house of Sarah and Christopher Saunders-Davies.

The initial phase of the event consisted of preparing the beautiful riverside garden house to accommodate more than 1,000 invited guests. This included converting a huge field into a well-run car park and also setting up the main arena for the concert and the parade.

By late afternoon, the guests had started filtering in to the main arena and were sitting down eagerly waiting for the Brigade Band's concert to begin. An hour flew by with the flow

of some soothing and intoxicating music from the concert. The guests were taking full advantage of the music along with sips of champagne from their picnic basket. The Brigade band wrapped up their final concert piece to the applause of a thoroughly impressed and appreciative crowd.

The next phase of the event was the parade which included the Queens Gurkha Signals soldiers, the Sea Cadets and the Officers of the Skinners Horse. They were smartly marched into the arena by WO2 (SSM) Khagendra Pun and presented before Field Marshal Sir John Chapple, together with Dame Mary Fagan, Lord-Lieutenant of Hampshire.

After the parade, the Brigade Band took over again for sounding the Retreat and the Sunset Ceremony. Once the flag lowering ceremony was finished, there was only one event that could have raised the crowd's now sombre mood. The finale of the evening was a brilliant display of fireworks over by the river. As dusk was falling, the fireworks drew 'oohs' and 'ahhs' from mesmerized guests who were simply loving and cherishing every second of their evening.

After a brilliant display of concert music and marching music, the Brigade Band marched off to a rapturous applause and ovation from the adoring and well-impressed crowd and this concluded the entertainment for the evening.

The money raised from ticket sales for the event will go to two charities. These are the Gurkha Welfare Trust and the Cairn Trust, which helps poor children in the Himalayan foothills of Nepal.

All in all, Blandford based Queens Gurkha Signals personnel feel privileged and honoured to have assisted in organising such a high profile event for such worthy causes and a huge 'thank you' goes to General Truluck saheb and Mr and Mrs Saunders-Davies for organising and hosting this truly wonderful event.



Dame Mary Fagan, Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire inspecting soldiers from QG SIGNALS based in Royal School of Signals, Blandford

Nepalese Cultural Education Programme with Downlands Primary School, Blandford Camp 11 October 2013

Most anticipated and celebrated Hindu festival for Nepalese, Dashain is cherished more than ever before, especially among those living abroad. For Nepalese living out of the country, Dashain brings a prosperous occasion to celebrate away from the hectic life with one's family and community. It also allows the younger Nepalese generation to become familiarised with festival much preserved and treasured by their parents and ancestors.

Gurkha community in Blandford Camp, as always, observed the festival with much pride and joy this year. Besides celebrating Dashain in a traditional Brigade of Gurkhas fashion, BCGC ladies stepped up a little further and organised a cultural education programme with Downlands Primary School on 11 October 2013. The aim of the programme was to bring Dashain festival to non-Nepalese students and teachers of the school in order to enhance their awareness of Nepalese culture and traditions. The cultural event consisted of a series of programme including a visit to the Gurkha Temple, Blandford Camp, cookery presentation and a cultural dance show in the main school hall.

On the morning of 11 October 2013, students from Downlands School and small group of Year 2 students from Clayesmore Boarding School came to the temple successively in groups accompanied by their class teachers. They were all welcomed and greeted by BGGC ladies volunteers including myself in a Nepalese way 'NAMASTE'. It was fascinating to see how most of the students understood and returned the greeting with Namaste. Inside the temple, they were introduced with a short presentation about Nepal and its culture and traditions, various Nepalese temples and Nepalese festivals especially the origin of Dashain and why it is celebrated. Relevant pictures were displayed to visually emphasise the theme.



Children posing for a camera after receiving 'Tika'

On the way out of the temple, children were blessed with 'TIKA' by their teachers. To make the visit more interesting for young students, boys were given a 'DHAKA TOPI' and girls were given a traditional scarf to be worn while they received blessings from their teachers. They were then treated with Nepalese sweets, all home made by lovely BCGC ladies. Simultaneously, the other half of the BCGC ladies volunteers were back in Downlands School, helping teachers to dress up in Saree before they marched up to the temple. Further, a cooking presentation was also illustrated to interested British mums on how to make Gurkha Chicken Curry.

Following the temple visit, everyone gathered at Downlands School Hall. During lunch time, whilst the teachers were treated with a typical home made Nepalese lunch by the kind BCGC ladies, we quickly changed into our dance costume and prepared for the final cultural dance show. The main dance act depicted the Hindu Devi 'DURGA' and demon 'MAHISHASURA' foretelling the story of Dashain. This was marvellously choreographed by Mrs Mamata Gurung and performed with equal aptitude by beautiful BCGC ladies. Similarly, everyone's heart wowed when little Miss Mendha Sherpa, who is only five years, came to the stage to present her cultural dance. Finally, a traditional Kauda dance was presented by ladies to conclude the programme on a high note.

Overall, it was an eventful but a joyful day for both the organisers and participants. The generous co-operation of the teachers from Downlands School & Clayesmore School and their sincere respect for our culture was truly encouraging and promising for the future of Nepalese in the UK. Merits go to wonderful BGGC ladies who voluntarily took their time off and actively participated to bring the event to a success. Also thanks to those generous ladies who helped by preparing food at home and delivering to the school. We are very grateful to a small group of "dajubhais" led by Sgt Ghanendra Jimee who helped the ladies to set up the temple. Last but not least, a sincere appreciation to Mrs. Beepana Rana Pun who organised and co-ordinated the event effortlessly and DaiWO2 (SSM(G)) Khagendrakumar Pun who indirectly supported us throughout the programme.

As we try to adapt and move forward, we automatically pick up foreign language and various things that come with the 'modern lifestyle'. This is inevitable for someone like us, the Gurkha families, who live in foreign land through most of our husband's career. But as not to forget how we have come to be, 'our traditional values and our origin', we BGGC ladies genuinely believe that events with purpose like this should commence once in a while to awaken our cultural instincts, to preserve our ethos and traditions and primarily to educate our future generations.

Brunei Signal Troop Tokyo Marathon 2013

By Cpl Tolokbahadur Gurung

The Tokyo Marathon is an annual sporting event held in the capital city of Japan. It is now the sixth biggest event in the world marathon major series; joining Boston, London, Berlin, Chicago and New York. This year the event was held on Sunday 24 February 2013 in which more than 36,000 participants took part. Among them, there were four members from Brunei Signal Troop with the aim of not only completing the race, but also to raise money in aid of the Gurkha Welfare Trust, ABF The Soldiers' Charity and the Gurkha Museum UK.

After four months of hard training, Capt Shankar Gurung, Sgt Tarjan Pun, Cpl Bishnu Gurung and I, along with Cpl Prem Gurung as support crew, flew to Tokyo on 20 February. The weather was completely different to what we were accustomed to with the average temperature being only four degrees Celsius. The next couple of days saw us registering for the race and exploring the local area. We also took part in an international friendship run, a minor event designed for participants to meet and greet each other before the marathon on 23 February.

The big day finally arrived and along with it came with the chilly weather. Despite clear blue skies, an icy wind assaulted us from all directions, and there was nowhere to hide. At 0830, the Mayor of Tokyo gave his speech. Afterwards the first of the participants, the wheelchair users, were under starting orders; we followed half an hour later. As I made my way across the start line, the only thought I had in my mind was to focus on the run and complete the race as comfortably as I could. I intended to complete the race in four hours.



Brunei Signal Troop runners at the start of the marathon

It was a fantastic experience taking part in the Tokyo Marathon. All of our hard work was rewarded with the presentation of our medals at the awards ceremony. We also managed to collect in excess of BND 5,000 in support of those

charities that are very close to all of our hearts. We would like to thank our sponsors for their generosity and good will, and not forgetting Cpl Prembahadur Gurung, for his dedicated support throughout the event.

Jai BST!!

BRUNEI SIGNAL TROOP LADIES' LABUAN VISIT

By Mrs Shrijana Thapa

On Saturday 02 February 2013, twelve ladies from Brunei Signal Troop made a trip to Labuan war memorial park and museum.

It was a one-day trip which started at 0600 from Tuger Lines. After an hour and half of driving to the Maura port by bus and further an hour and half of sailing on boat, we reached Labuan just after 0900.

Soon after reaching Labuan, we arranged three taxis and headed for the memorial park. According to historic information, the Labuan memorial park was primarily intended to commemorate the officers and men of the Australian Army and Air Force who died while prisoners of war in Borneo and the Philippines from 1942 to 1945 and during the 1945 operations for the recovery of Borneo, and have no known grave. Subsequently, it was found that a number of men belonging to the local forces of North Borneo, Sarawak and Brunei who were killed on war service also have no known grave, and they too are honoured here.



A snap in front of the Labuan museum.

This memorial consists of a colonnade forming a forecourt immediately inside the wrought iron gates of the main entrance to the cemetery. On the inner faces of the pillars are bronze panels on which are engraved the names of those whom it

honours and the dedicatory inscription is on the frieze facing the entrance. Some of those whose names appear on the memorial are undoubtedly buried in unidentified graves in this cemetery.

The memorial park was surrounded by peaceful environment with plenty of beautiful plants; with the high standard of maintenance, the park looked magnificent. For our memory, we took some photographs and headed for the museum.

The museum displayed the history and culture of Labuan. Its history covers pre-historic era of Labuan, Brunei Sultanate, British colonial days, World War II, Independence declaration of Labuan as federal Territory and up to the establishment of Labuan Corporation, while its cultural theme showcases various phases of socio-cultural and economic evolution in Labuan. After our visit in the museum we again took some group photographs and went to search a decent restaurant.

The final event of the day was shopping at the famous Labuan business park, where we bought varieties of items ranging from souvenirs to cosmetics, clothing to chocolates. Overall, it was a fantastic experience. All the participants



A group photograph at the cemetery.

thoroughly enjoyed the visit and learned something about the Labuan and the landmarks within. BST ladies would like to thank all the BST members for making the visit possible, especially to SSgt Indra for co-ordinating the event.

Alpha Troop

EX ARCADE WARRIOR/CHARGER/FUSION 2013

By Sig Reuben Limbu

Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC) is a highly capable multinational, NATO operational Headquarters that is fully ready for rapid deployment worldwide within five to thirty days. Having based its headquarters in Innsworth UK, it had conducted a series of major training exercises at RAF St. Mawgan Cornwall in the United Kingdom. The training is divided into three exercises: Exercise ARCADE WARRIOR, Exercise ARCADE CHARGER and Exercise ARCADE FUSION. These exercises took place over the periods 30 Sep to 4 October, 7 to 12 October and 18 to 29 November 2013 respectively.

The training event was mainly designed and run to test the ARRC's readiness - all in an effort to ensure that the NATO rapid deployment headquarters continues to remain ready for any potential short-notice call-up it may receive as part of its NATO Response Force. Standing out as one of the largest exercises of its kind to occur in recent years in the southwest of England, exercise ARCADE FUSION 13 brought the ARRC and several of its subordinate units from across Europe and North America. Additionally, military personnel from non-NATO nations such as Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and New Zealand also participated in the comprehensive training event.

To support this large scale and complex exercise, 217 Signal Squadron from 22 Signal Regiment deployed a large number of

military personnel including 248 Signal Squadron attached on 9 September 2013. The main aim of this deployment was to provide ICS support for EXCON and ECCP; two of the many functional elements in the HQ.

On arrival at RAF St. Mawgan, the build up started that included providing Staff Working Environment and then all the Information Communications Services (ICS) required by the HQ staffs. In order to provide all the services to the staff users, 217 Signal Squadron deployed with Magpie, Reacher satellite terminal and Falcon, along with highly trained and expertly qualified communication systems engineers, operators and electricians. The staff users were provided with NATO SECRET, MISSION SECRET and NATO UNCLASSIFIED user accounts, e-mails, respective departmental web pages, telephone services, VTC and many other applications according to their requirement.

The staff users arrived on 30 September 2013 to conduct their exercises. All communications services were ready for them now and we started the normal service management routine. EXCON and ECCP alone had around 700 users, so I must admit, reacting to service reports and request kept us very busy throughout the exercise. Hours of shift time passed by without notice each time. Yet, many of us managed to find time to visit the local gym and go for nice coastal run on a regular basis.

ARRC HQ Set up at St Mawgan during ARRCAD E Exercises



All three exercises were highly successful in terms of communications services and yet again, members of QG SIGNALS along with other members of 22 Signal Regiment provided the services at that level using fairly new and complex systems such as Magpie and Falcon. While we succeeded in delivering what is required, we have certainly developed our key skills and knowledge that take us to higher level of competency. A long but worthwhile exercise, it finally ended on 29 November 2013 and we can all look forward to our well deserved leave during Christmas and New Year period.



EXCON Main CIS set up for ARRC HQ



The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment

History

An eight pointed Star in Silver, thereon a Scroll inscribed 'Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment' issuant there from a Wreath of Laurel all in Gold, over all two kukris in Saltire, the hilts Gold, ensigned with the Royal Cypher in Gold.

28 Company Gurkha ASC formed in July 1958.

30 Company Gurkha ASC formed in July 1958 and disbanded in December 1968.

31 Company Gurkha ASC formed in July 1959 disbanded in October 1994.

Headquarters Gurkha ASC 17 Gurkha Division formed 01 July 1960.

34 Company Gurkha ASC formed in July 1960 and redesignated the Gurkha All Arms MT Training Wing GTR on 01 July 1970. It was further redesignated the Gurkha MT School and absorbed by 31 Squadron on 19 July 1971, but disbanded in September 1993. Gurkha Troop, Army School of Mechanical Transport was formed on 01 November 1993.

The Gurkha Army Service Corps was redesignated the Gurkha Transport Regiment in 1965.

29 Squadron RCT and 415 Maritime Troop RCT were included in the Regiment establishment from 01 September 1976 to 8 April 1994 when they joined the Hong Kong Logistic Support Regiment RLC.

The title of the Regiment was changed to The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment on 05 April 2001.

Extract from Royal Warrant

Our will and pleasure is that the Gurkha Transport Regiment shall be redesignated as The Queen's Own Gurkha Transport Regiment. Our further will and pleasure is that the changes mentioned in this Our Warrant shall have effect from 30 August 1992.

Change of Title

Her Majesty The Queen graciously approved the change in title of The Queen's Own Gurkha Transport Regiment (QOGTR) to "The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment (QOGLR) with effect from 05 April 2001. The Bde of Gurkha Chefs were recapbadged to QOGLR with effect 05 April 2002. On 12 May 2006, on parade at New Normandy Barracks, 10 Tpt Regt RLC was officially re-titled 10 Tpt Regt QOGLR.

Organisation

Regimental Headquarters 10 Transport Regiment The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment

1 Transport Squadron QOGLR

28 Transport Squadron QOGLR

36 (HQ) Squadron QOGLR

66 Fuel Squadron RLC

94 Stores Squadron QOGLR

LAD QOGLR

QOGLR Detachment Brunei

QOGLR ERE Detachments with other units

Affiliated Colonel-in-Chief:

Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal

Affiliated Corps:

Royal Logistic Corps (RLC)

Colonel of the Regiment:

Brigadier A S J Fay (Late RLC)

Colonel of The Regiment

RHQ

Staff List & Promotions 2013

Lieutenant Colonel P M K Beaumont RLC	Commander	RHQ
Major R J Browne RLC	Second-in-Command	RHQ
Major Devendra Ale MVO	Gurkha Major	RHQ
Captain M J Harris RLC	Adjutant	RHQ
Captain A Watson RLC	Operations Officer	RHQ
Captain N P W Evans RLC	Regimental Information Systems Officer	RHQ
Captain Rajpati Gurung	Regimental Career Management Officer	RHQ
Captain D Stewart RLC	Regimental Welfare Officer	RHQ
Captain A P Brazier RLC	Intelligence Officer	RHQ
Captain T N Fitzgerald RLC	Plans Officer	RHQ
Captain C K Taylor SPS	Regimental Administrative Officer	RHQ
Captain P Russell SPS	Detachment Commander	RHQ
WO2 Basantadhoj Shahi	Gurkha Chef Manning Officer	RHQ
Major S N Townsend RLC	Officer Commanding	I
Captain Palijar Tamang	Second-in-Command	I
Captain S Pearson-Burton RLC	Operations Officer	I
Captain Ganeshkumar Tamang	Troop Commander	I
Lieutenant W Jung RLC	Troop Commander	I
Lieutenant C J Godwin RLC	Troop Commander	I
Lieutenant S M Ingram RLC	Troop Commander	I
Major S Dunlop RLC	Officer Commanding	28
Captain Bhimprasad Gurung	Second-in-Command	28
Captain J D Howse RLC	Operations Officer	28
Captain G M Kemp RLC	Troop Commander	28
Lieutenant C R Genari RLC	Troop Commander	28
Lieutenant M T Howard RLC	Troop Commander	28
Major P A Eaton RLC	Officer Commanding	36
Major J Kerr RLC	Regimental Quartermaster	36
Captain Indrabahadur Tamang	Second-in-Command	36
Captain I K Bartlett RLC	Regimental Technical Officer	36
Captain N Homer RLC	Regimental Quartermaster (Technical)	36
Captain Chakrabahadur Neupane	Regimental Training Officer	36
Captain JPM Wooldridge RLC	Regimental Technical Training Officer	36
Major Diwan Limbu	OC Contracts	36
Captain Nandprasad Kala	Contracts Officer	36
Captain A E Lawrence RLC	LRS Officer	36
Captain J Hill REME	Officer Commanding	LAD
Headquarters Brigade Of Gurkhas, Upavon		
Captain Kumar Gurung	SO3 Transition/QGOO	
British Gurkhas Nepal, Kathmandu		
Captain N Berry RLC	SO3 Logistic Support	
Captain M Boomer RLC	SO3 Transport & Movement	
Defence School Of Transport, Leconfield		
Captain Rudrabahadur Chhantyal	SO3 JI HQ DTW	
Hq Aldershot Garrison		
Major Rudrabahadur Sahi	Chief of Staff	

Qoglr Detachment, Brunei

Captain Hariprasad Rai Detachment Commander

Gurkha Company, ITC Catterick

Captain Ganeshbahadur Gurung Platoon Commander

Learning And Development Wing (Ldw), ITC Catterick

Captain Baldeep Tamang 2IC/Instructor

Promotion 2013

Major

561909 Major Diwan Limbu

565586 Major Devendra Ale MVO

Intermediate Regular Commission (Late Entry)

21167919 Captain Hariprasad Rai

21168287 Captain Indrabahadur Tamang

Commissioned

21169262 WO2 Basantadhoj Shahi

21169396 WO2 Rambahadur Rai

Commander's Notes

By Lieutenant Colonel P M K Beaumont RLC

It is a great privilege for me to be able to write these notes for the journal. My wife, Jo, and I along with our two daughters are delighted to have returned to the Regiment and to serve alongside so many old friends. It is also a great pleasure to be within the wider family of the QOGLR and the Regimental Association again.

Much has changed in the two and a half years since I last left the Regiment. In a move away from training for, and deploying on, operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, 10 QOGLR is taking the lead in the development of the Theatre Logistic Regiment (TLR) concept. This is work in progress and has been furthered through regimental restructuring and proving the validity of the TLR during a wet and windy, but thoroughly useful, Exercise GRIFFINVIPER 13. Development will continue but 10 QOGLR has led for the Royal Logistic Corps in this work.

The change in the Regiment's key battle winning asset, its personnel, has also been noticeable. We are more heavily concentrated in Aldershot, and the Army's redundancy process has made us leaner. This makes our officers and soldiers - whether chef, driver or supplier - serving outside the Regiment in Afghanistan, Cyprus, Brunei, Nepal, Canada, Kenya, The Falkland Islands and Jordan, ever more important as ambassadors for the QOGLR. I am always surprised at how many military personnel come up to me to commend a QOGLR soldier or officer they have been working with in a far-flung location and how positive an impression has been left upon them; long may it continue.

Regimental success on operations, overseas deployments and in supporting UK contingency commitments endures

and achievements on the sports field, at Bisley, and at military skills events remains impressive. 'Excellence as standard' is the order of the day yet these achievements belie the hard work and commitment of our soldiers and officers in ensuring the Regiment's reputation continues to flourish. All success is underwritten by professionalism, self-discipline, modesty, and an irrepressible sense of humour. These are characteristics that all readers would recognise as indicative of the Regiment and its people. Yet, challenges remain ahead, including the management of soldiers affected by the Army's redundancy programme, Tranche 4 of which is in the planning stage at time of writing.

The Regiment's Redundancy Squadron has also been highly effective and I have been much impressed with the support provided for those affected by the redundancy process. Through one of the many sterling pieces of work completed by my predecessor, Tim Blackmore, our soldiers have been supported excellently in their transition from military service in The Brigade of Gurkhas to civilian life well set for future employment. Soldiers leave the Army with dignity and our immense gratitude for their service and commitment to The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment, as we would all expect and demand.

The pace of life in the Regiment has not changed and continues with breathtaking momentum. At one stage, the Regiment provided logistic contingency commitment for the bulk of 101 Logistic Brigade as 27 and 9 Regiments were committed to deployments on operations. Covering six separate contingency taskings, various elements in the Regiment, including the Comd and the RHQ, were held at less than 12 hours notice to move.

What was remarkable, was the self-confidence and pragmatism with which our soldiers approached and continue to approach such commitments and uncertainty; this bodes very well for the year ahead as the Regiment leads as the only Gurkha unit to support the Army's Reactive Forces and leads on work to support a whole host of contingency deployment capabilities. We are also at the heart of that work in developing the Theatre Logistic Regiment capability and support to high and very high readiness force elements.

I have no doubt that there will be challenges for the Regiment in the year ahead and that soldiers and families alike will face testing times but there will also be real opportunities.

Lieutenant Colonel PMK (Bill) Beaumont RLC

Lieutenant Colonel Bill Beaumont was commissioned into the Royal Logistic Corps in 1997 and following junior officer appointments in the UK and the Balkans, completed the Officers' Food Services Course in 2002 before serving as an SO3 in HQ 101 Logistic Brigade in Aldershot and on Operation TELIC 2 in Iraq. In 2006 he was appointed Adjutant 10 Transport Regiment RLC and was in post when the regiment was re-designated 10 Transport Regiment QOGLR.

Following selection for promotion to Major and attendance at the Intermediate Command and Staff Course (Land), Bill was posted to an initial grade 2 appointment in DE&S working on Joint Supply Chain strategy, policy and organisational restructuring. Squadron command in 10 QOGLR followed with a deployment to Afghanistan as a Combat Logistic Patrol commander on Operation HERRICK 11. Thereafter, he prepared his squadron in the dismounted close combat infantry role for deployment on Operation HERRICK 16 for Police Mentoring and Advisory Group taskings. Prior to its deployment, Bill relinquished his sub-unit command and took up the post of Deputy Chief of Staff 4th Mechanised Brigade in Catterick. On selection to promotion to Lieutenant Colonel and after attendance at the Advanced Command and Staff Course, Lieutenant Colonel

Planning for the celebrations to mark 200 years of Gurkha service to the Crown in 2015 ('G200') has already started. As part of 'G200', the Regiment will participate in a number of high profile commemorative events and have the honour of undertaking ceremonial duties at Buckingham Palace and the Tower of London. More information is to follow but it will be a unique experience for QOGLR officers and soldiers and their families. My final thought on returning to the Regiment is that I am reassured that the quality of those serving in the Regiment has never been better. This will enable us to face the future with confidence, as will the knowledge that the continued support of our families and the Regimental Association remains steadfast. **Jai QOGLR!!**



Beaumont assumed command of 10 The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment in September 2013.

Lieutenant Colonel Beaumont is married to Jo and they have two daughters: Katie (ten) and Emma (eight). The Beaumonts live in Wiltshire where, in his spare time, Bill is often found chasing the family Sprocker Spaniel across Salisbury Plain or attempting to desert his family duties in order to fly fish on the chalk streams of the River Avon.

Ex TIGER THYANGBOCHE

By Cpl Murphy

After a pleasant flight we were met at Kathmandu airport by a Brigade of Gurkha Nepal (BGN) representative who helped us through the VISA process, before exposing us to the mayhem of luggage collection and further documentation checks before we eventually escaped the airport.

After a good night's sleep and hearty breakfast from the cookhouse at BGN, we set about sorting out any last minute admin before loading up our transport in preparation for the epic journey to Jiri. We arrived in Jiri at 1800 and after some food we all retired to our beds for a good night's sleep in preparation

for our first day of trekking. Over the next ten days we trekked high and slept low to allow ourselves time to acclimatise walking through many villages such as Shivalaya, Bhandar, Sete, Jumbesi, Nuntala, Kharikhola, Paiyan and Phakding.

The people of Kharikhola were celebrating Maghe Saknrati, a Hindu festival celebrating the beginning of the month, marking the change in weather as it transcends into winter. The team chose to visit the celebrations and were all welcomed in as guests and treated to seasonal food whilst local boys and girls performed cultural dances.

At Phakding we joined the more commercial route for trekkers who begin their adventure after flying into Lukla Airport. For the first time we started to meet many more trekkers on their return to Lukla. The climb to Namche Bazaar was exactly



Sgt Durga thanking the local community for their hospitality

what we were expecting and what we had encountered before with mixture of stairs and boulders. After a cup of chya (tea) the team split up to explore the delights of Namche Bazaar, meeting up for evening meal and looking forward to an acclimatisation day. The dining room was decorated with a number of different nationality flags and t-shirts of various expeditions that had stayed at the hotel and it was only right the Regiment should leave its mark. A donated Regimental t-shirt was decorated with the route and the names of both the team and all the support staff before being pinned to the wall.



The Complete Team including guides and Porters in Namche Bazaar

We all awoke to view of Namche Bazaar as we had never seen it before, two inches of snow had dropped overnight adding to the already demanding day up to Tengboche at 3,900m. On arrival at Tengboche our accommodation was very basic but had a wood/yak dung burner which was essential as the temperature had taken a notable drop throughout the afternoon and into the evening. The team also took the opportunity to visit the largest Buddhist Monastery in the region.

The following morning we continued the gradual climb through to Dingboche where we had another acclimatising day. After a day's rest we headed for Loboche the stay allowed us to collect our thoughts before we attempted the last leg to Everest Base Camp (EBC). It was on this leg that we unfortunately had our first serious casualty suffering from Acute Mountain Sickness resulting in two of the team having to return to Loboche and eventually having to be aero med back to Kathmandu. The rest of the team reached Gorak Shep for lunch and then began the five hour round trip to ECB. It was gradual and steady hand

railing the Khumba Glacier all the way to EBC. Our arrival EBC emotions were mixed with some immediately contacting loved ones on mobiles crossed with disappointment that the whole team could not share the experience. The obligatory group photo was taken as well as a number of personal photos before beginning the unsavory trip back to Gorak Shep.

The following day was split in to two phases the first starting at 0530 which had the group up early in preparation for our most physical challenge to date, a climb to the highest point of the expedition at the summit of Kala Patter. The early morning was not all in vain as it would allow us to catch the best views of Everest and the surrounding mountains from the Nepal side of the Himalayas just as the sun rises. Unfortunately, this unique experience comes at a price with an extremely early morning, initial temperatures of below -20 C and a constant relentless climb. The experience at the summit was short lived as the cold forced us all down the mountain in a fraction of the time it took to climb in search of air, warmer temperatures and breakfast back at the lodge. The team began preparing for the phase two of the day; the gradual descent to Pheriche via Loboche for lunch. The descent was a much happier trek than the same trek three days earlier mostly due to seeing other trekkers on their outward journey to EBC. As the oxygen began to thicken our pace quickened to our accommodation for the night.

We followed our outward route all the way back to Choplung before turning up towards Lukla. Thankfully, the Everest Coffee Shop next door did the best coffee of the trip so far and it had free WIFI, an added bonus. The accommodation is positioned next to the airport with its short sloping runway off the end of a sheer drop, a shocking reality that the expedition was still not over. The evening in Lukla gave us all time to reflect on an eventful expedition and more importantly gave us the opportunity to express our appreciation to Lok (our guide) and his support staff. After a few celebratory drinks with the porters and our guides, the whole team had a good night's sleep before an early morning in order to catch the first flight out of Lukla Airport. Our arrival of in Kathmandu signified the end of the expedition and a chance to enjoy the cultural aspects of Kathmandu before returning to UK and reality.

All Photographs accompanying this article are by kind permission of LCpl Vishal Gurung



The Approach



The Approach



The Team at Everest Base Camp



The team safely in Kathmandu following an exhilarating "take off" from Lukla Airport



Transition to to the Royal Army Physical Training Corps (RAPTC)

By Sgt (SI) Bikash Gurung RAPTC

To keep the personal introduction as short as possible, I enlisted into the Brigade of Gurkhas in 2003, after completing nine months of Basic Infantry Training, Catterick; I could not wait to pursue my career in QOGLR. With motivational spirit on fire, what could have been a better opportunity than to volunteer for Trailwalker 2004? I must admit, 100 km in ten hours stood firm as solid foundation to develop myself physically and mentally. That was the turning point where the motivational source ignited into bursting flames that continued to spark and will continue to spark no matter what the challenge.

'Supplier' was my choice of trade, to provide an extra qualification in addition to being able to 'Drive'. After completing the Supplier Class 3 course in 2004, I was deployed to Iraq on Op Telic-6. Later in 2005, I finally managed to get loaded onto the All Arms Physical Training Course (AAPTC) of the many arduous courses I requested to attend. I was deployed to the Falkland Island in 2006 where my physical and mental robustness was pushed to the limit; winning the Falkland Marathon and one of the four successful members out of ten to complete a 75 mile tab from Port San Carlos to Stanley to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the liberation of the Island. Physical Training Instructor (PTI) has immensely enhanced to develop my many other professional and personal qualities, subsequently winning the Best Soldier Award on my Junior Leadership Cadre / Military Proficiency Cadre (Intake 2003) in 2007. I promised not to die (give up) nor be a coward but accumulating every drop of strength 'I trained hard to fight easy'. Then life swung into the rapids of operational tours of Op Herrick-7, 9, 11-Rear Supply Group.

Having experienced the pride and self-fulfilment of developing the fitness and physical endurance of others, I sought out a new challenge to specialise as a PTI for which I would need to pass the RAPTC selection and join a new Corps. My chain of command and the Regiment were very supportive of my choice of pursuing a different career. Blood and sweat turned into golden sparkle of blissfulness after passing Royal Army Physical Training Corps (RAPTC) selection in 2011. I would like to take this opportunity to thank my beloved wife Ganga, without whom I couldn't have been where I am now. I was one of the five successful candidates out of 21 to pass the extreme one week selection. After seven months of most rewarding PTI Class 1 course, I officially transferred into the elite RAPTC in December 2012 gaining a Foundation Degree in Sports Science with merit.

Time has moved on since, with so much to achieve to full potential. Eager to learn and reach new heights I have chosen the path to become an Exercise Rehabilitation Instructor (ERI) one of the specialised cadre within RAPTC. I must admit, six months ERI course in Headley Court has been one of the



Sgt Bikash Gurung RAPTC

most academically challenging courses I have ever done. I am extremely proud to be the first soldier from Gurkha background to break the mould into ERI cadre. The Foundation Degree in Sports Science achieved from PTI Class 1 course and the accreditation from ERI course has opened up wide avenues to commence Bachelor's Degree in Strengthening and Conditioning from University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN), due to be completed in early 2015.

Currently, I am assigned to the Primary Care Rehabilitation Facility (PCRF) at Pirbright for two years and happily accompanied by my wife Ganga and son Bihan. The glory days of Trailwalker, badminton, X-country and much more will be surely missed, but I will endure those sporting fronts to next level under different umbrella. With so many fond memories and friends in QOGLR I hope in the future to be able to serve with the Brigade of Gurkhas again in the near future. My sincere gratitude goes to the Regiment and all its members for their support throughout.

'Mens Sana In Corpore Sano'



Gurkha Staff and Personnel Support Company (GSPS)

History

Formed by Royal Warrant on 30 June 2011

Staff List

Colonel of the Regiment

Brigadier P R Burns (D Pers Admin)

Officers

Major	Bijayant	Sherchan	DCOS HQBG/OC GSPS
Captain	Ashwin	Rana	Det Comd 1 RGR
Captain	Kamansing	Rana	SO3 G1/MS HQBGN
Captain	Tikbahadur	Gurung	RAO 23 Pnr Regt
Captain	Suryakumar	Rai	RAO 1 Med Regt
Captain	Narendrakumar	Gurung	RAO 1 MWD Regt
Captain	Jitbahadur	Hamal	SO Admin Def Sect Nepal
Captain	Jitendra	Shakya	Det Comd 2 RGR

Warrant Officers Class 1

WO1	Bishan	Rai	SA HQ CTG
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Newsletter

By Major B Sherchan - OC GSPS

2013 has been a challenging but equally rewarding and productive year for the Gurkha Staff and Personnel Support (GSPS) Company as we continue consolidating our structures within the Army 2020 ORBAT. The Gurkha Combat HR Specialists operate at an exceptionally high standard and provide valuable professional service not only to meet the needs of the Brigade but also they are employed more widely within the Army under command of those units to which they are assigned. The GSPS presently numbers 104 Gurkha officers and soldiers, of whom 15 are in wider AGC (SPS) posts ranging from Regimental Administrative Officers (RAOs) to Financial and Systems Administrators (FSAs).

One of the primary reasons for the restructuring of the Brigade 'babujis' in June 2011 was to provide for all our Gurkha Combat HR Specialists a more valuable career and employment structure that would enable the individuals to meet their full career potential, while enabling the GSPS officers and soldiers

to retain their status as fully fledged members of the Brigade of Gurkhas. The enhancement to our career structures is an ongoing process as we seek to achieve two goals. Firstly, to retain our personnel as full serving members of the Brigade of Gurkhas with all the advantages of kudos, cultural and family understanding that it provides. Secondly, to ensure our Gurkha Combat HR Specialists are able to enjoy and achieve the full value of a career package equal to their counterparts in the AGC (SPS).

This has been recognised within the Personnel Administration capability delivered at unit level where opportunities in some roles, specifically financial, have been limited and hence, the urgency to develop a financial 'stream' to support the ideal of providing the GSPS with a sustainable career model that maximises potential. We have had some notable success to balance the current GSPS structure in order to produce a sustainable model offering a wider spectrum

of employment for GSPS officers and SNCOs. With the full support of Colonel Brigade of Gurkhas and Directorate Personnel Administration the following liability changes have been approved for transfer from AGC (SPS) to GSPS:

- Captain/RAO/10 QOGLR
- Captain/Instructor/Language Development Wing
- WO2/Wing Sergeant Major/Language Development Wing
- Staff Sergeant/FSA/10 QOGLR and QGE
- Staff Sergeant/Instructor/PATW Worthydown
- Sergeant/Regimental Accountant/1 and 2 RGR
- Sergeant/System Coordinator/ 2 Signal Regiment

GSPS continues to play its part on operations in support of Op HERRICK. A total of 15 Gurkha Combat HR Specialist staff from 1 RGR and 10 QOGLR were deployed on operations in Afghanistan in 2013 in a variety of roles. At the time of writing this Newsletter, we have a lone GSPS Warrant Officer, WO2 Khadak Chhetri, in theatre providing staff support to the Headquarters in Kabul.

On the sporting front, WO2 Anil Gurung assumed the coveted position of Team manager responsible for fielding a credible GSPS team for the Nepal Cup. Unfortunately, despite some very talented individuals, we went out in the first round to a strong QGE team. However, our Nepal Cup campaign for 2014 and beyond has started in earnest with a realistic aspiration to win the Cup in five years' time. This is a realistic aspiration and I am convinced that once we eventually win the Nepal Cup, the floodgates will open.

On a lighter note, the Brigade of Gurkha Clerks Cup on 20 July 2013 was a great family occasion and saw 1 RGR regain the Clerks Cup despite their preparation for the Unit Move to Brunei later that week. WO2 Kritiman Baraili and his team from 10 QOGLR provided an excellent programme culminating in an all ranks Dinner at the Junior Ranks Club.

We were honoured by the appointment of Brigadier Paul Burns as our new Colonel Gurkha Staff and Personnel Support with effect from 01 August 2013, in succession to Brigadier Nicky Moffat. We, of course, warmly welcome Brigadier Paul Burns to the Gurkha fold - an inaugural GSPS Dinner Night was held on 13 November to welcome our new Colonel GSPS (details are covered in a separate article). As Colonel GSPS, Brig Burns is also a member of the Gurkha Council of Colonels and we look forward to his leadership and wise counsel; thus ensuring that the voice of GSPS is heard at the highest level. However, it would be remiss of me not to mention the contribution of Brigadier Nicky Moffat in the launching of the Gurkha Staff and Personnel Support Company and we thank her for her foresight and dedication.

In our last Newsletter I embarked on informing our Kukri readers on the history of the GSPS and its formation in June 2011. I wish to continue along that theme albeit with a sharp focus on its early beginnings. Kukri magazine readers will be enthralled to note that the modern Gurkha Combat HR Specialists that we know today evolved from Indian civilians known as 'writers'. It is worth quoting an excerpt from a previous edition, which reads as follows:

...Gurkhas have been in British service since 1815 when four irregular corps enlisting Gurkhas were raised as part of the Honourable East India Company. Over the next century the number of Gurkha regiments expanded until by the outbreak of the First World War there were ten infantry regiments each comprising two battalions. Within each Gurkha battalion there evolved a clerical establishment, initially manned by Indian civilians known as 'writers' and later a mix of Indian and Gurkha military clerks, the latter having been enlisted as line boys. These were the sons of Gurkhas who were born and brought up within the regimental lines in India. They were usually better educated than those Gurkhas recruited from the hills of Nepal and were enlisted as signallers, bandsmen and clerks. Each battalion had its own clerical structure headed by its own jemadar (junior Indian/Gurkha officer promoted through the ranks) who was designated the Jemadar, or Head, Clerk.

Following the independence of India in 1947, the ten Gurkha regiments were divided between Britain and India and on 01 January 1948, four regiments, each comprising two battalions, were transferred to The British Army. Each of the Gurkha battalions and the newly raised Gurkha Engineers and Signals (Gurkha Corps units), known collectively as the Brigade of Gurkhas, had its own clerical establishment, which mirrored that of British regiments. However, in the early years the Brigade struggled to recruit Gurkha soldiers from Nepal with the necessary skills required of clerks, primarily because at that time schooling in Nepal was very rudimentary. The majority of clerks were therefore recruited from the Gurkha communities in and around the Darjeeling District in North East India where they had the benefit of a better schooling and education. In the 1970s, the recruiting policy for Britain's Gurkhas was changed and only clerks domiciled in Nepal were enlisted...

In summary, the Gurkha Staff and Personnel Support Company has enjoyed a tremendous year in all respects and has proved itself in every challenge with which it has been placed with. Our forebears can be justifiably proud of their legacy of tradition and excellence that is embodied in today's Gurkha Combat HR Specialists. There is no doubt that the GSPS is very strongly placed for the future and looks forward with relish to the challenges of 2014 and beyond.

Gurkha Staff and Personnel Support Coy (GSPS) Forum/Dinner Night

By Sgt Bijay Limbu GSPS

***'All great change begins at the forums and dinner table'* Ronald Reagan**

The early morning sky laid a canvas for the sun, I arose to the dawn of a beautiful day. The day was Wednesday 30 June 2011 and on that day for the first time the Brigade of Gurkhas was officially recognising the role of BG clerks by creating a new Gurkha Staff and Personnel Support Company and we BG clerks were to be presented with a new cap badge by General Sir David Richards GCB CBE DSO ADC Gen in his role as Colonel Commandant of the Brigade of Gurkhas.

As of this writing GSPS Coy has been formed for 17 months. The reminiscence of that wet and blustery afternoon in Shorncliffe receiving new cap badge is not yet a far-flung memory. Despite the short period the Coy has come a long way and achieved a lot beyond imagination. Meticulous planning, communication and hard work from all ranks has been the driving force behind this success and without doubt the annual GSPS Forum has been the platform for the source of this meticulous planning and communication.

This year the annual GSPS Forum was held on Wednesday 13 November 2013 at Trenchard Lines, Upavon followed by a GSPS Dinner Night to formally welcome new Col GSPS - Brig Paul Burns (Directorate Personnel Administration).

As planned all the GSPS SNCOs, WOs and Offrs (stationed in UK) not on essential duties arrived at Bagnall Conf Room at Trenchard Lines at 1400. Maj Bijayant Sherchan, Officer Commanding GSPS gave an opening remark and read through the minutes of the last meeting. He then gave an insight and update on GSPS liability/establishment, manning forecast, policy directive and GSPS dress regulations. OC GSPS also stressed fact that GSPS was formed not only to gain unique identity but also to significantly improve the opportunities of employment for BG Clerks. This was followed by MS presentation from Maj Ian Hill, SO2 SPS Sldrs, APC Glasgow. GSPS Coy forms a constituent part of the Brigade of Gurkhas, with HQBG as its parent Directorate and the Directorate SPS (Army) as the employing Service Directorate. Therefore GSPS career management was transferred to CM Command Support branch in APC alongside AGC (SPS) desk with SO2 SPS Sldrs as a career manager for the GSPS

Soldiers. Maj Hill gave an insight into career management and his ongoing aspiration in collaboration with the OC GSPS to remove the boundaries between GSPS and AGC (SPS) career employment. The forum concluded at around 1700. During the forum many ideas and views regarding improvement on GSPS Coy were discussed and debated. Ideas on Coy fund, GSPS Regimental Association, Regimental Newsletter and social events were discussed to bring the inspiration of unity among GSPS cohorts and of course where there is unity there will be success.

An hour after the completion of the forum, we gathered in the Offrs Mess for the first ever GSPS Dinner Night. The aim of the night was to welcome the new Col GSPS, Brigadier Burns and enjoy the occasion in good harmony. In addition to the chief guest, Col J G Robinson (Col BG), Maj Ian Hill (SO2 SPS Sldrs) and Maj T Pike (COS BG) were also invited as guests on this historic occasion. On arrival of the guests at 1830, we gathered at the Mess Foyer for the photograph. The best thing about photograph is that they capture a moment that's gone forever, impossible to reproduce. After photograph, we proceeded to the dining hall at 1920 and waited for the top table to arrive. The piper led and escorted the guest to the top table. The PMC (Sup Clk HQBG) for the night then rapped the gavel for silence and after the grace from Mr Vice, dinner was served. Near the end of the dinner Maj Bijayant Sherchan OC GSPS then officially welcomed Brig Burns by presenting him with the Gurkha Hat on behalf of all ranks GSPS fraternity followed by speech. During the speech OC GSPS also paid tribute to the outgoing Col GSPS Brig N Moffats and applauded her contribution during her tenure. Col Robinson (Col BG) then welcomed Brig Burns to the Brigade of Gurkhas by highlighting his contribution to GSPS on his recent meetings and forums. Brig Burns in return gave an inspiring speech highlighting his goals for his tenure ahead, vision and aspirations for the GSPS Coy.

Following the dinner, we retreated to the bar and the guests departed around midnight. Some days are nicer, some are better but some are even worth writing. The day was definitely worth writing.



On behalf of all the Coy members present on the day, we would like to thank HQBG team and OC GSPS for organising such a memorable day.



BG Clerks' Cup 2013

By Cpl Pramod Rai GSPS



The Annual BG Clerks' Cup this year successfully took place on Saturday 20 July 2013 in St Omer Barracks, Aldershot. The hosts for this event were the GSPS members from 10 QOGLR who put every effort to make this event worthwhile and a success. In addition, this year, the ex-RGR/GSPS members including families who had transferred into the wider Army were also invited.

The morning of 20 July 2013 began with an annual forum in the Training Wing 10 QOGLR among the GSPS members where Maj Bijayant Sherchan (OC GSPS) updated everyone on GSPS matters. Soon after the forum concluded, everyone made their way to the Astro 3G pitch in Queen's Avenue for a group photograph. The day also saw an opportunity to celebrate GSPS birthday by cutting cake. An 11-a-side league football competition between four teams commenced after the cake cutting celebration. The teams competing this year were 10 QOGLR, 1 RGR, QG Signals and QGE. Due to the geographical locations of ERE units, GC (Sittang) was affiliated with 10 QOGLR, GC (Catterick) APC Glasgow with QG Signals, and GC (Mandalay) with QGE.

A day before the Clerks' Cup on 19 July 2013, the annual golf competition was also held which was organised by SSgt Suren Limbu. On that event, the overall winner was Sgt Narayan Thapa, Net winner SSgt Suren Limbu, longest drive Cpl Rakam and Nearest to the Pin (NTP) WO2 Anil Gurung.

The weather on the day of the Clerks' Cup was perfect; neither too hot nor too cold, only filled with competitive spirit where everyone's mind was focused on winning the football competition. On side note, 10 QOGLR had a history of winning this cup for three consecutive years, so their focus was more on defending their title. However, they had to bite the dust this year as other teams proved to be more efficient than them.

Concurrently, there were fun games and activities organised for the ladies and children too. A small food stall was also set up at the side selling soft drinks, momos and crisps. At around 1530, the cup final took place between 1 RGR and QGE. Both teams were equally good and the final score was 2 - 2. However, victory went to 1 RGR in the end in the penalty shootout. Soon after the final match concluded, prize distribution took place. The man of the match trophy was given to Cpl Yogesh Pun and the highest goal scorer to LCpl Pratap Gurung.

The final phase for the evening was dinner and entertainment which took place in JRDC, St Omer Barracks. The guests and rest of the GSPS members started coming in around 1830 after which the atmosphere became very lively. OC GSPS gave a short speech in the beginning and was followed by farewell programme for members going on pension and transferring to the wider Army.

Catering had been booked from one of the finest restaurants in Aldershot and the food they served was delicious. To everyone's thrill, a band named 'Haami' had been arranged from London who kept us well entertained throughout by their live music and performances. GSPS were not short in talents too; WO2 Khadak Chhetri soothed everyone's heart that night by playing some of the finest Nepalese dhons on his flute. The wonderful annual get together concluded around midnight with a cocktail dance. Indeed the event presented us with the best opportunity to meet/greet friends and families in a pleasant atmosphere.



EX GSPS Run - BFB RAO Det Singapore Marathon

By LCpl Sagar Sherchan GSPS

“Brave the pain, celebrate later” was this year’s Singapore Marathon motivational quote which was followed by our team to keep the GSPS flag flying high

We all have people we admire for obvious reasons although the point of “obviousness” is not apparent to everyone. We admire those who save lives and those that are working hard for the good and benefit of others. We have heroes, we strive to be like others yet try to find our own uniqueness within that similarity.

For that simple reason, I decided to ‘take the plunge’ and run a marathon. It was a snap decision but carefully thought to raise a fund for the worthwhile charity - The Gurkha Welfare Trust. I was joined by three young members of the RAO detachment I RGR; Pte Bishal, Pte Monik and Pte Nabaraj. We organised various charity events and managed to raise \$2,500.00 (Singapore \$).

Train hard and fight easy - we ran a few miles to familiarise with the long distance. Who else; me being the oldest member, I had the pleasure of getting my lungs work extra mile than the rest. If you think running a marathon is half crazy, then you are right. It drains you and makes you think “Will I do it again”? We flew to Singapore on 30 November 2013.

At 0500 on the 01 December 2013, it was officially underway. There was no gun shot to be heard (if there was one), but you could tell as everyone started moving nearly simultaneously. It is hard to describe the stampeding chorus of foot steps, but it seemed that everyone was jogging in cadence. We were moving pretty slow, but the beauty of the chip is it doesn't matter how far back you are from the starting line. Your race officially begins when you cross the white line.

The first few miles were slightly easy and we consciously tried not to pay attention to the pace of the other runners, focusing on the ground in front of us and telling ourselves

to stay slow, don't go out too fast. The chorus of footsteps still filled the air. If you go out too fast I knew it could have ugly consequences later. But it was impossible not to follow the other runners being so crowded. In front of us there were a sea of people and the predominant colour was clearly visible from the distance. I marvelled at how fast some of these runners must be going. I wish I could say I was feeling great, but instead it was anxiety at how the run was going to play itself out. This may be the worst part of a marathon. On a scale of 1 to 10, I'd say I was feeling a solid 3.

At 33 Km, I started to think it's me over, but then I was determined to complete this race and I could hear my team members saying 'You can do it'. There was only one genuine thought that I can remember and I told myself over and over: you've worked very hard to get this far. Yes, this is tough but you've made it this far. You must continue! Do you ever want to run this far again? I will readily admit that I probably stood no chance if this was not the real me. There were lot of people along the course and the cheering still continued, “Good job. You're looking great!” Okay, I'm really thinking these people are not being honest. I can't be looking great. I feel awful! It was getting hard to even acknowledge



these people and I always wanted to smile, wave back, and tell them thank you. More and more I'm thinking, "Never again." Every mile marker was now a real victory. Finally to my great relief, the race was completed in four hours and 45 minutes. The team took the photo and waved the GSPS flag with a big smile.

Will I do another? Up to this point I've always said, "I'm really not a runner." But now having completed a marathon (I have to keep saying that because I still find it hard to believe) I'm going to have a hard time selling that line. So in

a perverse way I'm really saying I want to run similar kind of marathons, but this time to be at least three Km near to the front runner. Huh! Well my secret incentive - have I managed to achieve? I did! I shed few pounds to get my trouser fit.

It's important to know that at the end of the day it's not the medals you remember. What you remember is the process, what you learn about yourself by challenging yourself, the experiences you share with other people, the honesty the training demands and those are things nobody can take away from us whether you finish in the middle or the front runner.

AGC Triple Crown Challenge 2013

By LCpl Pratik Paija



The AGC Triple Crown Challenge has always been an event that excites every member of the AGC Corps across the British Army. Like every year, this year, 15 May 2013 was the date marked to hold this unforgettable event at Worthy Down, Winchester.

This year over 120 teams from different Units entered the Triple Crown Challenge which included 1 RGR, 2 RGR and other Gurkha Units. RAO Detachment 2 RGR Brunei entered for the March & Shoot Competition with a strong team of four led by Sgt Bowyer (SPS), Cpl Samir, Pte Aanko and Pte Yudip.

'Train hard and fight easy' was our motto from the beginning. I am glad to say that our months of hard work did pay off and on the day we finished the race with a very good timing of 2 hr 37 mins 06 sec. The route was muddy and the rain poured on us. After the race all the competitors gathered at the main pitch for the results and the prize giving. We came in 26th position over all but it was well deserved and an unforgettable event.

"In the spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt." Margaret Atwood. Well, having marched through the mudded terrain and rain on the day we did smell like dirt. At the end, I felt everyone were very proud of what they had achieved as an individual and more importantly as a team. The AGC Triple Crown Challenge 2013 was indeed a pleasant way to end the season, spring.



The Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas

Staff List

Director of Music
Assistant Director of Music
Band Sergeant Major
Bugle Major
Band Secretary

Major P W Norley
Captain Sewanta Purja Pun
WO2 Indrabahadur Gurung
Sergeant Bhojendrabahadur Pun
Mrs Christine Heath

Newsletter

The Gurkha Festival of Music 2013

The Gurkha Festival of Music, an annual charity event, was held at Nye Hall, Duke of York Military School Dover on 4, 5 & 6 April. The concert was presented by The Band of The Brigade of Gurkhas with the Combined Fanfare Team from The Band of The Army Air Corps and The Band of The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, Pipers from The 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles, Shorncliffe Military Wives Choir and Gurkha Band Children's Choir. It was a hugely successful event where female dancers from the Nepalese Community Folkestone were also invited to perform.

Support to Charity Organisations

The Brigade Band has supported GWT, ABF, SSAFA, Help for Heroes etc. by performing Sounding Retreat and Concert performances. Among these charity events, one of the most significant, was the Sounding Retreat performed at the Grange

on 07 September 2013. It was organised by ABF The Soldiers' Charity. It was a great opportunity to capture the heart of many VIPs, business personalities and celebrities including Joanna Lumley who took the salute at the end of the performance. The Charity successfully raised over £100,000.

Overseas Engagement

The Gurkha Band was tasked to provide a musical support to UKSC (Germany) from 12 May to 7 June 2013. Most of the engagements were Mess Dinner Nights and Queen's Birthday Reception/Parade in different locations around Germany including the British High Commission, Berlin. During this roulement period, the Band was also tasked to provide musical support to the 55th Anniversary of International Military Pilgrimage at Lourdes France from 22 to 27 May 2014. *Please see separate Article*



Defence Engagement

As a part of Defence Engagement, The Band of The Brigade of Gurkhas visited India and Nepal from 03 December 2013 to 15 January 2014. This included training, workshops and performances with 11 GR Band Lucknow, the Nepalese Army Band, the Nepal Police Band and Nepal Armed Forces Police Band. This engagement successfully concluded with the Recruit Intake 2014 Attestation Parade at British Gurkhas Pokhara on 03 January 2014 followed by seven days of trekking to Annapurna Base camp (ABC).

Germany and Lourdes Tour 2013

by Musn Binjay Limbu

Guten Tag! In the early hours of 12 May 2013, the Gurkha Band and the Pipes and Drums from the 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles packed up their instruments and luggage and headed to Germany. It took almost eight hours to reach HQ BF (G) Rheindahlen with breaks along the way. Upon arrival, hot food was served and accommodation was organised. There was a tremendous amount of excitement because after staying for one week in Germany, the Band was to travel to Lourdes, France, for the second time since 2004.

The next morning the band freight arrived on time, allowing for rehearsals to begin. Over the next few days, marching displays were also rehearsed, focusing on slick drills and high quality musical performance. Afternoons were set aside for quintet, sectional and individual rehearsals. The folk group (The Hill Boys) also put in extra hours rehearsing for their many upcoming performances.

On 22 May 2013, the Band set off to Lourdes for the 55th International Military Pilgrimage. This was cause for excitement, especially as it was the first time some of the members of the Pipes and Drums had participated in this event. The journey to Lourdes was to take 24 hours by train. To pass the time, the Band sang and danced, accompanied by acoustic guitars, madals and pipes. It wasn't long before other service personnel on board the train began to join in, the whole train having fun and enjoying the atmosphere.

The train stopped along the way in Worms, Germany, where the Brass Ensemble performed at the Opening Mass in the Cathedral of St. Peter.

Eventually, the train arrived at its destination and the Band was taken to a cosy hotel. Soon after arrival, everyone was enjoying many courses of French food and lots of delicious bread. Later that afternoon, the Band was welcomed in the opening address of the 55th International Military Pilgrimage.

Early the following morning, the Band performed in a parade, playing famous marches while leading all the British troops through the town of Lourdes. The Band also played hymns at the penitential service in the Cathedral. An official photograph of the whole British contingent on the steps of the Basilica was then taken for posterity.

One of the highlights of the Pilgrimage was being invited to a barbecue at Hosanna House. Here, the Band performed the world famous "Khukuri Dance" as well as a marching display with the Pipes and Drums. This was followed by a performance by The Hill Boys and the Pipes and Drums, who encouraged the audience to join in and dance - which was done with great enthusiasm!

The Band had a fantastic time in Lourdes, providing musical support throughout a major religious event attended by representatives from over 35 nations. After a closing ceremony, the Band boarded the train once again for the 24 hour journey back to Germany.

Once back in Germany, the Band was faced with a very busy week full of high profile parades. The first of these was in Paderborn, where crowds of local people gathered to hear performances of various genres of music, from marches to movie themes. That evening, the Band stayed in Normandy Barracks, Paderborn.

The next day, the Band travelled to Hanover for the Queen's Birthday Reception. To celebrate this, the 1st Armoured Division had organised a Sounding Retreat in front of Neues Rathaus. The woodwind quintet played during the cocktail party that preceded the ceremony. During the Retreat itself, the Band was joined by the Pipes and Drums of The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards and 5 Rifles Bugles. The ceremony finished in style with a grand finale of "High on a Hill" performed by massed bands and Bugles.

After the Sounding Retreat, the Band moved on to Hohne for another Queen's Birthday Reception, this time organised by Bergen Hohne Garrison. The Band performed the "Khukuri Dance" and finale tunes, closing with the German and British National Anthems.

Finally, after travelling six hours from Hohne, the Band reached Berlin for another Queen's Birthday Parade. Here, they played incidental music throughout the afternoon, with LCpl Manikumar Rai demonstrating his "X Factor" at the piano throughout the reception. The reception was then followed by a short marching display which featured the ever popular dancers.

Early the next morning, after breakfast, the Band headed back to the UK, taking with them many memories to cherish from their tour in Germany and Lourdes.

The Band would like to thank The Pipes and Drums of 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles for their continuous musical support and commitment throughout the tour.

A good time was had by all, and there was even time to hold a few social events and cook Nepalese curry. It was an enjoyable experience that will be looked back upon with fond memories.

Jai Gurkha Band



*Top: DOM Maj P W Norley with Mini Brass Group inside the Cathedral
Left: ADOM Capt S Purja Pun conducting the Band at Lourdes
Right: Band in front of the Lourdes Basilica*



Ladies Dinner Night 2013

Mrs Anjali Mukhiya Rai
WO CPL Kiran Mukhiya (69942)

A piece of log may be just enough to create adequate fire to warm you up, however a few more pieces may consolidate into a bonfire, large enough to warm up the entire circle of friends. It's needless to say that individuality counts, but unanimity supersedes. The Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas is a closely-knit unit, where support for one another is immensely imperative. Team spirit and unity among the band members have been exemplary in the Brigade of Gurkhas.

Parties and get-togethers are part and parcel of army life, however the Gurkha Band has managed to stay a step ahead of the rest. The unit definitely knows how to spice up every event. The Ladies Dinner Night, designed especially for the dependents, took place on 23 November. It was a night to remember, a very special treat for all the lovely supportive wives, who've always been a pillar of strength for their men.

It was around 1800, when all the ladies in their elegant dresses arrived at the gate, welcomed by members of the Gurkha Band. The ladies were clad in beautiful dresses, accentuated by expensive accessories, hair-dos and the right kind of make-up. All the ladies assembled at the recreation room in the band block with their cocktail drink, anticipating a wonderful experience. Meanwhile, the BSM formally welcomed the wives and spoke out his plan for the evening. We started with a formal group photograph.

Just after the photo session, ladies were invited to the dinner table, which was laid with silverware. The Director of Music assisted the other members to serve the ladies with delicious dinner while the Quintet from The Corps of Royal Engineers Band played soothing background music. It created the ambiance of the Officer's Mess, sophisticated throughout, just right to

make the dependents feel special. Their husbands had previously advised all the dependents about the quintet music.

Post dinner, the ladies were ushered to the recreation room once more, where more photography followed; thanks to Mr Sherjang Thapa, Mr Khusiman Gurung and Mr Pawan Rai for playing our photographer.

Meanwhile, after the posh dinner, all the tables were massed again and decorated aesthetically, replete with white napery and glinting cutlery swirling away into the gloomy margins of the dining room. President Mrs Rina Pun draped in a yellow gown, with gold-embroidered facings, tapped her mallet and invited us all to stand for the Loyal Toast. With a certain amount of harrumphing, all the lovely ladies got to their feet and raised their glasses. The president cried out: "Ladies, the Queen!" and all present wives replied "The Queen!"

Customarily, the lights were lit and the dance floor was now made ready for the ladies. The ladies then proceeded to the dance floor and danced to a variety to music. I have to thank Mr Raaj Pun and Mr Sunil Gurung for making excellent DJs.

The Gurkha Band has organised many such programmes over the years, the recent one being the Dashain party. It created a festive mood and was solely presented by the families. The whole event was absolutely flawless and the service was utterly delightful. At Gurkha Band, we are all aware that coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress and working together is success. Last but not the least, all the ladies are hoping for more of these events to come in the future.

Jai GURKHA Band!



Trek to Annapurna Base Camp 5 to 11 January 2014

By Musn Sherjang Thapa

The Band of The Brigade of Gurkhas has toured many parts of the world and performed for both military and public events. In December 2013 we headed to Nepal, the home of all Gurkhas. After a busy month of providing training to the Nepal Army, Nepal Police and Nepal Armed Police, performing concerts, marching displays and Sounding Retreat, it became time for adventure training. Despite the extremely cold weather, all the band personnel were excited and looking forward to undertaking one of the most famous treks in the world - The Annapurna Base Camp (ABC).

Day 1 - Pokhara (823m) to Ghandruk (1,940m)

After having breakfast at the beautiful lake city of Pokhara, we left for Ghandruk on the bus. We reached Syauli Bazar (1,170m) via Birethanti (1,070m) and started the trek uphill to Ghandruk. Passing through some small villages and enjoying the spectacular views of the mountains, we crossed the suspension bridge over Khumnu Khola (River) and finally reached Ghandruk where the villagers warmly welcomed us. As we were staying overnight, we quickly dropped our luggage in the lodge and left to explore the village. We visited the local museum, school and temple. Though we could not get a glimpse of the snow capped mountains due to cloudy weather, we were amazed by the views of terraced fields and thick green forest. Later in the evening, we were warmly entertained by the local people who sang Dohori (strophic songs) to the beat of the madal (traditional drum) and we all danced together. In this short stay, we learned about the diverse and rich cultural traditions of Ghandruk.

Day 2 - Ghandruk to Chhomrong (2,170m)

Early in the morning we left Ghandruk and climbed upwards for about an hour until we reached Ghandrukkot. The sun was shining, the weather was clear and we were blessed with a stunning close up towering view of Fishtail Mountain (Machhapuchhre). Then we started walking all the way down to the Kimron Khola (River) at the bottom of the valley. Before beginning our ascent to Chhomrong village, we took a break to have lunch. While on the trail we encountered the mighty peak of Annapurna above the village and the view of Fishtail Mountain facing across the valley. Finally we reached our destination for the night and took a brief rest while having popcorn with tea and coffee. Some of us then went out to enjoy a short walk through the village and surrounding neighbourhood, while the more foot weary just relaxed. In the evening, we enjoyed another round of songs and dances performed by the kind hearted villagers. Chhomrong is a beautiful village located in the lap of the great Annapurna.

Day 3 - Chhomrong to Himalaya (2,870m)

The trail started with downhill stone stairs leading to the suspension bridge over the river Modi Khola. We then ascended the high steep slopes reaching Sinuwa. The optimal temperature of nine degrees made it a perfect day for trekking. Passing through a thick rhododendron forest, we arrived at the village of Bamboo,



where we heard the sound of a large river rushing down the gorge. The name Bamboo was only explained when we entered the forest full of short and thin varieties of bamboo. We slowly climbed uphill enjoying the atmosphere of the thick forest, taking time to admire and take pictures of the fascinating scenery of waterfalls on the mountain lying opposite the trail. We stayed at the Himalaya Hotel that evening.

Day 4 - Himalaya to Annapurna Base Camp (ABC) (4,130m)

Following the trail, we gradually ascended and crossed small bridges over the many streams. The trail became rocky and passed through solitary places where we saw some wildlife species such as monkeys, deer, tigers and brightly coloured birds. We climbed past the Hinko Cave, a huge overhanging rock. A further climb paved the way to Deurali. We had to be alert as there are many avalanche prone areas on the trail. After about half an hour out of Deurali, we were in the middle of a river bed surrounded by giant snow covered mountains. We gently climbed through the river bed and then steeply ascended over to the mountain side. When the sun rose, the snowy mountains shone and the river valley was filled with warm rays of sunshine.

The trek to Machhapuchhre Base Camp (MBC) was somewhat strenuous but the unfolding view of the majestic Machhapuchhre was certainly a rewarding experience. After having lunch at MBC we proceeded to Annapurna Base Camp (ABC), here the vegetation disappears as you climb higher and the snow boulders melt and form small streams. We followed one of these streams and passed a few huts alongside the moraine. There we saw sensational views of the near vertical south face of Annapurna towering above us; we had made it!

After four days of walking we had finally arrived at the Annapurna Base Camp (ABC) (4,130m). It was cold but we were all impressed by the dynamic 360 degree panoramic view of the Fishtail, Annapurna and other peaks. We felt a sense of peace from the tranquillity and isolation that surrounded us. It was worth every step. With the outside temperature less than minus 15 degrees, we spent an extremely cold night at the base of the mountains.

Day 5 - Annapurna Base Camp (ABC) to Sinuwa

We woke up at the crack of dawn to witness the sun rise. As the rays of sunlight hit the mountain, it lit with a fabulous orange warm light; it was simply breathtaking and one of the best scenes I have ever witnessed. After sunrise, we had breakfast and begin descending back to Sinuwa, passing through Machhapuchhre Base Camp (MBC), Deurali, Dovan and Bamboo. It was a good day for walking as the weather was mostly cloudy and not too warm. On our way back, we passed through forests, waterfalls and also encountered stunning views of the Fishtail and other

mountains. Heading back down to the valley was much easier than climbing up. Later in the day we arrived in Sinuwa.

Day 6 - Sinuwa to Jhinu

We climbed up the toughest part of the trail - thousands of uphill stone steps, and reached Chhomrong. From there we descended to Jhinu Danda, had lunch and gave our tired muscles a well deserved rest in the delightful hot spring water next to the river. It is believed that the hot spring waters have curative and medicinal powers. In the evening, we attended a celebration dinner together with all the guides and porters - this was our last night together.

Day 7 - Jhinu to Pokhara

We continued the trek from Jhinu Danda to Kyumi village via New Bridge. After arriving at Syauli Bazaar our trekking came to an end and we drove back to Pokhara.

This seven day trek brought us close to the base of an impressive 8,091m high mountain (ranked the tenth highest in the world) with diverse landscapes and incredible scenery along the way. We enjoyed the warm welcome and gracious hospitality extended to us by the villagers, giving us the chance to gain insight into their local culture. Walking in higher altitudes is more physically demanding than walking in lower altitudes; but with a positive attitude, self confidence, strong determination and good physical fitness we accomplished this trek successfully. We returned with vivid lifelong memories of seven days and six nights in the Himalayas.

Jai GURKHA Band!



OP SANGITIK YATRA - Band Defence Engagement to Nepal and India

By LCpl Sunil Gurung

This was the third time in recent years that Gurkha Band has been given the opportunity to visit Nepal. Gurkha Band visited Nepal in 2002 and 2005 to undertake public performances. This time however, we were visiting for a full scale Defence Engagement. The tour gave us the opportunity to display our professionalism across Nepal and share our skills, knowledge and experience with the Nepalese Army Band, Nepal Police Band and Armed Police Force Band.

The Band travelled to Nepal on 02 December 2013. We were warmly welcomed by the Permanent Staff of British Gurkha Kathmandu (BGK) with an excellent party with first rate messing. 05 December was the only day we had to rehearse and prepare the equipment for the tour to India; thankfully all our instruments and uniforms had arrived safely.

Our first engagement in India took place in New Delhi at the Sunken Garden of the British High Commission. We performed a concert followed by a marching display. The garden was full with all the staff, employees and families from the High Commission. During our two performances, we performed some popular tunes from Nepal and India; these were much appreciated by the local audience, who were amazed by Gurkha Band professionalism and slickness. After the marching display, many of the audience were queuing up to have their photograph taken with us.



On 07 of December, we took a flight to the home of 11 Gurkha Rifles (11 GR) in Lucknow. Their Band performed a short concert for us, starting with the welcoming song Swaagat cha. The next day saw us delivering intense musical training during rehearsals for the combined concert to be held on 09 December in the Officers' Auditorium with 11 GR Band. The concert programme was dedicated to the late Nelson Mandela, including a stirring rendition of World In Union.

After returning from India, DOM, ADOM, all Gurkha Band SNCOs and a piper from BGK undertook a short Recce to all three military bands in Nepal - Nepalese Army (NA), Nepal Police (NP) and Nepal Armed Police Force (NAPF). The following three weeks training programme was discussed

at length and a common approach decided upon. Our first combined rehearsals were with the NA Band on 13, 14, and 16 December. These were held in the Officers Club Bhadrakali. Initially, the Nepalese Army Band was divided into instrumental sections for individual tuition and detailed rehearsal. We were also able to issue instrumental repair equipment, accessories and other useful musical items. These had been kindly donated by Bands across the British Army, Royal Marines and Royal Air Force. Following this, instructional sessions were held on instrument repair and maintenance.



The overall training and combined rehearsals continued with the NP Band. This is led by the ex-Gurkha soldier SSP Rajendra Gurung as the Senior Director of Music. Both bands worked together for two days and performed a combined concert at the Nepal Police Academy, Maharajung on 20 December.

The last band to be visited was the APF Band at Sita Paila. Two days of instruction and rehearsal were followed by a combined concert in the APF Stadium Hall on Christmas Day. Rehearsals had to be held outside in the sun and dust, despite this the training and final concert were very successful.

During the tour, somehow we managed to fit in performances at the British school, Jawalakhel and the Lincoln school, Ravi Bhavan, both in Kathmandu. In the Evening of 13 December, we delivered a Sounding Retreat at the British Embassy Lazimpat, Kathmandu. This was followed by a Christmas Carol concert. The Gurkha Band also entertained at numerous Dinner Nights and other festive occasions.

The final part of the training programme was the preparation for a Joint Tattoo held at the Army Sports Stadium, Lalitpur on 28 December. This was a grand event involving all four bands, many dancers, Pipes & Drums, drill display teams and actors. In total there were over 600 personnel on parade for the grand finale. The event was attended by the Nepalese Chief of the Army Staff, Gaurav Shumsher JB Rana, as well as many other high ranking officers and government officials.



Finally, the Gurkha Band moved to Pokhara. The Attestation Parade for Recruit Intake 2014 was hosted by British Gurkhas Pokhara (BGP). The Gurkha Band provided musical support to the occasion in the presence of the Chief of the General Staff, Colonel Commandant The Brigade of Gurkhas General Sir Peter Wall GCB CBE ADC. Also present were Lady Wall, the Brigadier General of the Nepal Army and the DIG of the Nepal Police Force. Many of the spectators were ex Gurkha soldiers and their families and families of Recruit Intake 2014.

All in all it was a busy, tiring, memorable and highly successful tour. The Gurkha Band proved to be the perfect ambassador for the Brigade of Gurkhas and the wider British Army.



Jai The Band of The Brigade of Gurkhas!

The Great Gurkha Kukri Dance

By Major John Burlison

When you go to a Gurkha Band concert or other Gurkha performance you are sometimes entertained by the 'Great Gurkha Kukri Dance'. It is billed as traditional Gurkha culture and coming straight from the high hills and valleys of the Himalayas. If you wonder the origins of this display, the following might help.

In summer of 1968 a large contingent from the Brigade came to UK to put Gurkhas in the UK Public eye. The contingent comprised the 2nd Goorkhas Regimental Band with (the late) Major Dinty Moore as the Director of Music and Captain Hastabahadur Thapa as Assistant DoM, 2 GR Buglers and pipers, drummers and support staff from other regiments of the Brigade. I was appointed the OIC and Rodney Shoesmith from 6 GR was 2IC. Our base was the old and empty Cavalry Barracks in Aldershot from where we would drive to our performances. Our main venues were the large county shows around England and Wales and the Royal Tournament in London and the Edinburgh Tattoo. The band programme was a standard marching and music display of military music with bugles and the pipes and drums. This display lasted about eight minutes.

All was fine until we came to prepare for the Edinburgh Tattoo who suddenly said they wanted more than eight minutes; could we extend to twelve.

Nobody now knows whose basic idea it was but all of a sudden a Gurkha dance was conceived which involved waving kukris around and shouting "Hoki Hoina? Ho, Ho, Ho". Luckily one of the clerks, Mohan Chhetri from 2/2 GR, had some Nepali musical background and suggested the Nepali tune "Chepe kholako chiso pani" ('The Chepe river never dries and brave Gurkhas heads are never bowed') which Dinty Moore arranged for the Band to play. Later the tune was changed to "Lahureko Relimai Pheshanai Ramro" ('Being a Soldier is good, dressed in red with a kukri'.) Captain Hastabahadur and

Mohan then came up with some initial dance steps which by trial and error by the lead 'dancer', now Captain Benbahadur Ale, were choreographed into the dance you now see. Initially it was really a bit of a 'Drill'.

My role in all this was to see the finished product and say "Jolly Good!" and agree that we should put it forward to the Edinburgh Tattoo for their approval. They came to see a rehearsal and very much liked the dance, saying it was most original and they had never seen anything like it before (which was not surprising since it was only conjured up the previous week in the back of a drill shed!). The Brigade of Gurkhas Liaison Officer to MOD London, (the late) Lt Col Charles Wylie 10GR, also saw it and approved it on behalf of HQBG.

At the first performances of the dance in Edinburgh I went to the stand of the spectators to pick up comments and reactions from the audience. These seemed favourable and some people gave a cheer and clap when the dancers did their 'chop'. This confirmed that the 'Kukri Dance' should join the Band's repertoire. Of course it is necessary for the dancers to perform in a spirited, manly and vigorous manner as originally conceived otherwise it appears silly and childish. It wants to be fiery not fairy!

The dance now features not only here in UK but also has been adopted in Nepal by dance groups who go round hotels in Kathmandu and Pokhara. When the thing was first produced it was to fit a spare four minutes. We had no idea it would become regarded as of real Nepali provenance. I do not know if such a dance existed before or if there is another elsewhere now.

I am grateful to Captain Hastabahadur and Captain Benbahadur who have provided information for this article. And to Major Norley, the current Brigade DoM, who confirmed the title of the current dance tune. Captain Ben adds that whenever he or any of the others involved at the time witness the dance in Nepal or UK they cannot withhold 'a wry smile'; and neither can I!



Gurkha Company (Sittang) Royal Military Sandhurst



Staff List

Maj	Yambahadur Rana MVO	RGR	Officer Commanding
Capt	Maniram Rai	2 RGR	Second-in-Command
Capt	Dilip Gurung	1 RGR	Operations Training Officer
Capt	Dillikumar Rai	2 RGR	1 Platoon Commander
Capt	Mahendra Phagami	1 RGR	2 Platoon Commander
Capt	Mukunda Gurung	1 RGR	3 Platoon Commander
WO2	Shreeman Limbu	2 RGR	Company Sergeant Major
CSgt	Kamalbahadur Pun	1 RGR	Company QuarterMaster Sergeant
SSgt	Deepak Gurung	QG Sigs	Resettlement/Welfare SNCO
Sgt	Devprasad Rana	1 RGR	Training Sergeant
Sgt	Khobindra Gurung	1 RGR	1 Platoon Sergeant
Sgt	Kumar Rai	2 RGR	2 Platoon Sergeant
Sgt	Bikash Rai	2 RGR	3 Platoon Sergeant

Newsletter

The 2013 has been fairly unwavering in terms of command change in the company. However, there have been one or two changes among SNCOs appointments. CSgt Kamalbahadur Pun has taken over from CSgt Bishnukumar Thapa in early July as Company QuarterMaster Sergeant. Sgt Bikash Rai who promoted to Sergeant from the company has taken over as Platoon Sergeant 3 platoon from Sgt Bharat Rai. Finally, WO2 Shreeman Limbu has taken over from WO2 Lokprasad Limbu as Company Sergeant Major. However, company has experienced 60% of new arrivals in junior ranks.



Gurkha Coy (Sittang) Routine Support To The Academy

The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst operates on a term basis. There are three terms of 14 weeks in a year. The academy receives three intakes a year and each intake goes through three terms, first being Junior term, Intermediate and Senior.

In addition to regular commissioning courses, GC(S) supports the Reserve Commissioning Courses, Reserve Commissioning Courses+, Reserve Professionally Qualified Officers Courses and Reserve Professionally Qualified Officers Courses+. GC(S) is one of most active and largest supporting units in the Academy and supports all three intakes and other short courses equally through each term.

GC(S) has configured itself to be able to support all three terms (intakes) and other courses which run concurrently throughout 14 weeks. The training and support programme is designed in such a way that company can support every single requirement. The range of training support GC(S) provides to the academy ranges from large to small field exercises, demonstrations, range safety, all other standing and administrative tasks, ceremonial guards, security and temporarily filling the gapped posts across the Academy.



Exercises

There are five major field exercises in a term for all three intakes and for GC(S) which are, Ex Dynamic Victory and Ex Broad Sword (Seniors), Ex First Encounter and Ex Druid Ridge (Intermediates) and Ex Crychan Challenge (Junior). Apart from these major exercises, there are thirteen small to medium range field exercises for which GC(S) provides manpower. All these exercises are manpower intensive but provide ample opportunities for the soldiers to maintain their basic field crafts and infantry Basics.

Demonstrations

There are seven demonstrations conducted through the term. Those are Strike Ops, Platoon in Defence, Public Order, Platoon Harbour, Ambush, Sect Attack and Platoon Attack. All these demonstration are time consuming and laborious to get up to scratch. However, these demonstrations remind us all in depth knowledge of the operations.

Ceremonial Guards



One of the tasks at the Academy which is only supported by GC(S)! GC(S) provides manpower for Guard of Honour for Her Majesty's representative famously known as Street Lining along King's Walk in front of old college during every Sovereign's Parade. GC(S) further provided the guard of honour for the President of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Hamid Karzai and visit of Crown Prince of Bahrain (recent Sandhurst graduate) Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa's visits to the Academy.

Security

The RMAS is very sensitive place and can attract groups or individual with terrorist motivation. Therefore the threat to RMAS is considered seriously and security is always high in RMAS's battle rhythm. Although routine security responsibility falls with MGS and MPGS, GC(S) plays a vital role during specific occasions, i.e. Royal and foreign diplomat visits, every Sovereign's Parade at the end of term and during

Heritage day. There are always a few NCOs and soldiers on routine academy duties too.

Miscellaneous Task

GC(S) provides man power for many other standing tasks, i.e. fatigues, fast ball commitments, fulfilling gapped post temporarily across the academy. GC(S) is well known as an engine room of the academy which kick starts on the first day of the term and never stops until the last day of the term. We all agree that the jobs we do here are not always exciting rather some time so

tedious which could easily affect our professionalism. But it has never happened! We have now started saying that Sandhurst posting is "Easy but Busy". The Night Out Of Bed and field deployment, statistics show that on average soldiers were out of the camp for 35 days in a term of fourteen weeks which further supports our saying. Apart from these routine support to the academy, so many other activities go on concurrently which will be highlighted later on in this newsletter.

GC(S) Additional Activities

Inter Platoon Competitions

GC(S) traditionally runs a number of sport and military competitions throughout the training year to decide the Champion Platoon of the year. The competitions for training year 2012/13 included Swimming, Shooting, Orienteering, Football, Basketball, Volleyball and X-country. The last two remaining competitions, Football and Shooting were held in February and March 2013 and 2 Platoon secured the Champion platoon trophy for Trg year 12/13. Soon after this, the new competitions for training year 13/14 started. Due to heavy and additional commitments, the command group decided to reduce the activities by two. Therefore, competitions for this training year will be only five. Among those, four of the competition have already completed and shooting is due to be conducted in February this year.

Capt Dillikumar Rai led the Battle Field Tour (Ex Purkha haruko Birata) to France and Belgium for 46 people from across the Academy with the aim of giving GC(S) soldiers and members of the staff across the Academy an understanding of the core values and standards of the British Army by visiting battlefields where the Brigade of Gurkhas had fought alongside their British counterparts. This was probably the first time ever the Gurkha Company (Sittang) has organised such an event.

The exercise was extremely successful and has achieved its purpose fully with minimal cost. The exercise had a historical significance for the Brigade of Gurkhas where they visited 12 WWI stands including the new Indian Memorial. The participants also realised the harsh condition and inhuman nature of war as fought during World War I. A historical Talbot house was used in Ypres as accommodation and received a presentation from in theatre tour guide (Mrs Katherine) about the museum in Talbot house where Gurkha soldiers used to come there for rest and recuperation during the lull of the battle.

BattleField Tour

GC(S) is extremely grateful to departments and individuals within the RMAS for their generous support to this exercise, i.e. 44 Sqn for providing military transport, services of Dr Chris Mann from the War Studies Department as the tour guide,



Senior Padre for providing substantial amount of funding and co-ordinating subsidised accommodation at the historical Talbot House in Ypres and a presentation from in theatre tour guide about the museum in Talbot House where Gurkha soldiers used to come for rest and recuperation during the lull of the battle and of course Brigade of Gurkhas for Education and Welfare Grant.

Heritage Day 2013

This is an annual Commandant's charity and was an important event to let the public enjoy and at the same time, raise money for Charity. GC(S) actively participated and ran a number of stands, but most notable stands were Jungle Lane, Gurkha Curry and Gurkha traditional & cultural stand. Jungle Lane was mainly about survival in the jungle and it was visited by more than 700 visitors. Gurkha curry stand was



Children ready for Nepali dance during Heritage day

very popular and all the food was sold within two hours. Our sympathy goes to all those who were not fortunate to test the flavour of delicious Gurkha Curry. Finally, the most highlighted stand was the Gurkha traditional and cultural stand where the children and soldiers from GC(S) performed traditional Nepalese dance, Gurkha Kukri dance and the Kukri Patterns. The spectators were all delighted with the colour and diversity of Nepalese culture and tradition. Long it may continue!

Sandhurst Station Familie's Fun Day

Sandhurst Station Familie's Fun Day is an annual event organised within RMAS to provide fun full day for all permanent staff including civilian staff and families. This year's Fun Day was organised by Capt Mukunda Gurung on Sunday 15 September 2013. The event comprised of various free rides, fun activities and good food. Despite the bad weather, approximately 400 people attended the event.

GC(S) Farewell and Congratulation Programme

On 27 November 2013, GC(S) organised an evening with messing to say farewell to outgoing members through normal pension and redundancy and the Coy also congratulated

some promotees. There were ten members (intake 1992) and few redundant members to whom the Coy said farewell. There were four members promoted to different ranks who were congratulated.



Members of GCS with Chelsea Pensioners

Public And Community Relationship

Guernsey Island Visit

Public Relation (PR) and Community Relation (CR) in the wider community remain a vital function of the company. The highlight of these events has been the visit by ten members of GC(S) led by Capt Dillikumar Rai to Guernsey Island along with the pensioners from the Royal Hospital Chelsea to mark the independence of Guernsey Island from the Germans on 9 May 1945. Capt Dilli's team and The Chelsea pensioners were generously invited and sponsored by Dame Mary Perkins (Generous Gurkha Supporter) and they were welcomed and hosted by the people of Guernsey with respect for a week. The final day of the visit concluded with the freedom parade in the centre of the town where it was inspected by the Governor of Guernsey Island. GC(S) has been representing the Brigade of Gurkhas for the past four years. During the visit, bonds between the Chelsea Pensioners and the Gurkhas have strengthened and eleven Gurkhas from GC(S) were invited in Formation Parade at the Royal Hospital Chelsea in London.

HRH The Duke of Edinburgh visit to Sandhurst Town Council

The another highlight of the Public Relation has been GC(S) contribution to HRH The Duke of Edinburgh visit to Sandhurst Town Council on 23 April 2013. During the visit, GC(S) had an honour to represent the Brigade of Gurkhas and the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. The Officer Commanding GC(S) Maj Yambahdur Rana MVO presented a brief history of the Khukuri and the soldiers performed the traditional Khukuri dance in front of His Royal Highness. His Royal Highness seemed amused by the performance.

Armed Forces Day

During the Armed Forces Day celebration at Winchester Museum in June 2013, the display under Capt Dilli depicting both Afghanistan and Brunei, highlighting the role the Gurkhas have played in the recent operations, was deemed to be the best stand. Both the chairman Armed Forces Museum (3* General) and the Mayor of Winchester have highly praised him for outstanding display. The Mayor of Winchester also made a point about the association of the Gurkhas with Winchester. The Mayor would very much like to repeat same stand in the future which is a draw to both parents and children and puts the Gurkha Brigade in the public eye.



Children having a go with Monocular during Armed Forces Day

Contribution to GWT and ABF

We are also very proud to say that our boys have been involved in raising money for ABF and GWT throughout the year. Ten members from the Coy took part to raise money for Army Benevolent Fund on 21 September 2013 at Newbury Race Course. Due to the professional approach from the members they raised the record amount of money to this date. Big well done to the members for this effort!

Dashain & Tihar Celebration 2013

GC(S) celebrated our auspicious Dashain 2013 in style! On 12 October 2013, all members of Gurkha Company (Sittang) and their families celebrated the most auspicious Hindu festival, Dashain in a traditional and unique style. For ten days the various religious ceremonies including fasting, prayers, and offerings were carried out by the Pujari team led by the Company Second-in-command Capt Maniram Rai.



Children, wives and members GCS during Dashain Natch

On the night of Kalaratri, all Officers, SNCOs and their families gathered outside the New College to greet the guests with Khata and Nepali topi. Among the main guests, we were delighted to have the Commandant RMAS Maj General S R Skeates CBE and his lady, Brigadier J P Bourne OBE and Mem Saheb. After a couple of hours of drinks and tipan tapan, announcement was made for Gurkha Bhat in the New Collage Dining Hall. A delicious meal was served to all, after which every one made their way to Woolwich Hall for the entertainment.



Comdt RMAS and OC GCS enjoying Dashain cultural programme

The Officer Commanding Maj Yambahadur Rana MVO highlighted the significance of the Dashain to the Brigade of Gurkhas, how it is celebrated and handed over to Capt Mukunda Gurung who led the cultural show with true professionalism. The whole programme was magically arranged and choreographed considering our history and tradition of the Gurkhas, Nepali culture and of course not forgetting the growing new generation of the Brigade, the show was fantastic and mixed flavour for all spectators. The programme concluded with the cocktail dance by all including our all guests.

On tenth day, the final day of the festival, all ranks from GC (S) gathered in the temple to receive the Tika from the most senior Gurkha Officer, Officer Commanding Maj Yambahadur Rana MVO.

All in all, the festival was a grand success, marking one of the main religious festivals but also celebrating our heritage and culture.

Tihar celebration (Gambling) was organised during 02-04 November 2013 due to various training commitments. On 02 November 2013, Commanding Officer Sandhurst Support Unit Lt Col D M Rex MVO opened the gambling by throwing dice and winning some money. The celebration continued for three days and all members and families of GC(S) enjoyed it thoroughly. Above all, no one is identified as victim of TIHAR gambling!

Visits To Gurkha Coy (SITTANG)

The Outgoing Commandant Royal Military Academy Sandhurst

The Commandant Royal Military Academy Sandhurst Maj Gen T P Evans DSO MBE paid his final farewell visit to the company on 05 August 2013. The Commandant expelled kind and very generous words of hard work, professionalism and loyalty of the members of the company. The Officer Commanding GC(S) Maj Yambahadur Rana MVO thanked him for his visit and presented a memento (Kothimara Kukuri) to the Commandant. On behalf of all members and families, the OC congratulated him for his promotion to Lt Gen and wished him every success in his new post as the Commander Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC).

The New Commandant Royal Military Academy Sandhurst

On 27 September 2013, all the available SNCOs and officers of Gurkha Company (Sittang) in the presence of their ladies in colourful saris gathered and lined up in Nepal Lines eagerly waiting to welcome the new Commandant of Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, Maj Gen S R Skeates CBE and memsaheb. When the Commandant arrived, he was cordially received by Maj Yambahadur Rana, OC GCS and the command group. After a brief welcome and a chit-chat with GC(S) officers, SNCOs and wives, the Commandant signed the visitor's book.



This was followed by a Company update at the GCS conference room while the memsaheb was entertained by the families at the community centre. As per Gurkha custom, the Commandant was also taken to the Temple for a brief service accompanied by Capt Maniram Rai, 2IC GCS. They were met at the 'Mandir' by caretaker-pundit Rfn Dalbahadur Gurung and a traditional 'Dhup-batti' and worship was conducted. The official group photograph with the officers, SNCOs and families took place at Nepal Lines. Of course, the visit would not be complete without a proper Gurkha curry. The Gurkha chefs at RMAS prepared a fantastic buffet and an outstanding curry feast was served to delight all those present.

It was a great honour to welcome the Commandant to GC (S) as part of his first official visit to the Company. Sure enough, he was delighted! Maj Gen Skeates has been Commandant of the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst since August 2013.

Commander 145(S) Brigade

Sandhurst Support Unit is adminicon to 145 (S) Brigade. Therefore, Commander 145 (S) Brigade, Brigadier A B Hughes MBE paid a visit to GC(S) on 23 October 2013. The guest was welcomed by offering a traditional Khata by OC GC(S) met by the Company Command Group. After short informal chitchat, the guest was briefed on current company's commitment and issues.



Colonel Brigade of Gurkhas

Colonel Brigade of Gurkhas, Colonel J G Robinson paid a prestigious visit to GC(S) on 11 February 2013. He was welcomed by OC GC(S) Maj Yambahadur Rana MVO with RGR garland (Mala) and received by the GC(S) command group. OC GC(S) delivered the briefing on company's current update's focusing on redundancy and Non Front Line (NFL) reduction. Col BG Saheb, then briefed the whole company in Woolwich Hall, focusing on hardship of redundancies, update of the current and the future of BG. After delicious curry lunch, Col BG Saheb was accompanied by CO SSU Lieutenant Colonel Roger Morton for his office call and the commandant RMAS.

Commanding Officer Sandhurst Support Unit

Commanding Officer Lt Col D M Rex MVO RGR took command of SSU from the end of summer term, GC(S) was not able to formally welcome him in the Company. Therefore, the formal welcome programme was organised on 06 December 2013. The Coy Comd Group welcomed the Commanding Officer by offering a RGR garland and the guest signed the visitors book. After a very short brief by OC GC(S), the visit ended in the company bar with delicious Tipan Tapan, drinks with informal chitchat.

CONCLUSION

Despite hardest hit by redundancy on Tranche 3s again GC(S) has kept up with the ever-increasing pace of the battle rhythm of the Academy in professional manner. Our hard work, our belief in the ethos of the Gurkhas will always take us to the destination.

'JAI GURKHA COY (SITTANG)'

Exercise DYNAMIC VICTORY (Germany)

By LCpl Santosh Rai

“Leadership is the phenomenon that occurs when the influence of ‘A’ (the leader) causes ‘B’ (the group) to perform ‘C’ (goal-directed behavior) when ‘B’ would not have performed ‘C’ had it not been for influence of ‘A’”

The Exercise DYNAMIC VICTORY is the final exercise of the Officer Cadets (future leaders) of the British Army. The exercise has a complex scenario in a contemporary environment. It is an immensely tough and busy period in which Cadets will have an opportunity to enhance their leadership skills, command & control, conceptual understanding of offensive and defensive operations and many more tactical skills. Overall, this is the final confirmatory exercise to test Officer Cadets' suitability for commissioning. The exercise used to be held in Scotland. Due to its demanding, challenging and realistic nature, the exercise was transferred to Bavaria, Germany from this year onwards.

On the 08 Nov 2013, we headed to Germany via France, Belgium and Holland. We went there as part of RMAS training support group to provide military field training and administrative support to the Officer Cadets and RMAS training team.

Our tasks were divided into four different phases. The Initial Phase was the preparatory phase. We travelled 18 hours arduous journeys in coach up to Grafenwohr Training Area (GTA) in German. On the following day, we began on preparing Live Rangers for ICQB to PI Live Attack. The second phase was to set 47 tents for the Cadets and ammunition sentry. The third phase was LFTT where Cadets had to go through ICQB to PI level Live Attack. In this phase, JNCOs from our Gurkha Coy Sittang were engaged as safety supervisors. The fourth phase was rural and Urban Ops.

We headed to the next place called Hohenfels Training Area (HTA) for the fourth phase. It took us around two hours

of driving from our actual location to HTA. Cadets were divided into two Coys, one on rural phase and the other was on urban. The OPFOR for Urban phase was completely supported by the US Army, but rural phase was supported by GC(S).

From the first day of the last phase, we were given different roles individually. The roles consisted of policemen, village elders, teachers, Civilian population, governors, doctors, priests, wood collectors and many more. A few of us were attached to the Cadets as friendly forces such as FSG and Recce Group for final Battle Group attack and the rest of us played the part of OPDOR (Enemy).

The exercise was concluded after the battle group attack. The Commandant RMAS Maj Gen S R Skeates CBE congratulated all the Officer Cadets for their hard work and achievement and thanked all enablers for making the exercise so worthwhile. The Officer Cadets were presented with their regimental headdress. After the champagne breakfast, the very final phase of the exercise for us (supporting group) was close down of the training area.

On the last two days, we were busy clearing up the village, taking off the tents and other miscellaneous activities. Nevertheless, we had a bit of morale thinking of going back home. This exercise has indeed taught us a lot about support necessary for Cadets and we were always reminded of our infantry 'Basics'. The GC(S) group was commanded by Capt Mahendra Phagami and his excellent leadership has encouraged us to work hard and reach our goals. All academy staff and Cadets appreciated our hard work and importance of training support group.



British Gurkhas Nepal

Staff List

Headquarters British Gurkhas Nepal

Col S P F Harris OBE Late QGE	Comd/DA/Dir GWS
Lt Col E A Davis QG SIGNALS	D Comd/COS
Maj P M O'Nions AGC (SPS)	DCOS
Maj Manoj Mohara RGR	GM
Capt Kamansing Rana GSPS	SO3 GI/MS
Capt N G Berry RLC	SO3 G4 Log Sp/Est
Capt M A Boomer RLC	SO3 Tpt & Mov
Capt Rajeev Shrestha QG SIGNALS	OC NST
WOI Babindra Gurung RGR	RSM
Mrs M Childs	Civ Sec
Hon Maj Hitman Gurung Ex RGR	CLO
Dr M Kitson	CMP
Ms J Foster	SSAFA

Defence Section British Embassy Kathmandu

Maj Hitman Gurung MVO QG SIGNALS	AMA/MLO
Capt Jitbahadur Hamal GSPS	SO Admin

British Gurkhas Kathmandu

Maj D J Hendry PARA	OC
Capt P Murray-Knight AGC (SPS)	RAO
Maj (Retd) Krishnabhadur Gurung Ex QG SIGNALS	BUWO

British Gurkhas Pokhara

Maj J A Arney RGR	OC
Capt Dolbahadur Gurung RGR	2IC
Capt R I Roberts RGR	Ops/Co-ord Offr
Capt Meenjung Gurung QGE	QM/MTO/CAO
Capt (QGO) (Retd) Gangabhadur Gurung Ex RGR	Records Offr
Capt (QGO) (Retd) Bhojraj Gurung Ex 2 RGR	SARO
Capt (Retd) Pradip Limbu Ex QOGLR	ARO (E)
Capt (Retd) Rembahadur Ghale Ex 1 RGR	ARO (W)

Defence Infrastructure Overseas (Nepal)

Capt R H Gale RE	Head of Delivery
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British Gurkhas Dharan

Mr Chandrakamal Rasaily	OC
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Gurkha Settlement Office

CI (Retd) Rumbahadur Gurung	Dep Proj Manager
Capt (QGO) (Retd) Rukumbahadur Rana Ex 1 RGR	LO GSO

Commander's Foreword

By Col S P F Harris Obe Late Qge, Commander Bgn

This has been another successful year for British Gurkhas Nepal. 2013 has seen a significant turnover in personnel, and we have welcomed a new Commander, Gurkha Major and RSM, in addition to a large number of other key personalities. Whilst there have been no other major changes to BGN or its mission and key tasks, we have continued to pursue our responsibilities with relentless enthusiasm and, we hope, professionalism.

The Recruiting year has successfully delivered 126 high quality Trainee Riflemen to Catterick, and we wish the Recruit Intake 2014 the best of luck as they begin their journey into the Brigade. A significant number of evolutionary measures have been implemented this year, designed primarily to improve and streamline the recruit selection process, but also to lessen the time, effort and cost that Potential Recruits currently expend in preparing themselves for this rigorous process. However, none of these measures cut corners or jeopardises the standards and quality that we expect our Potential Recruits to achieve.

Our support to the serving Brigade has continued unabated. The work of the Brigade Welfare Officer is a key pillar in connecting the soldier with his family in Nepal. Many small, but important issues have arisen this year, which require unit and individual attention, and we have continued to inform HQ BG so that units can educate their soldiers accordingly. We have also seen a growth in the number of Adventurous Training expeditions using BGN facilities, and also an increased appetite for the deployment of Short Term Training Teams (STTTs) conducting Defence Engagement tasks in Nepal. Coupled with the constant flow of routine and high profile visitors and Duty Trekkers, there is much we have done, and will continue to do, to "Support the Soldier" and maintain our influence in Nepal.

Our support to the Ex-Service community in Nepal also continues undiminished. Last January saw an unparalleled spike of interest in UK Settlement, following a misrepresented UK court case. The Gurkha Settlement Office and the Record Office were besieged with visits and enquiries, and caused a temporary backlog of work. This has now returned to routine levels, and these two departments continue to improve their advice, assistance and support to Ex-Servicemen and their widows and families. The constant activity of Service Pension Paying provides vital financial support to our Ex-Gurkhas in Nepal. BGN also remains very closely connected with the various Regimental Associations in Nepal, and preparations for G200 celebrations in Nepal are underway.



BGN has also devoted considerable time and effort to improving our resilience, training and preparedness against the threat of earthquakes. Of course, we hope it will never happen, but if we fail to prepare, we are preparing to fail.

Finally, BGN could not do its work without the assistance of the Gurkha Welfare Scheme and the Locally Engaged Civilians employed within BGN. These two elements are vital to our mission success, and we thank them for their continued loyalty and assistance to British Gurkhas Nepal.

Jai BGN!

British Gurkhas Kathmandu

By Unit Correspondent

Nepal Management Supper 2014

Evenings during December in Kathmandu are generally cold, and the weather on Saturday 21 December was no different. The guests and available Officers and SNCOs, who had yet to take their Christmas leave, were trying to keep warm and awaiting the performance of the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas to start in the Basketball court in British Gurkhas Nepal (BGN). The performance was the precursor to the annual BGN Management Supper. Guests from various governmental organisations and other service providers to BGN were invited to the evening. The aim of the evening was to thank the organisations and individuals who have been supporting BGN in various guises.

The guests started to arrive from 1700 at Kathmandu Mess. Comd BGN Col S P F Harris OBE, COS Lt Col EA Davis and GM Major Manoj Mohara were receiving and welcoming the guests as they arrived. With welcome cocktails and juices in their hands, the guests mingled on the Kathmandu Mess lawn, which was beautifully set up by the never tiring mess staff the day before. With decorative lights, a quintet from the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas playing in the background and bonfires to keep everyone warm it, had the real feeling of festivities. After the arrival of the chief guest of the evening, Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Nepal Police (NP), Gopal Rai, a splendid and variety of starters, prepared by BGN chefs, were served. It must have been the effect of the cold weather that spirits were the preferred choice of drinks among the attendees.



Comd BGN welcoming chief guest
DIG Gopal Rai of Nepal Police



Comd BGN, Chief Guest and GM having chat during supper

A brief announcement on the sequence of events by GM Saheb was followed by everyone making their way to the Basketball court for the performance by the band. The Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas had been in Nepal for the last few weeks on invitation by Nepal Army (NA), and had been training bands from NA, Nepal Police (NP) and Armed Police Force (APF), with an aim to have a combined beating of retreat on Saturday 28 December 2013. BGN took the opportunity of the presence of the Brigade Band in Nepal and brought forward the Management Supper, which normally takes place in March each year. The Director of Music (DOM) and his team were only too happy to oblige and return the favour to BGN for looking after them well since they had been in Nepal. As the guests settled down in the seats, the Band Major marched in his troops with the sound of the drum.

The Basketball court was transformed into a small arena, with British, Nepalese and BGN flags adorning the perimeter fence. The floodlights provided the perfect focus on the band in the middle of the court. The band utilised the available space very well, performing various manoeuvres as they belted out popular tunes; Yo Nepali Shir Uchali, Yo Maan Ta Mero Nepali Ho etc. In between the tunes they played, there was a Khukuri dance performed by what must have been new members of the band as they looked very young. Kukris in their hands and controlled aggression and expressions on their faces made the performance complete.



Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas performing the musical show

The atmosphere turned sombre and emotional as the band played The Sunset Ceremony. The floodlights were switched off, turning the whole place dark. A couple of spot beams were focussed then on the lone piper who stood on the high platform in front of the arena. The timing, effect of the lights and the tune of Sunset were a perfect combination to make the atmosphere even more enchanting. With the arena lights switched back on, the band played the national anthems of Nepal and the United Kingdom (UK). The performance drawing to a close, the Band Major asked Comd BGN for his permission to take his leave. With uplifting tune of Yo Maan Ta Mero Nepali Ho playing again the band left the arena to rapturous applause. It was pretty obvious by the guests' reaction that the performance by the band was excellent, highly enjoyable and appreciated.

It was close to 1900 by the time everyone gathered on the lawn of Kathmandu Mess again. After topping up their drinks, everyone was looking forward to the next phase of the evening; a sumptuous supper. Following the dinner call by the Mess Manager, the guests were escorted by BGN personnel to the dining hall, which was wonderfully decorated in a Christmas theme.

A variety of food, masterfully prepared by BGN chef, Cpl Rajesh Thapa and his team, was ready. Each table took their turn to queue for the buffet, which was gleefully consumed with a glass or two of preferred wines. A quintet from the band providing entertainment during the meal further enhanced the atmosphere of the evening. Before excellent dessert of cheesecake was served, Comd BGN took the opportunity to thank the guests for their presence and continued support to BGN, mess staff for another superb service and supper, DoM (Director of Music) for excellent performance by the band, and last but not least GM Saheb for co-ordinating the evening.



OC NST welcoming guests from Worldlink

British Gurkhas Nepal Signal Troop

By Captain Rajeev Shrestha Qg Signals, Oc Nepal Signal Troop

Looking Back

I know it is a bit of a cliché, but 2013 has been a very eventful and busy year for Nepal Signal Troop (NST). Members of the troop (Tp) have been heavily involved in a plethora of activities, not just limiting themselves to the Tp activities but supporting every single event in British Gurkhas Nepal (BGN), reinforcing the key role NST plays in support of BGN.

The beginning of 2013 saw the successful roll-out of DII services in Kathmandu. Tp members have been instrumental in ensuring all preparatory works for the roll-out were completed. Active participation by the Tp members with the DII team during the implementation phase was key to the smooth transition of services from BGN Local Area Network (LAN) to DII. Unfortunately and frustratingly though, staff in Pokhara have yet to have full services delivered to them. A number of issues have impacted the successful delivery of the services there. Tp continues to liaise with Information Services and Support (ISS) and ATLAS to resolve these issues to provide overdue DII services in Pokhara.

It is pleasing to take delivery of 2 x Broadband Global Area Network (BGAN) with associated LAN for contingency operations; one of the key BGN tasks. Light Weight Recce Node (LWRN), an ailing and limited capability, needed to be replaced to meet current demands. BGAN is a deployable LAN with the capability to reach back to the United Kingdom (UK), providing UNCLAS voice and data services up to ten staff. There is a plan afoot to add classified services in the near future. Contingency Ops requires Other Governmental Organisations (OGD), mainly Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), Department for International Development (DfID) and BGN to work together to conduct evacuation of British and Brigade of Gurkhas personnel and their dependants, and much needed information to HQBG on the status of wider families of Brigade personnel during an emergency. This requires a coherent and balanced approach by all stakeholders. NST has been instrumental in bringing these organisations together to improve communication and provide training on their communication equipment.

Tp personnel continue to take initiatives to provide better services to staff in Kathmandu and Pokhara. Establishment of Communications and Information Services (CIS) helpdesk is testament to their commitment to improve services. It has allowed Tp to prioritise the work in hand and provide smooth and better services to staff. Another key improvement in the process now is building of a proper workshop to provide Tp personnel an established and safe working environment to carry out tests and repairs on suspected faulty equipment.

Work of NST personnel is not just limited to in-barracks support. The Tp provides support to Gurkha Welfare Scheme,

by conducting yearly visits to all Area Welfare Centres (AWC) (19) to inspect and improve communications services and provide refresher training to AWC staff. This year Tp personnel have already installed 15 new High Frequency (HF) radios at the AWCs, with a plan to complete the rest at the beginning of the year.

Members of the Tp have been equally involved in other BGN activities. A highly successful organisation and execution of Ex VALLEY RIM WALK earlier this year demonstrates the commitment and abilities of the Tp personnel, and reflection of the trust placed on NST by BGN hierarchies. Enormity of the task can only be envisaged considering the numbers involved; more than 250 personnel that included serving, Locally Engaged Civilians (LEC) and their dependants. Ex KHUKURI MARATHON TIGER 13 provided an opportunity to prove mental and physical robustness of the Tp personnel; an opportunity of a lifetime to complete the Everest Marathon route, a challenge that Cpl Kumar Thapa successfully completed. Further test of robustness was provided by participation in a mountain bike challenge from British Gurkhas Kathmandu (BGK) to British Gurkhas Pokhara (BGP); a task successfully completed by Cpls Kumar Thapa and Rabindra Shrestha.

On the social front, Tp celebrated QG SIGNALS 64th Birthday, with a large participation by ex-members of the Regiment. It is a testament to Tp personnel's dedication and organisational abilities that the conduct of the function was highly praised by all attendees. For the first time, NST had their own Dashain celebration. Sgt Sanjay Rai with his family from BGP and Sgt Shankar, who was due to take over from Sgt Sanjay, joined in the celebration in Kathmandu; a clear reflection of camaraderie and togetherness that exists among the Tp personnel. Our ladies have been equally active on all fronts. Be it raising money for SSAFA, participating in the trek to Everest Base Camp or running the Thrift Shop voluntarily, they have played their parts in supporting BGN.

We have had considerable changes in manpower in the Tp. Capt Rajeev Shrestha took over the post of OC NST from Capt Kedar Rai in May, SSgt Laxman Gurung replaced SSgt Laxmanbabu Rana as Senior Tech/Tp SSgt, Sgt Shankar Gurung replaced Sgt Sanjay Rai as Senior Tech in British Gurkhas Pokhara (BGP). I must thank them all for their sterling work during their time in NST. I am saddened to report that two members of the Tp have been selected for redundancy. Cpl Surendra Rai and LCpl Tek Tamang (posted to 250 Gurkha Sig Sqn since) and their families take away our best wishes for the future. I am pleased to report that two members have been promoted to Cpl; Cpl Sitkumar Rai and Cpl Shemprasad Limbu; big congratulations to both and their families.

There are considerable challenges ahead. Successful delivery of DII services in Pokhara is a continuing challenge that we aim to resolve as soon as possible. Automation of the exchanges in Kathmandu and Pokhara, upgrade of Promina switches at both locations, delivery of DII SECRET in Kathmandu, inter-site link between BGK and BGP are just a few tasks that we look forward to completing in the coming year.

Tp has been performing in the best tradition of the Brigade of Gurkhas, upholding the values and ethos of the Brigade. We aim to continue to deliver on all fronts; be it CIS, military activities or social and charitable functions. Lastly, I would like to take the opportunity to wish you all a very happy new year 2014.



OC NST bidding farewell to LCpl Tek



Sig Puspa and Rabindra on Ex Paschim Signal Kukri



Cpl Kumar during the mountain bike challenge from Kathmandu to Pokhara



NST boys posing for the photograph during the Bike ride to Jiri

Brigade And Unit Welfare Office (BUWO)

The British Army takes the welfare of its soldiers and their families very seriously and offers a wide range of support. As such, Brigade and Unit Welfare Office (BUWO) based at Headquarters British Gurkhas Nepal (BGN), Kathmandu provides the welfare support for serving members of the Brigade of Gurkhas including those transferred to the wider army and British National Overseas (BNO). The History of the Brigade of Gurkhas goes back to the 18th century since East India Company, however there is no actual account of an established welfare office. In the past years it was called Serving Soldier Welfare but is now known as Brigade and Unit Welfare Office (BUWO) with effect from 01 April 2007.

From 12 December, the Transit office has also merged with BUWO adding more responsibilities. The fundamental role of the BUWO is to provide welfare support on various aspects of issues such as NOTICAS, DILFOR, Repatriation, Inquest, marital harmony, call forward of unaccompanied (U/A) family in UK/BWN on GMAS, Brigade Marriage Registration and compassionate cases for serving soldiers and dependants of the Brigade of Gurkhas including for those who transferred to the Wider Army and British National Overseas soldiers.

The management team consist of 5 x Staff, OC as BUWO, SNCO Clerk as ABUWO and 3 x LECs (Locally Employed Civilian). BUWO is a retired Maj Krishnabhadur Gurung, A/BUWO SSgt Dugendra Tamang, Mr Yogendramani Tamang (Senior Clerk), Mr Madhukar Lama (Clerk) and Mrs Mani Shrestha (Clerk).

Currently there are 20 Area Welfare Centres (AWC) established in Nepal including one in Darjeeling (India). Locally administered by own Area Welfare Officer (AWO) under the command of Gurkha Welfare Scheme (GWS).

For all welfare cases outside Kathmandu Valley, a serviceman's family should report to the nearest Area Welfare Centre except for those in Kathmandu Valley who should report occurrences to BUWO.

AWOs will examine the case and forward to BUWO in Kathmandu. On receipt of a letter with AWC's recommendation,

BUWO will assess and verify the case with the appropriate organisation before forwarding it to respective units. However on medical cases, only CMP BGN (Civilian Medical Practitioner) can categorise and recommend the compassionate leave on receipt of requests from any organisation involved in the case. On CMP's recommendation, BUWO will release signal message to JCCC (Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre) for authority and to the unit for information and necessary action.

Likewise, on receipt of NOTICAS signal from JCCC, BUWO/ABUWO will act as CNO/CVO. For those Next of Kin who reside outside of Kathmandu Valley, the nearest AWOs will act as CNO.

As in the previous years, this year has been busy dealing with Welfare issues. The statistics on all Welfare Cases from 01 January - 31 December 2013 are as follows:

Cat A	5
Cat B	120
Cat C	12
Marital Dispute	41
Welfare Cases	52
Leave extension	88
DILFOR Cases	1
Inquest	2
Marriage Registration	162
Aeromed	1
UK Visa Documentation	148
Pre-Flight documentation BWN	39

British Gurkhas Nepal Ladies' Expedition to Everest Base Camp

By Mrs Devkala Tamang (Wife Of Ssgt Dugendra Tamang Gsps)

If the sad but bitter truth be told, most of the people from different parts of the world are still oblivious about the existence of Nepal. However, mere mention of Mount Everest and they all go ahh... In essence, Everest has in great deal helped put Nepal on the map of the world hence one can call her the Ambassador of Nepal in every sense of the word.

People from all around the world flock every year to Nepal to see Mount Everest. Personally I found her with many facets. She enthral you with her spectacular beauty, overwhelms you with her colossal personality, intimidates you with her aloofness, startles you with her unpredictability, impresses you with her benign disposition and radiates you with her vivaciousness. Her presence is so potent and profound, everything one witnesses is invariably and indelibly etched on every mortal's memory that I can vouch with full conviction.

When opportunity knocked on my door with the prospect of going on a trek to Everest Base Camp (EBC) and Kalapathar, without any chain of thoughts and score of hesitation I signed up. After all, life is too short to put off such adventure. We were seven of us. Laxmi Gurung with perpetual words of wisdom and optimism. Kamala Limbu whose amiable and agreeable nature would boost one's morale. Kamala Gurung whose endeavour was just too inspiring. Trishna Rai whose impromptu one liners and songs would rejuvenate one's mood. Ruth Fry whose enthusiasm was never ending and then there was Teresa Day, whose passion and drive was very contagious.

On arrival at Lukla, Kathmandu, the metropolis somehow takes a tumble from being a protagonist to agonist. Frenzied urban life is swapped with scenic vistas of Khumbu region which has a propensity to blow anyone away with its beauty leaving one elated and euphoric. Whether it be modest Phakding or lively Namche Bazaar, whether it be peaceful Temboche or picturesque Deboche, whether it be quirky Pheriche or rhododendron shaded Dingboche, Juniper scented Thukla or challenging Gorak Shep... Untarnished landscape by westernisation, this part of the earth is truly a paragon.

Some might struggle to come to grips with my statement and question, "Does such a paragon exist? Suspension bridges embellished with harlequin of prayer flags, sound orchestrated by Dudh Kosi River, serene Monasteries singing the songs of Buddha's teaching, hospitality showered by genuine locals, salvation-filled air, just goes to prove, such paragons indeed exist.

Exchange of salutations between passing trekkers from all walks of life from all over the world is normal, giving a sense of camaraderie with one purpose. Journey entails excruciating

endurance and perseverance. No one is immune from the wrath of altitude sickness or at least of its side effects. But fatigue disappears when you see sights of beautiful Ama Dablam, charming Thamserku, Lhotse and Nuptse to name a few.

Everest Base Camp is decorated with Khumbu Glaciers with its idiosyncrasies. Sporadic avalanches catches you off guard fuelling the adrenaline rush. The view from Kala Pattar steals everyone's thunder. Granted, reaching the top of Kala Pathar is very challenging but, my oh my, it's very much worth it. I can bet my last dime that everyone will experience an epiphany, one that will change your whole belief system. Justified hedonism, your chest swells with pride for being Nepali. When the young sun finally emerges from the back of Everest enhancing her beauty, you feel alive with the cusp of a new dawn.

On behalf of all the Ladies I would like to take this opportunity to thank Major Hitman Gurung MVO, GM BGN and Major Jim Thompson DCOS BGN for their encouragement and more importantly for providing the financial support. We are very grateful.

The trip to Everest Base Camp was truly wonderful, majestic and most memorable and we all enjoyed it immensely. We will treasure this experience forever. Jai BGN Ladies.



Ex-KUKRI MARATHON TIGER 2013

By Unit Correspondent

BGN has been very busy on Ex BHUKAMPA AYO 2013 and Nepali New Year celebrations, besides daily routine jobs. BGN managed to keep this unprecedented event in its calendar despite its busy schedule. The Ex-KUKRI MARATHON TIGER AYO 2013 was conducted over the period from 28 May to 10 April 2013. Preparation for this exercise began from November 2012 to cover both admin and training side. WO2 Mark Black (WOES BGN) led and was responsible for organising the event. Capt Dick Gale was the expedition leader. This was a level 3 adventure training, with the aim to create team bonding and to improve physical robustness.

After two days of flight cancellation, emerging out from cloud of despair, 13 BGN serving personnel headed to the destination on 30 April 2013. Everyone was very excited but only for a few minutes as the plane was flying in between and near to the hills which itself was an adventure. At times we thought that the plane would touch the hills as this flight to Lukla Airport is regarded as world's No 1 dangerous airport (2,840m).

Without any delay, the team left for Namche with the porters via Phakding. According to the guide, Phakding was the only place on the route where the fresh food could be available. Indeed the team did enjoy the delicious fresh delicacies in Phakding by not wasting anything that was served on the plate. After six hrs of walk and heart pumping flight we finally reached the home of Sherpa's, Namche bazaar (3,440m).

"There were Bars and clubs here before the tourism fostered in Kathmandu", asserted CSgt Ganesh (CQMS Guruji) looking at the Namche bazaar. 01 May was acclimatisation day for us to reduce the risks and severity of altitude sickness, so we did a loop visit of Khumjung and Thukla (only four managed) and returned to Namche. Not to forget the momo (meat dumpling) served at Namche which left SSgt Dugendra craving for more throughout the journey. On 02 May, we left for Pengboche (3,990m). We could see the longest traditional Mani walls, Chortens, Buddhist prayer flags, beautiful Rhododendron and could hear holy mantras at Pengboche Monastery on our trail, wishing us good luck.

One cannot deny the luxury of having Bakery cafe at those remote places. Some of us couldn't stop eating cakes despite their triple value then in Kathmandu. We visited a 400 year old Monastery at Pengboche, and saw the skull and finger of Yeti (original was stolen). Dhindo (flour dough)/Gurkha Cake was served at dinner by Cpl Govinda that evening.

On 03 May, we started to feel heavy on our legs and shortness of breath as we were climbing from 3,900m to 4,620m at Thukla via Pheriche. Mt. Thamserku and Mt. Ama Dablam didn't leave us for a single second on our whole trip, until our rest point. Fortunately, we had a privilege to meet and share experience with the owner of the Yak hotel, who had summited Everest three times. On 04 May, we had a long 300m ascent for breakfast. At the

top of the hill, there was a memorial for all fallen mountaineers. It was hard to believe that so many mountaineers had lost their lives on these mountains. From this point onward, we could see mountains all around us.

We reached Lobuche (4,950m) just after two hours of hike and that was it for the whole day. So, the only way to kill the time was to play cards. Cpl Govinda's team won seven pathis (22.4Kg) of potatoes but the tea house owner couldn't provide that much potato and we had to satisfy ourselves with two pathis. People were shocked to see the price of internet usage, Rs 1,000 per hour in the hotel where we stayed. CQMS decided to do some concurrent activity and came up with the idea of making a stone BGN logo, which looked stunning.

On 05 May, everyone was suffering from the symptoms of altitude sickness, mainly headache and dehydration, but SSgt Bed Guruji (Master Chef BGK) suffered a bit more than rest of us. So, SSgt Bed Guruji took a day's rest at Lobuche under the care of 2IC Capt Diwan Saheb. After two and a half hours of walk, we reached Gorak Shep (5,140m) around 0845 in the morning. Shortly after the quick tea break, we headed for Kalapathar (5,545m), which was the highest point of our exercise.

Initially I thought, I was the only person struggling to grasp oxygen but later on it was evident that everyone was going through the same pain, especially RP Guruji. It was a great achievement and euphoria for most of us, as we had never been up to that height. All the pain, headache and discomfort were swept away by the spectacular views of Mt. Everest, Mt. Lhotse and Mt. Lho la. We took group photos, proudly posing with BGN, UK and Nepal flags and headed back to Lobuche.

On 06 May, we headed to Everest Base Camp (EBC), a city of tents. Climbers from all over the world stay there for acclimatisation and preparation, prior to summiting. I learnt to respect Sherpa's even more because without them, summiting Everest is not possible. 07 May was finally the long awaited Marathon day. We started running from Gorak Shep at 0645 in the morning, with the countdown of 3,2,1 from WO2 Black. SSgt Bed led the run.

The cold dry air was penetrating inside our lungs but the determination kept us shuffling our legs. The lower we got down, the more energy we felt in our body. I had a healthy competition with COS Saheb and at one point in check point 2, I managed to overtake him and asked whether he would like to have a tea or coffee at Tengboche check point, so that I can order for him. But to my dismay, he soon beat me and offered the same, back to me.

It was a never ending steep climb from Phungi Thanga (3,250m) to Khumjung (3,780m). Finally, COS Saheb, CSgt Ganesh and Sgt Harka managed to finish the race together within the respectable time of six and a half hours. The rest of the team



Ex KUKRI MARATHON TIGER 2013 team



Ex KUKRI MARATHON TIGER 2013 team at Kala Patthar

managed to finish within seven and a half hours. There were highs and lows but all the runners persevered until the very end of the run. We had a rest day on the following day and then headed back to Lukla. On 10 May, we were supposed to fly back to KTM, but as usual the flight got cancelled. Thanks to the sterling effort of Capt Fry Saheb, we finally returned to KTM on 11 May.

This exercise has indeed strengthened the team bonding between us, tested our physical and mental strength and taught us to adapt in extreme conditions. The team would like to specially thank WO2 Mark Black for organising such a superb event and Lt Col E A Davis Saheb (COS BGN) for supporting the Ex despite the busy work schedule.

JAI BGN

Mountain Bike Challenge (25-29 October 2013)

By Unit Correspondent

They say an opportunity seldom comes and if you miss it you will probably regret it for long time, hence grabbing the opportunities at the right time is one of the wisest things to do. Who could ignore the package of an adventurous and an incredible opportunity to see Nepal through the back door in a way few tourists and locals experience. Hence, without the slightest of doubt, I volunteered instantly for this incredible experience of cycling from BGK towards the west of Nepal finishing in BGP. After all it is one of those unique experiences, which you hardly get and would not wish to miss, especially in your own country. Five days (25 to 29 October 2013, over 300 km and 11,000m of climb) on a mountain bike in the hills of Nepal and life takes on a different meaning!

Although it seems glamorous and exciting, cycling for five days off roads in the hills of Nepal was not an easy task. After the final preparations, a team of BGN cyclists SSgt Dugendra, Sgt Top, Sgt Harka, Cpl Rabindra all being novice cyclists, apart from Cpl Kumar a qualified Mountain Bike Leader commenced their journey from Kathmandu on 25 October 2013. The challenge was led by OC BGK, Maj Hendry Saheb, who being an experienced mountain biker also teamed up with friends Major Nigel Potter and his wife Becks as well as the recently retired Steve Edwards.

To complete the group we were joined by our guide and Nepal's top female cyclist Ms Laxmi Magar.

I must admit that cycling with the experienced mountain bikers in the hills of Nepal was hard work, but an incredible experience and we all gained much from their knowledge. Despite being a Nepali you hardly visit those remote villages and hills



BGN cyclists team at the start point on the first day of the cycling tour at BG Kathmandu

so this added another aspect to our trip. Our first day from Kathmandu to Nuwakot was tough, especially as it was our first day and getting used to the gears, roads, dealing with punctures (Sgt Top's was the lead for punctures on that day but this proved to be a good rest for the group) I must admit, the hard work was worth every penny, when we reached the historical Nuwakot Palace of King Prithvi Narayan Shah. It almost took you back to the days, when King Prithvi Narayan Shah once took the courage from those palaces to unify Nepal.

With sore legs and aching bodies we headed towards Dhading on the second day. As it was only our second day the enthusiasm and cyclist spirit could be seen in everyone's face, despite the toughness of the route. Due to harvesting season of the wheat, the sceneries in the fields made this an enjoyable experience. After a long day's ride we finally reached the outskirts of the Dhading town, which like other towns was full of shops, restaurants and traffic. In order to complete the rest of the journey, the search for the fresh local chicken was very important and we were successful. The appetising delicacy of local chicken with dhindo (Nepalese cuisine) undoubtedly was the best meal of the whole tour and definitely energising for the next day.

On our third day we headed towards Gorkha and the route was equally challenging not to mention the monotonous uphill in the scorching heat. Nevertheless taking the sips of home made lassi (mohi) during the breaks was near to Nirvana experience. By the time we climbed the hills of the Gorkha, we were all starving and no shops and restaurants were to be seen, which really tested our cycling spirit and stamina. However Sgt Top was not affected at the slightest with all this hard work, as he was anxious and excited as we were heading towards his village. Especially it was emotional journey for him as he was going back to his childhood school after 23 years and the overwhelming welcome reception of the school was second to none. That excitement, pride, joy of the teachers and hospitality was worth the hard work. We then headed towards AWC Gorkha to end our day.

After an excellent reception by AWC Gorkha and a good night's sleep in our tents, we headed to the uphill of the Gorkha in the early morning to view the famous historical Gorkha palace which was equally interesting. After finishing AWO Saheb's brief on our fourth day at AWC Gorkha, we headed towards Besi Sahar in Lamjung, a famous tourist hub for the hiking towards Annapurna range and Mustang/Manang area. After a long and tiring cycling, finally we were in AWC Lamjung at Besi Sahar to receive the warm welcome of AWC Lamjung Staff. By the time we reached Besi Sahar, the rain began to pour at its best and the decision to abandon our tents and head towards a hotel was certainly the right one. Besi Sahar was equally interesting; especially the panoramic view of Mt Annapurna range and the fresh enthusiasm of the tourists tempted us to join with them; no matter how tempting it was, our task was to head towards Pokhara on the final day.

After a good night's sleep, we headed towards Pokhara on the last and longest day of our cycling trip. Although our bodies were aching and the energy level and enthusiasm level slowly lowering, the scenery that morning was nothing less than spectacular: beautiful hills, rivers and the famous Mt Annapurna range revealed itself in time for us to capture several great photos. On our way to Pokhara, we stopped at Sundar Bazar for tea in Capt Amar Gurung Saheb's (QG Signals) house, where the hospitality and reception was very humbling; their hospitality made the final challenge of the rest of the journey so perfect. After the tea, we continued our long and tiring journey towards Pokhara. Hill climb after hill climb made that 85km stage the toughest by far however the scenic view of Begnas and Rara Lake on the way to Pokhara lightened the pain. Finally at around 2000, we were in British Gurkhas Camp, Pokhara to end our five day cycling journey and a delicious food with rakshi (local home made wine) at Cpl Kumar's house was the perfect way to end our journey.

In hindsight, the five day mountain bike journey was physically challenging without a doubt but an incredible experience of a lifetime and very rewarding. Throughout the journey we were blessed with good weather, beautiful views of the mountains, and hospitable people along with a flurry of activity of villagers in the fields due to harvesting season. I encourage readers to embrace the uncertainty of the road ahead and to take the path less travelled, exploring roads, people, culture, hills and villages that you would never experience travelling by car or bus. If you ever happen to be in Nepal, I would highly encourage and recommend everyone to try this route by mountain bike. On behalf of OC BGK, the Mountain Bike Team and myself, I would like to thank GWS and the AWC's for their warm welcome and the Admin Team for their hard work in supporting us throughout this unique experience.

Jai BGN



G200e Training For Mount Everest

By Unit Correspondent

Like a warrior preparing for battle, on 14 December 2013 at around 0200 in the confines of a claustrophobic tent in the freezing cold snowy mountains of Nepal, Gurkha 200 Everest Expedition (G200E) team were preparing their mountain climbing gear in order to summit Mt Ombigaichan (6,340m). After the successful training in Wales during the first phase of G200E held in July 2013 at the Joint Service Mountain Training Centre, Anglesey the opportunity of training arose in Nepal. Hence, 13 serving members from BGN, 1 and 2 RGR headed towards the Mt Ombigaichan as phase 2 training of G200E from 03 to 18 December 2013.



It was not only an ideal opportunity to familiarise ourselves with mountaineering gear and techniques but a lifetime opportunity to experience the outskirts of the beautiful Khumbu area, where people pay a fortune just to be there. After an adventurous and roller coaster flight to Lukla we headed towards our destination under the guidance and company of experienced Sherpa guides. It was my second time in the Khumbu area and this time it was a bit different, as I was in the training and was prepared mentally for the challenges; after all it was G200E training.

After five days of ascent, we finally reached the famous Ama Dablam base camp. We had to familiarise ourselves with the altitude, because even the fittest and healthiest men could suffer from AMS (Altitude Mountain Sickness) at any stage in the mountains. There is no way of avoiding AMS, it is only matter of whether you have mild, or severe case of AMS. As you ascend towards the higher ground, you suffer more from AMS and symptoms like tiredness, fatigue, nausea, headache will slow you down. The chilly nights, the sound of violent winds tearing away the fine yellow walls of our North Face tent seldom woke us. Experience of drinking water and cooking food from the frozen river and snow was also worth mentioning.

After a week long training in the famous base camp of Mount Ama Dablam, G200E team were confident with their mountaineering gear and skills. The training was mainly focused on use of mountaineering techniques and getting used to the equipment. Introduction of various mountaineering techniques and gears like avalanche transmitter, prodding drills, use of ice axe, jumar, crampons, different rope skills and much more were vital for our summiting days. Walking with full gear in the mountain boots and crampons in the snowy and windy mountains is not an easy task. Minor mistakes could lead to fatal results.

Finally on the freezing morning of 13 December 2013, we headed towards the advance base camp of Mt Ombigaichan and started our climb on 14 December 2013 at 0200. With the newly acquired mountaineering techniques and assistance from the skilled Sherpa Guides the whole team successfully climbed up to the height of 6,000m at 1500. Without a doubt, climbing through the dangerous glaciers and crevasses in strong winds was tough but an incredible experience for the forthcoming Everest Expedition.

The whole training was physically challenging without a doubt but an experience of a lifetime and very rewarding. Throughout the training we were blessed with the beautiful views of the mountains and hospitable people. This training has indeed strengthened the team bonding between us, tested our physical and mental strength and taught us to adapt in extreme conditions. On behalf of G200E team, I would like to thank Expedition Leader Capt Dick Gale, Sherpa Guides and all involved for this unique experience and wish all the best for the remaining phase of G200E (Everest Expedition).

Jai G200E and Jai BGN



British Gurkhas Pokhara

By Unit Correspondent

British Gurkhas Pokhara has had another busy, enjoyable and prosperous year; and for the first time in a few years, has the full complement of serving personnel in camp. BGP successfully selected 126 recruits for the British Army, assisted the GCSPF select 60 new Gurkhas; significantly developed Contingency Plans; ran two language courses; welcomed well over 400 visitors; hosted the BGN/GWS Conference as well as the usual plethora of Dashain, RAN and ex-Servicemen Associations functions and festivities.

Recruit Intake 14 was led by the DRO Capt Richard Roberts (RGR) and the SARO Capt (Retd) Bhojraj Gurung. The Registration phase this year was highly successful with a 12% increase in potential recruits applying for the British Army compared to Recruit Intake 13 and the highest numbers registered in total for three years despite the limited number of vacancies again this year. This was in no small part, due to the effectiveness of this year's advertising campaign where the Gallah Wallahs and Recruit Cell Officers extend the BGN footprint on the ground across Nepal. The Gallahs reached over two thirds of the districts in Nepal and Officer briefs were conducted in half of the Nepal districts, which alone, directly engaged with nearly 2,000 local people. Relations with Training Academies have not begun (nor will they), but we ensured they were aware and had access to the public recruiting briefs in their areas so that numerous academies sent their students along. This provided us with an excellent opportunity to pass on key information and advice in a fair and transparent way to much larger audiences than previously. This dispelled myths and provided encouragement and tried to ensure potential recruits trained safely. Furthermore, there is a perception that British Army redundancies are 'bottoming out' thus they correctly believe there is an increase in job security and career opportunities.

The implementation of different education tests each day at Regional Selection also proved to increase the fairness of the process; as did a greater in-depth study of physical abnormalities and their medical implications. This ensured we were all singing from the same hymn sheet and not de-selecting a potential recruit unjustly. At Central Selection we had three groups of 100 PR's including a company which was half Western / half Eastern PR's. Once they had gone through the education, medical and physical tests what we were left with for the Interview boards was very encouraging. For the first time ever, we ran two interviewing boards this year in an attempt to optimize and streamline our process. There were fears from all that this may lead to some discrepancy between the two boards. However, with careful "zeroing" of assessing candidates and the scores we gave, it proved to be successful. As 126 were selected and we felt that should the Brigade wish to increase its numbers we had the quality there to match. This is all very positive for the future.

Next year it is with sadness that we bid a fond farewell to the SARO, Bhoj Saheb. He has served for 42 years for the British Crown and the Brigade of Gurkhas. He joined the Rect Cell in 2007 as ARO Coord and during his tenure 1,294 quality young Gurkhas have been recruited into the British Army. His presence, style and charisma will be sorely missed, but we send him the very best wishes during retirement.

On 03 January 2014 BGP hosted the Attestation Parade, which was attended by a variety of guests including Nepal Army Generals and numerous Ambassadors, and most importantly General Sir Peter Wall GCB CBE ADC - Chief of the General Staff (CGS). The 126 recruits gave an immaculate display - a testament to the excellent instruction of the Gurkha Company gurujis. A new tradition has also been born at Attestation Parade. Now it is 2iC BGP who leads the parade and reports to the Inspecting Officer. Once inspected the 2iC hands over the recruits to RCO Gurkha Company. This is a good symbolic act to show that once the recruits BGP have selected have been approved by the Inspecting Officer; they are then handed over to Gurkha Company for their onward move to the UK, training and subsequent careers. Attestation Parade, as ever, proved to be a wonderful occasion and it was fantastic to see the pride in the faces of the recruits' families and friends.

BGP has also spent a lot of time over the year doing Contingency Training and developing Contingency Plans in the event of a predicted major earthquake. Whilst this has been worked on over the years, it has really picked up in pace as we are determined to be as ready as possible and not found wanting. Every month we continue to hold monthly training not only for all BGP personnel, but also GWS personnel in camp and KAAA. This focuses on anything from First Aid to practicing searching buildings for survivors. Our annual exercise, Ex BHUINCHALYO AYO was a success and the fallout from that has led to the establishment of a new permanent Ops Room; an increase in supplies; and improved relations with local government agencies. Our focus over the next year will be how we could help our LECs and dependents, the local community and expatriates in the event of an earthquake; and longer term how we could host external support to get vital aid into Nepal.

Dashain at BGP was a large occasion as ever with immaculate planning and preparation, in particular from the LEC community. It did not fail to disappoint with the successful removal of the Buffalo's head in one go during March. As many will know, it is believed by some that the good fortune of the entire Brigade of Gurkhas for the following year rests in the hands of the Marwala. The meat was then divided up, frozen and sent worldwide across the Brigade.

Next year, BGP is looking forward to recruiting once again. We are optimistic we will receive a requirement to increase the number of young men we are to recruit. There is some excellent Adventure Training planned: Paragliding in February and summiting Mt Yala 5,732m and Naya Kanga 5,844m in April.

We are also delighted to be hosting G200 events in 2015 and we will spend time next year planning for those, namely the 2GR Durbar on 29 March 2015.

JAI BGP



Comd BGN congratulating the Maar Wala



The Doko Race start point



Contingency Planning - Search & Rescue Teams



Hunter's Breakfast with Comdt SCHINF Brig D J H Maddan



Practicing riot control for Contingency Training

British Gurkhas Dharan (BGD)

By EO(L) Chandrakamal Rasaily Oc Bgd

As in the previous years, despite the various challenges in 2013, BGD successfully carried out BGN's core function smoothly in order to maintain BGN's good reputation in East Nepal.

In 2013 BGD bid farewell to Mr Krishna Shrestha, who served as a movement staff at BGD for 20 years. He was one of the most loyal/trustworthy staff of this unit. He was always there to receive and see off the visitors in Biratnagar Airport.



Mr Krishna Shrestha receiving the certificate from Civ Sec HQ BGN

In December 2013 another important visit to BGD was paid by Col J G Robinson Late RGR Colonel Brigade of Gurkhas. During this visit Col BG inaugurated the statue of late Rfn Vijay Rai 2 RGR at United Ex-serviceman club at Tarahara, Sunsari on 05 December 2013 at the special request of his parents. Vijay's parents were very much thankful to his late son's numberies for taking such a great initiative to raise the statue in his home town Tarahara. In the inauguration ceremony Col BG was accompanied by Lt Col EA Davis COS HQ BGN and Maj Manoj Mohara GM HQ BGN.



Statue of Late Rfn Vijay Rai inaugurated by Col J G Robinson Late RGR, Col BG

Official/Duty trek starts here from September to April (Eight Months in a year). But this year due to political instability numbers of trekkers went down in comparison to past years. Now we hope that this number will gradually go up in coming



Col J G Robinson (Col BG), Lt Col EA Davis (COS HQ BGN) and Maj Manoj Mohara (GM HQ BGN) with Late Rfn Vijay Rai's parents

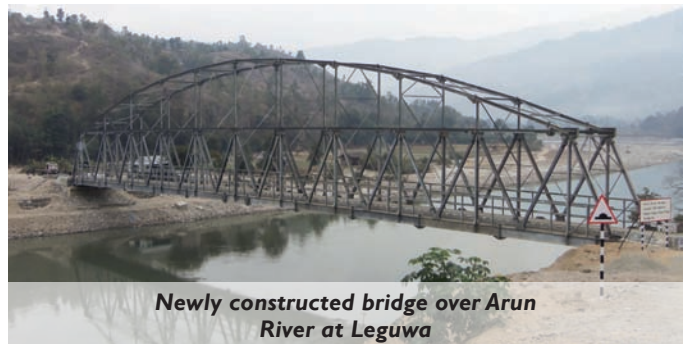
days. I encourage everyone to experience trekking in East Nepal at least once in a lifetime. The main attractions in the eastern Nepal are the beautiful views of Himalayan ranges and Rhododendron (Laliguras flowers).

From May to July 2013 Potential Recruiting Registration and Regional Selection during August went well. Thousands of potential recruit candidates turned up at BGD with required documents to fulfill their dreams of joining the British Army or GCSPF.

Pension Paying Office(PPO) has been established here in Dharan for the convenience of the pensioners of east Nepal and plenty of senior pensioners can be seen in the PPO. One peculiarity of PPO Dharan surprisingly is the turn out of senior pensioners on the first day of the month as they not only come to collect their pension but to meet their old colleagues and recall their past with a bottle of beer.

This year in December I along with AMTO BGK will be carrying out the road recce to Bhojpur. There was no bridge over Arun River and the only means of transportation to cross the river was ferry. The road condition from Leguwa to Bhojpur is difficult but it's a motorable road. Eight buses depart to and from Bhojpur to various locations like Dharan, Biratnagar, Itahari daily.

Jai BGD



Newly constructed bridge over Arun River at Leguwa

Gurkha Welfare Scheme

Staff List

Lt Col G R Blewitt R Welsh	Fd Dir
Maj (Retd) Lalitbahadur Gurung Ex RGR	Dep Fd Dir
Capt (QGO) (Retd) Hikmatbahadur Gurung Ex I RGR	SO Coord
Capt B C Stretton RE	Proj Engr
Mr Sindhulal Shrestha	Fin Adviser
Maj (Retd) Krishna Gurung BEM Ex QGS	SO IA
Lt (Retd) Mahendrakumar Gurung Ex QGS	SO Med
Lt (QGO) (Retd) Purnabahadur Gurung Ex I RGR	SO Log
Hon Lt (QGO) Chhatrabahadur Rai ex QGS	SO Ops
Capt (QGO) (Retd) Bhaktabahadur Rai Ex QGE	Prog Dir RWSP
WO2 (Retd) Shriprasad Tamang Ex IRGR	OIC RH Kaski
Hon Lt (QGO) Punendraprasad Limbu Ex 2 RGR	OIC RH Dharan
Dr Satish Gurung MBBS, MD	SMP

Area Welfare Centres

WO2 (Retd) Deoprakash Rai Ex 10 GR	AWO Darjeeling
Sgt (Retd) Mangalsing Tamang Ex QG Signals	AAWO Khandbari
Maj (Retd) Gyanbahadur Limbu MVO Ex QOGLR	AWO Damak
Capt (Retd) Purnaprasad Limbu Ex 2 RGR	SAWO Dharan
Hon Lt (QGO) Tikaram Rai Ex 10 GR	AWO Phidim
Insp II (Retd) Subharaj Thamsuhang Ex GCSPF	AWO Taplejung
Hon Lt (QGO) Premkumar Tamang Ex QG Signals	AWO Tehrathum
WO2 (Retd) Barhajit Rai Ex 7 GR	AWO Bhojpur
Insp (Retd) Shyamkumar Rai Ex GCSPF	AWO Diktel
Hon Lt (QGO) Thakursing Gurung Ex 2 RGR	AWO Rumjatar
Maj (Retd) Sovitbahadur Hamal MVO Ex QOGLR	AWO Bheri
Hon Lt (QGO) Deobahadur Rana Ex QOGLR	AWO Gulmi
Maj (Retd) Chandrabahadur Gurung MVO Ex I RGR	SAWO Kaski
Lt (QGO) (Retd) Senbahadur Gurung Ex 6 GR	AWO Lamjung
Hon Lt (QGO) Tirthabahadur Thapa Ex 2 RGR	AWO Gorkha
Capt (Retd) Pimbahadur Gurung Ex GSPS	AWO Syangja
Hon Lt (QGO) Haribahadur Rana Ex I RGR	AWO Tanahun
Capt (QGO) (Retd) Hemchandra Rai MBE BEM Ex GSPS	AWO Chitwan
Capt (QGO) (Retd) Jitbahadur Thapa Ex I RGR	SAWO Butwal
Hon Maj Dalbahadur Limbu MVO Ex QGE	SAWO Bagmati

Honorary Area Welfare Officer

WO2 (Retd) Satyasagar Ghale Ex 6 GR	HAWO Dehradun/ Dharamsala
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The Gurkha Welfare Scheme Nepal

By Lt(Qgo) Retd Purnabhadur Gurung (So Log)

Introduction and Core Activities

The Gurkha Welfare Scheme (GWS) Nepal is a charity organisation with its headquarters based at Pokhara. It has a total of 20 permanent branch offices known as Area Welfare Centres (AWC), 19 across Nepal and one in Darjeeling, India. In addition, it has twelve patrol bases, which are mostly rented and used for medical RV and quarterly welfare/service pension payments. The GWS operates under the umbrella of British Gurkhas Nepal (BGN) and the Commander BGN Colonel S P F Harris OBE is our also Director.

The GWS serves approximately 7,500 welfare pensioners and 20,000 service pensioners including ex-Gurkha Contingent Singapore Police Force (GC SPF) and provides them, their dependants and communities the following services.

Support to Welfare Pensioners:

- Welfare Pension
- Disability Support Grant to adult children
- Free Medical up to a ceiling and beyond if case justified
- Residential Homes
- Hardship Grants., landslide, fire, destitute cases
- Assist in ILE application (through AWCs & LO GSO BGN)

Support to MOD (service pensioners & serving soldiers):

- Service pensions payment at AWCs
- Medical aid (65% or more up to a ceiling)
- Disaster relief i.e., earthquake/landslide, etc.
- Personal records updating
- Assist in ILE application
- Investigation of compassionate and welfare cases including NOTICAS

Community Aid:

- Water projects including promotion of health and hygiene
- Schools - new builds, maintenance of GWS built schools, roofing, furniture, etc.
- Public relations aid i.e., sports complex, community hall, side-roads, etc.

The Gurkha Welfare Trust (GWT) UK, chaired by the Chief of the General Staff (CGS) General Sir Peter Wall GCB CBE ADC, who is also the Chairman Trustees, is the architect of the policy and funding for all our core activities in Nepal. The GWT works tirelessly to raise funds from all over the world, particularly in the mainland UK. They are supported by MOD, DFID (UK Aid) and serving Gurkhas including GC SPF who contribute to the GWT through One Day Pay Scheme (ODPS). This donation, however small or big, plays a significant part in the trust's mantra to ensure that our pensioners live out their lives with dignity. We pay our sincere tribute to all for their generous contribution for this humanitarian relief effort.

Changes to Key Personalities

Our previous Director GWS Col A M Mills (now OBE) left Nepal in July 2013 and he was given a farewell party at AWC Kaski to thank him for his tremendous guidance and support throughout his tenure. Accordingly, we are all extremely glad to hear of his receipt of OBE in the New Year Honour list. We congratulate him for this exceptional achievement. He has assured us that he would return to Nepal and has kept his promises by returning as the representative of the EU Election Monitoring team. We welcome our new Director Col S P F

Harris OBE and have already had opportunity to work under his leadership. He has already made some changes for the good of the organisation and the ex-servicemen community and we look forward to working with him for many many years to come.

Meanwhile we bade farewell to the following senior officers and staff this year who contributed much to this organisation. We wish them well for the future.

Maj(Retd) Chandraprasad Limbu MBE ex 3RGR
Maj(Retd) Govinde Gurung MVO MBE ex QGS
Capt((Retd) Damberkumar Pradhan ex 6GR
SSgt Tejman Gurung ex QGS

Re-rolling of AWC Khandbari

As part of the wider GWS drawdown plan, the post of the AWO is withdrawn when the number of welfare pensioners reduces to below 150, coupled with other factors. AWC Khandbari is the first to have experienced such reduction. The AWC is now manned by an AAWO, currently Sgt Mangalsing Tamang, ex QGS. In the near future, it is hoped that he will be assisted by an ex-serviceman (ideally a Cpl) and the title to

be 2IC, i.e., 2IC AWC Khandbari. It is expected that few other AWCs will follow suit.

G200 Celebration and Enhancements of Trust Support to Ex-servicemen

To mark the 200 years of the Gurkhas' service to the British army, the GWT is preparing to celebrate this historic year with grand events at both ends. The UK event will mainly focus on the fund-raising strategy, whereas Nepal will see improved enhancements to the current aid provided to our ex-servicemen, namely medical home care facilities and few other amenities, which will be made public in the coming months.

Establishment of Residential Home Dharan

After the successful establishment and running of the RH Kaski, another RH with *en suite* facilities for 26 residents has been built within the extended perimeter of AWC Dharan, thanks to our generous donor Mr. Michael Uren, who has so generously provided funds in the construction of RHs. Both RHs have been running smoothly and the entire residents are enjoying their new lives there. The plan for the third RH is under consideration now and I hope to present the outcome in the next issue of the *Kukri*.

Conclusion

The GWS has been providing much needed aid to our ex-servicemen and their communities with the view to uplift their living standards, especially in the remote villages. These tasks have been made possible by the sheer effort by our trustees in the UK and more importantly, our generous supporters and donors. We are proud to be part of you and we thank you all.

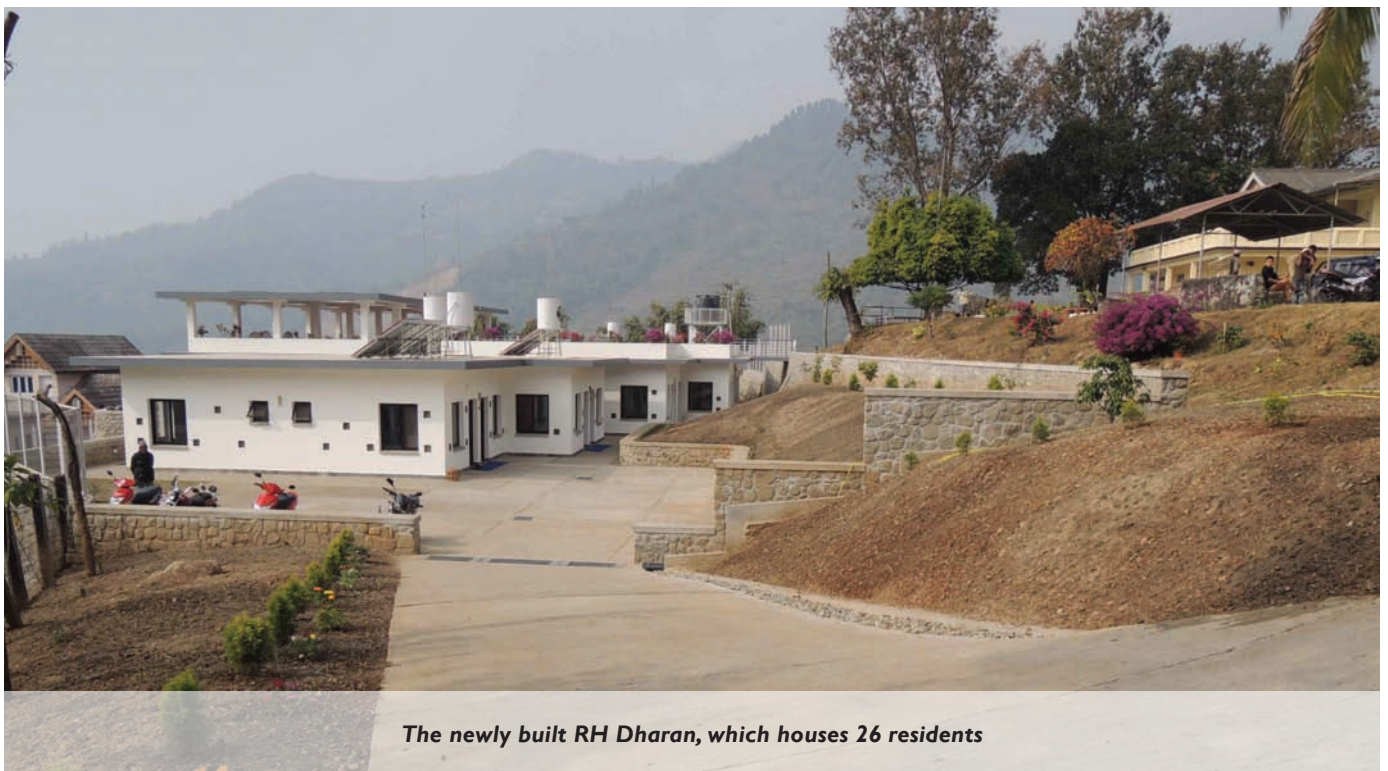
JAI GWS



A GWS District Nurse visiting the pensioner at her home



The re-rolled AAWO Khandbari welcoming BGP recruiting team



The newly built RH Dharan, which houses 26 residents

KADOORIE AGRICULTURAL AID ASSOCIATION (BRITISH GURKHAS NEPAL) (KAAA (BGN))

Staff List

Capt (Retd) A P W Howard ex 6 GR/RGR	KAAA Representative
Maj (Retd) Judbahadur Gurung ex QGE	Co-ordinating Officer
Capt (Retd) Karnabahadur Thapa ex 2 GR/RGR	Administrative Officer
Capt (Retd) Dudman Gurung ex 2 GR/RGR	Recce Offr 1
Capt (Retd) Mohankumar Gurung ex QGE	Recce Offr 2
Er Narayan Gurung M Tech	Tech Dir Field Project

Kadoorie Agricultural Aid Association British Gurkhas Nepal

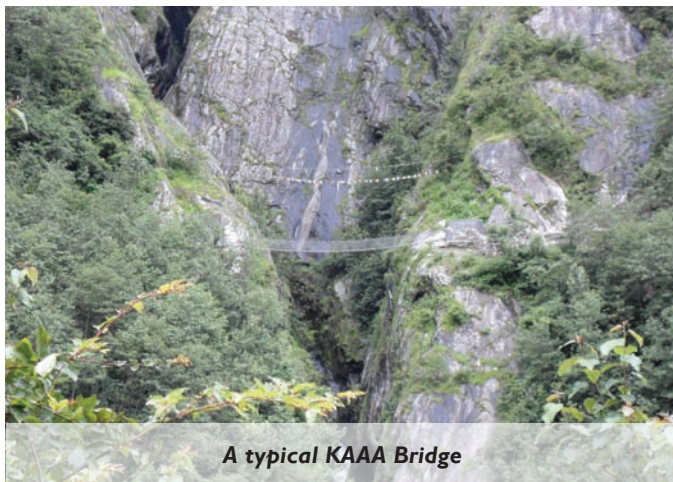
By Hon Major Judbahadur Gurung, Co-Ordinating Officer

Kadoorie Agricultural Aid Association (KAAA) has had another busy year and has completed projects in areas beyond what once were traditional recruiting areas but of course recruiting of Gurkhas covers the whole of Nepal and the need to cater for the most needy has now taken KAAA to the foothills of the snow capped mountains. Chhekampar in North Gorkha was until recently 'a no go area' for tourists and we ventured into recce mode in 2007 and have now completed some notable project work there. This area is predominantly more connected to Tibet and once in a while items are bought from the North (when weather permits) rather than the South due to logistical problems and of course the high cost of transportation. Cement for the projects was cheaper when bought from the North when you add up all the cost.

The furthest village in this serene valley where you are surrounded by the Himalayan peaks is Nile and a Micro Hydro Electric Project (24 KW) was installed by KAAA and the villager's life has been brightened up in more ways than one. In addition, Wind Generated Electricity was put on trial but after a year the winds were too powerful and the turbines were blown away nowhere to be seen again in the vicinity. However the village of eight houses will now be linked to Lar Village Micro Hydro Project that is already up and running courtesy of KAAA.

KAAA was at one time heavily staffed by QGE Ex-Servicemen but ever since the Grant of Entry to the UK, the exodus in that direction has been immense and a radical change in recruitment of staff in KAAA had to be made. Hence young men in the villages who had failed the School Leaving Certificate (SLC) and who were either children or grandchildren of Ex Servicemen were selected to attend two and a half years training in either Electric or Plumbing & Sanitation at Balaju, Kathmandu totally at KAAA expense. After successfully completing these courses some were selected for potential Project Supervisors (PS). Others not connected to the army are also eligible for these courses as long as they are destitute or poor. Today we have 17 PSs within KAAA permanent staff and three Project Managers who came through this system. This year we will be saying goodbye to 21156042 Cpl Purnabahadur Thapa Ex QGE who will be the last QGE PS to leave us after serving here for 20 years.

We also managed to install a Solar Water Pumping System in Khung Khani in Dang where the solar panels from Tanahun were re-utilised as the latter had been connected to the main electric grid. Another Ex Serviceman SSgt Yemkumar Rana was the driving force in this area and he assisted KAAA immensely. Colonel Lavender, Director KCF from Hong Kong, officially opened the pumping system while on his visit to Nepal. This project has a lift of 156 metres.



A typical KAAA Bridge



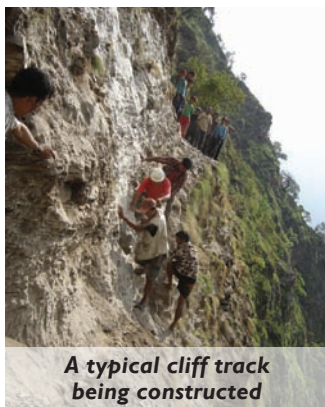
Col Lavender at Khung Khani, Dang Solar Water Pumping Opening Ceremony

There is more empowerment to the women as the menfolk tend to go overseas in search of work and the females are left to tend to the village elders and the children. Recently in Tumsika near Barpak, Gorkha, we had ladies climbing up the electric poles to instal electric wires for our Micro Hydro Projects.



Women are just as capable as men. Installing electric lines at Tumsika, Gorkha

Cliff Tracks are another KAAA specialty where if one has to go over the top of the hill in a time consuming journey, this can be shortened by literally hacking into the rocks to make tracks out of the cliff itself. This is quite challenging and the villagers themselves have to select the people to do this job.



A typical cliff track being constructed

Employment Training is in some ways the 'Jewel in the Crown' of KAAA and all those aged between 17 and 27 years are eligible for Short Courses & between 17 and 25 years for Long Courses. These are like 'Chatham type courses' but have more variety. It ranges from Masonry to Dentist Hygienist and are located all over Nepal. A KAAA Board will short list candidates once the nominations are received from AWCs & KAAA Staff while on project work.



*Mason
A Masonry Course in progress 9:13:56AM*

Medical Camps are sponsored by KAAA and are run by GWS. It is usually a three day event carried out in Area Welfare Centres to coincide with the pension paying to ex-servicemen and to welfare pensioners. Recently in Bhojpur AWC, 77 cataract operations were carried out in addition to free medical consultation and treatment. Extraction of teeth is another free service. This is open to all in that particular area irrespective of whether they are Ex-servicemen or not. The mobile doctors within GWS are very active in this event as are doctors from various hospitals in Nepal. A Bailey Bridge of 18 metres span is being built this year as motor able tracks are appearing in the hills of Nepal everywhere. For Ex QGE staff this is like refreshing our brains and going back to the earlier days in the army.



Dark Glasses for the cataract eye operated personnel at AWC Rumjatar 013:07:29

KAAA has 58 Permanent Staff with around 150 skilled seasonal labourers & some 150 on courses at any one-year. We are under command of British Gurkhas Nepal and work closely with Gurkha Welfare Scheme (GWS). It is totally funded by the Kadoorie Family in Hong Kong.



KAAA Staff

Raid into Tibet

By Gen Sam Cowan

A recent study of two Foreign Office files in the UK National Archives (371/176118 and 371/176120) shed interesting light on events in Kathmandu in July 1964 which put Antony Duff, the recently arrived British Ambassador, in a predicament, seriously discomfited the monarch and caused major problems for Panchayat ministers and officials.

The man at the centre of the events was a dedicated supporter of the Tibetan cause called George Patterson. He was a former missionary in Kham and spoke the Kham dialect fluently. He arrived in Kathmandu in March 1964 and was later joined by Adrian Cowell, a gifted documentary film maker, and Chris Menges, an experienced TV cameraman. Their ambitious mission was to make contact with Khampa fighters in Mustang and film them carrying out a raid so that the world could see that Tibetans were still actively fighting the Chinese.

The build up in late 1960 of Khampas in Mustang and their later dominance in the area was a badly kept secret. An article in the New York Times on 03 March 1962 quoted a Nepalese foreign ministry spokesman as saying that unidentified aircraft had been dropping arms to about 4,000 Khampas in Mustang. The same article said that official Indian sources were expressing strong concern that the build-up of Tibetans on Nepal's northern border could lead to China sending troops into Nepal. There were 2,000 Khampas in Mustang and the first two air drops to them, organised by the CIA, had taken place in April 1961 and December 1961. In each case, two Hercules aircraft had delivered the weapons to a drop zone ten kms inside Tibet, just across the border from Mustang. The weapons dropped were mainly of second world war vintage.

The CIA's intention from the outset was for the Khampas to establish positions astride the roads within Tibet but despite sustained pressure (which increased considerably after a third and final air drop into Mustang in May 1965 by one DC-6) such a move never took place. Setting up bases in Tibet would have led to heavy casualties on the scale suffered by those Khampas parachuted into Tibet between 1957 and 1962 after the PLA had fully mobilised to meet the threat. Of the 49 men inserted, 37 were killed, most of them in pitched battles against the PLA. Lightly equipped guerrilla forces simply cannot stand and fight conventionally equipped armies supported by artillery and fighter ground attack aircraft.

The same heavy attrition occurred when the CIA shifted their point of effort in early 1964 to infiltrating small groups of Khampas into Tibet on intelligence missions. Four members of one of these groups were arrested in Kathmandu in June 1964 following a brawl. One of Duff's dispatches gives the detail of this arrest as told to him by the Inspector General of Police, PS Lama. Lama told Duff that the Khampas were trained abroad and were on their way to the border. He also gave Duff a list

of sophisticated surveillance and communication equipment taken from the Tibetans which, they said, had been given to them in Kathmandu by Hugh McDevitt who was employed as the manager of "Air Ventures" which operated two helicopters for the United States aid mission.

All of this indicates that from an early stage the Nepalese authorities knew what was going on in Mustang, and who was backing the Khampas there with money and material. There was therefore no chance that the Nepalese authorities would allow Patterson anywhere near Mustang but they underestimated the man's guile and determination.

In his book, *A Fool at Forty*, Patterson describes the web of deceit he spun in Kathmandu to cause maximum confusion about his real aim beneath the cover of making "a TV film about Nepal." King Mahendra was travelling in the far west, but Patterson saw most of the key people: Tulsi Giri, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Prakash Thakur, the Chief of Protocol, Mr Banskota, the Director of Publicity, and General Padma Bahadur Khatri, the Foreign Secretary. He also had a two-hour meeting with Mahendra's brother, Prince Basundhara.

Patterson clearly pulled the wool over all their eyes as he quickly got permission to start filming in and around Kathmandu. His application to go to Mustang was refused but on a visit to a Tibetan camp near Trisuli, Patterson was informed about a small Khampa group in Tsum. After some delay he obtained a permit for "a trek to Pokhara." He had a further slice of luck when three separately nominated liaison officers all found some excuse not to go. At the last minute, a young college student was nominated and accepted. Soon after getting the permit, the group headed to Arughat at which point they left the trail to Pokhara by turning north up the Buri Gandaki. After passing the police check post and Indian wireless station at Setibas, (one of 17 established along the northern border by secret protocol in 1950 and withdrawn in 1969) they left the line of the river to head north east up the long, steep trail to Tsum.

Contact was quickly made with the small Khampa group of 17 men. They had been dispatched from their main base in Mustang two years earlier to establish an outpost in this distant location. They had one Bren gun and eight rifles between them, and no means of communication. Tendar, their commander, had led reconnaissance sorties across the high snow passes which marked the border to monitor traffic on the Dzonkha to Kyrong road but, with supplies from Mustang having to come on a long and tortuous trail across the Thorung La and Laryka La passes, little offensive action had taken place.

At the time there was also apparently a lull in cross border raids from the main Khampa group in Mustang. A July 1964

dispatch from Duff reported a meeting he had with Michael Peissel who “recently had spent two months in Mustang getting material for a book.” Peissel gave him a detailed account of where the Khampa camps were located and told him that there had been no raiding across the border since early 1963 “after the Dalai Lama had sent word that the raiding was to stop and the Tibetans were to settle down peacefully where they were and cultivate the land”. CIA sources also report this lull but give different reasons for it.

Patterson lost no time in putting his proposition to Tendar. With no means of checking with his superiors in Mustang, Tendar had his doubts. To decide the issue, he went to the gompa to cast the dice. The result was a clear indication to carry out the raid. On 07 June 1964, Tendar, with his eight lightly armed men, the three foreigners and three Khampa-provided porters, crossed the high snow passes which marked the border. Two days later at 1410, having been in the ambush position since before dawn, they attacked four unescorted PLA vehicles travelling on the Dzonka to Kyrong road. Three vehicles were damaged and 8 PLA soldiers killed. Patterson subsequently gave a detailed account of the raid to Charles Wylie, the Defence Attache in the UK embassy, and listed all the weapons carried. All except one were of the type dropped by the CIA. The exception was “one British rifle marked LSA & Co Ltd, 1919, which the Khampas claimed had been officially supplied to Tibet”. (In 1947, acting on a request for military aid, Britain supplied a substantial amount of arms and ammunition to the Tibetan government.)

In his book, Patterson’s detailed description of the raid closely follows the account he gave to Wylie, including how they left the student minder behind under the pretext that they were going to film refugees. The ambush was successfully filmed and the team returned to Kathmandu on 27 June 1964. Various lurid accounts have appeared of what happened next, including stories about the team being pursued to the border by the police and the Khampas misinterpreting a CIA order to retrieve the footage as a directive to kill them. Duff’s dispatches are clear and generally tie in with what Patterson says.

On the morning after they returned, Cowell dispatched the footage of the raid on the first plane out which happened to be going to East Pakistan. A few days later, the three of them went to see Duff to confess all, mainly on the grounds, Patterson says, that they thought it was the proper thing to do. (Duff had entertained them to dinner prior to their departure but they had said nothing about their true intentions.) Cowell and Menges were dubious but Patterson agreed that Duff could pass the information to Mahendra at an audience already fixed for the evening of Friday 03 July 1964. Duff waited till the Friday morning to alert London to what had happened. One of his two telegrams that day stated that he was going to inform the US ambassador. It would be reasonable to assume that this is when the CIA would have been first alerted. At this stage the UK was still accepting categorical denials from the US that it was involved in support for the Khampas. Subsequently the CIA blamed Baba Yeshe, the Mustang commander, for ordering

the ambush to get publicity. He was reprimanded and the flow of funds to Mustang was stopped for six months. Tendar was recalled to Mustang and reassigned to administrative duties.

Mahendra’s first reaction was to tell Duff that the film would be “a big headache for us and for you.” In a later audience, Mahendra told him that the Khampas constituted one of his major problems though many considered that he was at best ambivalent on the subject. However, such apparent sympathy clearly counted for nothing given what Patterson was now about to expose to the world. Immediately after meeting Duff, Mahendra summoned the Foreign Minister, Kirti Nidhi Bista. He lost no time in transferring the monarch’s ire to his subordinates at a meeting he called at 0830 on Saturday. Duff reported that “the main brunt fell on Padam Bahadur Khatri who took it especially hard because he would much sooner not have known anything about it all.”

That same morning, as previously planned, Cowell and Menges left Kathmandu to drive overland to India via Rauxal, accompanied by their student liaison officer. Patterson stayed on in Kathmandu as his wife, a surgeon, had arrived in his absence to help in the United Mission Hospital, bringing with her their three small children. Cowell and Menges were detained overnight at the border but left the next morning for Calcutta. Some innocuous film footage and audio tapes were confiscated. These were later returned to them; the tapes through the UK embassy in Kathmandu and the film from the Nepalese embassy in London. Duff reported that the palace had given the order to release them without informing the Foreign Secretary. Two days later he thought they were still under arrest and being brought to Kathmandu to face disciplinary action.

A week later Duff reported: “Judging by conversations with the King and the Foreign Minister at a reception, I have acquired no merit at all for telling the Nepalese about the sortie over the border into Tibet. The Foreign Minister indeed muttered something about it being sometimes better to conceal things for a while.” At the same reception Mahendra said that the film ought to be stopped. Duff told him this was not possible. Patterson and Cowell had told Duff that they would wait for three months before showing the material. In the event, the finished film called “Raid into Tibet” was not shown on British TV until 09 May 1966. It was widely acclaimed but, contrary to many reports, there is no record of it winning the Prix Italia. Cowell did win it in 1971 for his documentary about a remote Amazonian tribe: “The Tribe that Hides from Man.” Patterson was clearly not prepared to sit on his story for 18 months. In March 1965 he wrote a lengthy propagandist-style article on the raid in *The Reporter*, an American bi-weekly news magazine published in New York. It described the ambush in graphic detail and made it clear that the action had been filmed for TV. Large extracts immediately appeared in the *Hindustan Times*, under the heading: “Nepal-based Khampas harass Chinese”. The files show that the articles caused concern among British officials which suggests that perhaps ATV, the independent company who finally transmitted it in UK, had been persuaded to delay showing the film. An earlier note in the files indicates a determination to do this if pressure on Patterson failed.

Throughout the furor in Kathmandu over the filming of the raid, Duff had argued that some control over the film's final content might be achieved by taking a conciliatory approach with Patterson. Only Mahendra and the palace were receptive: Padam Bahadur Khatri and his cohorts wanted some measure of retribution.

This manifested itself at the airport two weeks later when, without producing any authority, the police prevented Patterson from leaving on his booked flight. When Duff complained, no one in Kathmandu could or would identify who had given the order. Three days later Patterson was allowed to leave having signed a five line note saying essentially that he was sorry for any inconvenience caused by visiting Setibas, which was not listed on his permit, and that he had not visited Mustang.

"Why that curious little statement should have satisfied anyone is merely one of the many mysteries about Nepalese behaviour throughout this affair." That comment from Duff's final dispatch on the event seems an apt way to end this tale as it also neatly conveys the opaqueness of government during the Panchayat days which so confused outsiders and so suited the monarch.

(In addition to the UK archive material, and Patterson's book, other information about Tendar and the Khampas in Mustang comes from the well-sourced book: The CIA's Secret War in Tibet by Conboy and Morrison.)

(A shorter version of this article appeared in the Nepali Times, Issue 688, 03 January 2014)

Two Hundred Years Of Nepal-Britain Relations, A Way Forward

By HE A J Sparkes CMG (Ambassador to Nepal)

A transcript of a speech given on 15 September 2013, by HE Mr A J Sparkes CMG (Ambassador to Nepal) on Nepal-Britain relationship, at a seminar in Kathmandu organised by the Institute for Foreign Affairs and the Chevening Alumni Association of Nepal is copied below. The speech is particularly appropriate as the Brigade gears up towards celebrating Gurkha 200 in 2015.

This speech was delivered at the seminar "200 Years Of Nepal-Britain Relations: A Way Forward" organised by the Institute for Foreign Affairs and Chevening Alumni Association of Nepal on Sunday 15 September 2013 at Hotel De L'Annapurna, Kathmandu.)

Honourable Foreign Minister Mr Madhav Ghimire, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

I was recently in Biratnagar, and the Nepalese businessmen there were explaining to me their frustrations that quite a lot of their export produce. Since it was shipped back through India, appeared to the consumer to be Indian. They wanted help in how to market their produce better to Western markets as "Made in Nepal". I said that we would try to help, but I also offered this encouragement: "Made in Nepal" would be a positive sell in the UK. The fact that something came from Nepal would incline many Brits to buy it. Such is the affection that my countrymen have for your country, and for Nepalese.

Let me briefly review the history that led to this. Our engagement as nations began rather unpromisingly with a war, and indeed our recruitment of Gurkha soldiers began by effectively stealing from the other side! But in the meantime British fascination with Nepal had already begun - a member



of the mission tasked with conducting the tense exchanges before the war was Alexander Buchanan-Hamilton, who made some early and excellent notes and drawings on Nepal's unique flora and fauna.

After the war, the Treaty of Sergauli formalised in March 1816 established a full relationship with Britain as two independent nations. We chose not to try to colonise, but to partner and influence. We were Nepal's only such partner between 1816 and 1951! And after initial wariness, relations began to improve, under the long tenure as Resident of another amateur naturalist, Brian Hodgson FRS, from 1829 to 1843. But they really became warm with the visit to the UK in 1850 by Nepalese leader Jang Bahadur Rana, who famously got on so well with Queen Victoria that during his year's stay She saw him no less than six times. Jang Bahadur in turn

became an enthusiast for all things British. He brought back British architecture, and he started the process of educating the Nepalese ruling class in the UK which continued for well over a century.

Chandra Shamsar's visit to UK in 1908 kept up the momentum but the next real watershed moment was the signature in 1923 of the Treaty under which the British accepted in writing that Nepal was an independent nation. This was crucial to Nepal's future. Without it, with Indian independence in 1947 Nepal might have been hard put to it to retain its separate identity.

The 20th Century saw another angle on the growing British love affair with Nepal, with the birth of mountaineering as a sport and the British determination to climb the world's highest mountain - Sagarmatha, or Everest. The romance of that quest was embodied in George Mallory, who died climbing Everest in 1924 and whose body was only recently found. Nobody knows whether or not he got to the top, but as we all know, in 1953 a British expedition led by John, Lord Hunt did succeed in putting the New Zealander Ed Hillary and Tenzing Norgay on the top. The British people went wild as the news reached them on the morning of the coronation of their Queen, who is still our Queen today.

And underpinning all this history, of course, was the arrangement whereby Gurkha soldiers were recruited into the British army. We owe them so much. Tens of thousands of them gave their lives for the British cause in two World Wars and they have won many of our highest decorations for bravery. They have in turn given honour and recognition to Nepal, as home of some of the world's best, most professional and dedicated soldiers. And the money they have earned has, over the years, done much for the prosperity of their communities, communities which we look after today through the work of the Gurkha Welfare Scheme.

So all this is why "made in Nepal" would sell products in the UK. It's why "Sherpa" branded trekking gear is sought after in the UK. And maybe, on the other side, it's why Nepalese people put our flag on their tee-shirts, on their scooters, on their shops and their trucks. This is a SPECIAL relationship.

But is a relationship not just about the past, but the present and the future. In the past, Nepal mattered to us because it was surrounded by countries which we either ruled or influenced. But the South Asia region still matters to us - not any longer because we are a superpower but because of the millions of Britons who come from South Asian origin, and because of the danger the region poses to the world in general if its antagonisms boil over, or if the terrorists who have found shelter in some parts of it are allowed to overrun the rest, or get their hands on weapons of mass destruction. In such a region, we need Nepal to be a beacon of stability and democracy, a like-minded power growing in prosperity and influence. A South Asian country which keeps good relations with all its neighbours, can host roundtables and broker between them.

That is our strategic interest in Nepal. But there are solid and substantial aspects to the modern relationship beyond that - above all our position as much the biggest donor to the country. That's consistent with the specialness to which I was referring, but also meeting Nepal's absolute need as the second poorest country in Asia.

I recently sat down with the British offices in Nepal - the Embassy, DFID, the Brigade of Gurkhas HQ staff who also run the Gurkha Welfare trust with its 20 Area Welfare centres around the country, the British Council - and we worked out together a one page Strategy for our modern relationship as we approach the 200th anniversary, in other words to cover the period 2013 to 2016.

I'd like to thank the senior colleagues who worked on that Strategy for coming to support me here today. Charlotte Duncan from DFID, Guy Harrison my Deputy Ambassador, Colonel Sean Harris my Defence Attaché who is also chief of the Gurkhas here in Nepal and his deputy Lt Colonel Elton Davis, and the Director of the British Council, Brendan McSharry.

I'll now run through that Strategy with a comment on its elements.

First, here is our overarching goal: A peaceful, democratic and inclusive Nepal, with dynamic growth, respect for human rights and continued strong partnership with the UK.

Under that, of course we have the responsibility of any British mission anywhere in the world - to support British nationals in Nepal, through an effective consular service, and also working with the Nepalese authorities to improve air safety for our tourists.

Then, there is our support for development in Nepal. We do this through DFID's work on wealth creation, service delivery, governance, disaster response, building climate change resilience, and improving health. We do it through the British Council's work to support cultural relations, and ELT standards and exam reform in education. And we have some smaller British Embassy project funds which contribute as well.

I'd like to dwell on this a little more and tell you more about what DFID and the Council do.

DFID is the largest single country donor to Nepal. It was before but it is even more now, as we have committed to nearly double our assistance to a total of £106 million a year. This is part of our Prime Minister's global commitment to spend 0.7% of our GDP on overseas development assistance, notwithstanding our economic crisis. DFID's Operational Plan aims to achieve the following results by 2015:

- Create 230,000 jobs, 50% of them for women
- Build 532 km and maintain 3,700 km of road
- Reduce the climate and disaster vulnerability of four million poor people, of which 2.19 million will be women

- Support 2,100 minors and late recruited former Maoist combatants given training and reintegration support
- 98% of local government bodies conducting public audits for every project
- Avert 108,000 unintended pregnancies • Ensure 110,000 people (53% women) benefit from safe latrines, partly through our support to the Gurkha Welfare Scheme

Amongst the many DFID programmes, I would like to highlight particularly those which will help Nepal to create sustainable growth, move along the path to Middle Income status, and so graduate from dependency on foreign aid altogether. Success will be when DFID is able to leave. So the DFID-supported Centre for Inclusive Growth has continued to tackle the critical constraints to growth. The centre focussed on analytical and legal support to unlock power development agreements to assist Nepal to get a fair deal for its hydro resources. This has contributed to ongoing work on improving the attractiveness of Nepal to foreign investors which DFID supports through the International Finance Corporation. At the same time DFID is working on the design of an Access to Finance programme which should provide small businessmen and farmers with what they need to grow into SMEs and so stimulate employment.

In the general area of infrastructure, jobs and skills, through DFID's work in the last decade, over one million people in remote districts have been connected to the national road network through the construction of 1,224km of rural roads and 246 pedestrian bridges. In doing so, 16 million days of employment were created for 10,000 poor and disadvantaged people. In addition, 42,000 households have improved drinking water sources, 15,000 households have improved sanitation facilities and 7,000 households have basic electricity supply. Through skills training programmes 10,000 people have been supported to obtain long term employment, and 21,669 had their incomes improved by the DFID-supported Market Access for Small Holder Farmer's Programme and 718 entrepreneurs had their business skills developed.

Turning now to the British Council. Amongst other activities in the financial year 2012/13 the British Council Nepal:

- Trained in the field 400 key state school teachers in basic teaching skills, who in turn will cascade down to some 8,000 more
- Launched 20 new links between Nepali and UK schools - we now have 310 active school links
- Delivered English by radio and learn English Mobile programmes, reaching around 6,000 teachers and learners of English
- Delivered over 42,000 exams to 31,000 candidates, mostly in the English language, A levels and accountancy
- Held our Annual Education UK fair, in which 24 British universities took part. The fair had 3,600 visitors, many of them school and university graduates.
- Delivered global on-line English products to thousands of Nepali citizens. That is Learn English, Teach English and Schools on line

Whilst we are on the theme of outreach to Nepalese citizens, I should mention also the BBC Nepal service which reaches six million listeners.

The next pillar of our Strategy is supporting conflict resolution and promoting human rights, democracy and good governance in Nepal. Under this, I and other staff have been actively advocating for early, free and fair elections to the CA (Constitution Assembly) and we are very pleased that the intent to go to the polls in November has not been derailed. The UK will support these elections as the biggest donor - £14 million in all. But we will also see how we can help the CA to reach early agreement this time on an inclusive Constitution, and also advocate for local elections as soon as possible after the CA/Parliament is installed.

We will also work for a justice system which has public confidence and champions the rights of the citizen. We are working on a programme to discuss with the government to begin to achieve that goal. In the meantime DFID has already done a lot for improving the access of women to justice. Through the Women's Paralegal Committee Project we have supported the training and establishment of over 14,000 paralegals (98% of them women) and 1,023 paralegal committees. To date, these have worked on an estimated 25,000 cases, benefitting over 13,000 women in Nepal - many of these cases focussed on domestic abuse and social violence.

Then we are very determined to increase UK business with Nepal. As I said above, we want to improve the climate for business, tackling obstacles to British and other FDI and trade with Nepal. But my target is also to double British exports and increase British investment. Partnerships with existing Nepalese firms, particularly smaller ones looking to grow, to produce for export from Nepal would be the best win/win, since Nepal needs to address her trade deficit. I am keen to encourage Brits of South Asian origin, of whom there are now millions in the UK who have been particularly successful in business, to come out and look at opportunities here and use their South Asian networks. I am in touch also with the Nepalese diaspora in the UK, which is itself significant and includes successful businessmen.

And last but not least of course in our Strategy we want to promote strong relations between the UK and Nepal. An important element in that is continued recruitment of Gurkhas and strong partnership in parallel between the Nepalese and British Armed Forces. General Rana has just paid a very successful visit to the UK which should reinforce the tradition of training of Nepalese Army officers in the UK, and some also in the other direction. The role played by the Nepalese Army in peacekeeping for the UN (7th largest troop contributor) is a great contribution to peace in the world and enhances Nepal's global reputation. We will continue to look for ways in which we can help the NA with this capacity, such as the recent training package we provided in the safe disposal of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) to equip the Nepalese contingent headed out to Mali.

As regards the Gurkhas we are very conscious of the obligations we owe to these brave soldiers and their families. In the UK they are now treated on equal terms and conditions with British-born army professionals. In Nepal, as I mentioned before, the Gurkha Welfare Trust spends millions of pounds a year looking after retired Gurkhas, their families, dependents and even whole communities through its rural development projects, making use of a network of 20 Area Welfare Centres for the purpose, throughout Nepal.

On the visa side, we realise that visas are a nuisance for the many bonafide visitors to the UK from Nepal. Visas unfortunately are unavoidable because of the number of visitors to the UK from many countries who overstay and become economic migrants, imposing a burden on our tax payers and our social security system at a time of economic trouble. Our pledge therefore is to try to provide options to shorten the waiting time for your passports with UK visas in to come back from New Delhi, the regional issuing centre. Our policy is to provide a high quality and fair service to visa applicants whilst controlling migration to the UK effectively.

Finally, we want to use the theme of this seminar, the upcoming 200th anniversary, to strengthen bilateral co-operation further, looking not just back at the history, but forwards. And, in drawing these remarks to a close, I want to spend a little time on this.

The approaching 200th anniversary watershed gives us a natural opportunity to review, take stock, recommit to an important partnership for the 21st century. That is why we have suggested a roundtable with a visiting senior UK official. There are some parts of the architecture of our relations that we need to spring clean for the 21st century. For example a SOFA (state of forces agreement) for our military co-operation, to replace the Dharan Agreement of 1963 under which we still operate at present. We also need an MOU to enable the British Council's new commercial arm to operate as a company and pay taxes, and a code sharing agreement on air services so that we can bring more British and other tourists to Nepal out of London.

I share one vision very strongly with my counterpart Dr Chalise, the Nepalese Ambassador in London. Let us breathe fresh life into our long tradition of academic co-operation

and knowledge transfer. The 200th celebration could include seminars and conferences to that end but let us look also for 200th anniversary scholarships to provide a more lasting legacy. Both Dr Chalise and I will work on getting commercial sponsorship for those.

We also need to be more systematic about the links we have. I salute the co-sponsor of this event, the Chevening Alumni Association, and look forward to working more with them on this agenda. In particular, I would like to systematise into one network our many medical and surgical connections and partnerships, and hope to engage the Britain/Nepal Medical Trust, which the other day celebrated its 45th anniversary of work in Nepal, as the natural umbrella for that.

Finally I want to leave you with an image of the modern partnership between Britain and Nepal - with an eye to the future. I highlighted earlier the work DFID is doing to help rural people in particular to cope with climate change. In the past, the UK was a polluter, and we acknowledge that past polluters need to help present victims. Nepal has not been a big polluter. But is one of the most vulnerable victims. At the same time though Nepal is going to be vitally important to the sustainable future for humanity in this whole region, through responsible use of its clean energy, hydropower and best use of the rivers that flow from the Himalayas, a resource that will become ever more precious in an ever-more populated world.

So here is a partnership. We have the experts in the science, and the engineering. We have the responsibility to help, and we will. Nepal is the head of the Least Developed Countries group in the COP Climate Change talks. We are helping Nepal to get those countries - the main victims - to achieve their objectives at those talks and face up to the big polluters. In co-operation on the green agenda - helping Nepal develop whilst at the same time reducing the global carbon footprint, preserving Nepal's fabulous environment whilst bringing more people sustainably to see it - we have the basis of a truly modern partnership. In this, as we embark on our next 200 years, we shall be standing shoulder to shoulder to do the right thing, not just for Britain and Nepal, but for the very future of our planet.

15 September 2013



The Gurkha Welfare Trust

“Gurkhas Living Out Their Lives with Dignity”

Director's Report 2013

The Welfare Pension:

The provision of the Welfare Pension remained at the centre of the Trust's Vision and key to enabling our ex-servicemen and their widows to live out their lives with dignity. In 2012/13 the cost of this Programme represented 43% of total expenditure by the Trust.

At the beginning of the year, there were 8,148 individuals in receipt of a Welfare Pension from the Trust. During the past 12 months 535 pensioners died. Of these 134 were married and their pension was transferred to their widows. A further 39 new Welfare Pensions were awarded. By 30 June 2013 the number of Welfare Pensioners had declined to 7,475, almost 60% of whom are widows. The average age of our Welfare Pensioner is now 77 years.

In 2012/13 the Trustees agreed an increase of 11% to the rate of the Welfare Pension from NPR 4,500 to NPR 5,000 per month to ensure it retained its value in real terms against rising inflation in Nepal.

Welfare Grants:

Welfare grants provide immediate financial relief in the event of a natural or other disaster. The intention is to enable the individual to recover quickly and become self-sufficient as soon as possible. During the year 285 welfare grants were awarded at a cost of £14,000 to the Trust. The overwhelming number was for the immediate relief of destitution with the remainder in response to fire, flood and landslide damage.

The Winter Fuel Allowance of NPR 1,500 per Welfare Pensioner was again paid at a cost of £84,000, which was met in its entirety by one Trust supporter.

Residential Homes:

The Trust's first Residential Home in Kaski continued to provide round the clock care for 26 of our most vulnerable pensioners. To respond to the emerging medical needs of the residents, the Trust employed one additional Care Assistant.

The construction of the second Residential Home in Dharan was 90% complete by the end of the year. It will provide a haven for a further 26 ex-Gurkhas or their widows in east Nepal. We anticipate residents moving in over Autumn 2013. The capital cost of this Residential Home has been met in full by a single donor. The Trust will meet the annual running costs of £125,000 per home from its restricted and designated funds.

Medical Aid:

The Trust's Medical and Key Hospital Scheme provides both primary and secondary medical care to all Gurkha ex-servicemen and their dependants. Primary care is delivered via the Trust's network of Area Welfare Centres, in each of which is a full-time medical assistant and access to a doctor. Secondary care is provided in four key hospitals in Nepal. In addition, the Trust has three Mobile Doctors who provide medical care to those pensioners unable to access our Welfare Centres.

In 2012/13 this Programme provided 138,686 primary medical care appointments, a ten percent increase from the previous year. 9,919 individuals received secondary medical treatment, a slight decrease on 2011/2012. The Trust, in conjunction with KAAA, supported eight Medical Camps where 14,747 individuals received medical care in the areas of general medical, dentistry, gynecology and cataract surgery. Internal costing controls resulted in a ten percent decrease in costs in this Programme.

Student Grant Scheme:

The Trust has traditionally provided funds in support of the education of children of ex-Gurkhas. As the parents involved are no longer Welfare Pensioners but those in receipt of a service pension, no new grants were awarded in 2012/13. Only 55 students received continuation grants in support of education at a cost of £5,000 to the Trust. This Scheme closed on 30 June 2013.

Schools Programme:

The Trustees have focused the Trust's limited resources on the repair and improvement of existing schools, rather than on building new schools. During the 12 months, only one new school was constructed using restricted funds of £18,000. A further £285,000 was spent on the maintenance, refurbishment and improvement of 78 existing schools.

Rural Water and Sanitation Programme:

52 new projects were completed during the period, ranging from the drilling for water to the installation of tap stands and latrines in village communities. Sixteen existing projects underwent major refurbishment or repair. Funding for this substantial Programme continued to be provided by DFID.

Infrastructure and Staffing in Nepal:

The cost of delivering welfare support in Nepal during the year was £7,996m. £1,201m was met by the MOD via its annual Grant in Aid, with the balance being funded by Trust general funds.

Support to ex-Gurkhas in the UK:

The Gurkha Welfare Centres in Salisbury and Aldershot continued to respond to the welfare needs of UK Gurkhas. While research shows that the majority of Gurkhas settle well into life in the UK, with 84% of men in employment, there is a real welfare need among the elderly. In 2012/13 the Welfare Centres responded to 874 new cases of support. The programme of Outreach Surgeries was extended to include Swindon, where there is a strong local Gurkha community. Plans are underway to extend further to Nuneaton.

The Trust continued to work closely with central and local government departments and other agencies on welfare advice and information, and with local Gurkha Community groups. In recognition of the significant support and financial aid given by other Service charities to Gurkhas in distress in the UK, the Trust made a welfare grant of £200,000 to the ABF - The Soldiers' Charity.

Gurkha 200:

2015 marks 200 years of Gurkha service to the Crown. The Trust, in partnership with the Brigade, GBA and the Gurkha Museum, has been working over the past year to establish the parameters of the year of celebration. Importantly for the Trust, it is a unique opportunity to raise our profile and additional funds. We are developing both a Media Plan and a 'Case for Support' based on responding to the additional needs of our Welfare Pensioners as they reach their final years. It is anticipated these will be finalised over the coming months and will, of course, be shared widely within the Trust, the Brigade and all our supporters.

Incoming Resources:

In 2012/13 the Trust received an overall income of £12,804,000, an increase of ten percent on the previous year. Donations from individuals, companies, trusts and other organisations rose slightly to £4,265,000. Trailwalker raised £450,000 for the Trust; the One Day's Pay Scheme, under which all ranks of the Brigade of Gurkhas and the Gurkha Contingent of the Singapore Police Force donate a day's pay, raised £341,000; and legacy income grew by 17% to £3,959,000.

The Trust's Regional Branches raised £231,000 in 2012/13 and continued to sustain an important level of awareness of the Trust and its work in their local communities. We would like to register our thanks for their selfless contribution during the year.

As always, the Trust would like to record its thanks to everyone who has supported its work and the Gurkha cause.

Expenditure:

Charitable expenditure totalled £8,473,000 in 2012/13, 84% of total expenditure. The remaining 16% was split between governance and fund raising.

The focus of the Trust's charitable expenditure continued to be individual aid, responding to the financial and medical needs of our elderly Welfare Pensioners in Nepal. Individual aid represented 83% of total charitable expenditure. Funding enabled the Trustees to agree an uplift to the Welfare Pension and a repeat of the Winter Fuel Allowance.

Community aid, the Trust's support of the communities from where Gurkhas have been traditionally recruited, represented 17% of the Trust's charitable expenditure.

In 2012/13 the Trustees agreed a restructuring of the Trust's fund-raising staff in response to a decline in income from donations and other sources. The aim of the restructuring was both to expand existing fund-raising activities and to develop new programmes, most notably in major gifts and charitable trusts. The restructuring was completed in December 2012 and the new team ensures the Trust is well placed to tackle the Trust's future fund-raising needs. The Trust's total fund-raising costs of £1,191,000 resulted in voluntary income of £9,040,000, representing an ROI of £7.59/£. The Trustees consider this represents very good value.

The Trust is keen to raise its profile among a younger audience. In 2012/13 it established a presence on Facebook and Twitter, where it is attracting increasing audiences.

Role Reversal

By Mrs Anna Townsend

My husband Simon (OC I Squadron) and our two children returned to Nepal for three weeks in May 2012 and, on this occasion, it was my work that took us back. Since living in Nepal six years ago, when Simon was SO3 G4 Log Sp at HQ BGN, the charity that I founded has grown and we returned to see the amazing work being carried out by the charity's staff and friends in the country.



Whilst living in Manbhawan in 2005, I was approached by an elderly missionary called Eileen Lodge, who is famous for being one of the founding staff members of Shining Hospital in Pokhara. Eileen was 80 years old in 2005 and lived in Patan; by her own means she was supporting a small group of destitute women with their rent and medical bills. These women were her friends and quite simply Eileen was concerned about what would happen to them when she died. Having no social provision, Nepal is a difficult place in which to survive if you are vulnerable and unable to work, and Eileen provided vital support to these women.

Eileen asked me to take on the financial support of these women, which I did, and thanks to the kind support of my family and friends I found sponsors for the women and we continued to pay for their rent and medical bills. Eileen named the charity Women Without Roofs (WWR) and in 2006 we were registered in the UK. It seemed I was now the chair of an official charity and we have continued to expand ever since - I am now Chair of Trustees!

All the women WWR supports are alone and have no one else to help them; of the first group passed on to us by Eileen, around half had suffered from leprosy. The social stigma of leprosy had meant that their husbands had abandoned them, leaving the women to raise their children alone. Since that time, we have steadily taken on more women and discovering their problems and the issues they face has been a challenging learning experience. We have helped a human trafficking victim

who had been poisoned and smuggled to work in brothels in Delhi; other women have suffered rape and then there are countless widows, both young and old, who remain on the margins of Nepali society and suffer from harsh discrimination.

We spent two weeks of our trip in Kathmandu visiting the women in their homes. We took the children along too and they were warmly welcomed into the humble rooms that the women live in. The level of poverty can be shocking; some women, at the time they are referred to us (we always try to move them somewhere better though it is not always possible) live in cellar rooms without windows where the walls have been blackened with smoke from cooking. All of them have to endure endless dark evenings due to the multiple power cuts across the city. Most of the women have children to support as well and we have come across young girls who work instead of going to school and even at the age of ten have grey hair because of their poor diets; it is deeply saddening. Two years ago Kabita (below) had grey patchy hair; now she lives at Anugraha Ashram and is far healthier and happier.



Thankfully, we have been able to help them and the highlight of our trip was visiting Anugraha Ashram (Grace Women's Home) (left) in Godavri that WWR established in 2011 to provide a safe and pleasant place for our neediest women to live. The home has a beautiful view over the southern Kathmandu valley and not only has clean rooms but also space for a market garden so that vegetables can be grown and animals kept. There are hens, goats, bees and two cows called Angela and Bob - a donor in the UK wished to name them! It was marvellous to see the women there, some of whom have suffered enormously, smiling and caring for each other so tenderly.



*Anugraha Ashram (Grace Women's Home)
in Godavri that WWR established in 2011*

WWR operates across Kathmandu and also runs two sewing and literacy courses in Bansbari that teach women a valuable skill so they can provide for their families. There is also a small shop there where the graduates of the course can work and earn some income. One of the benefits of being a small and relatively new charity is that we can respond quickly to the needs of the women we support and we are keen to help them as much as we can, especially when they have their own ideas to make their lives better.

WWR's work is growing most in the area of education; all of the women we support receive an allowance per child per month (rather like child benefit in the UK) and we are now looking to support children through college and beyond. Education is the key to breaking the cycle of poverty within families so we wish to invest in this area; however it seems every student in Nepal wishes to leave the country and work abroad and this is dispiriting. We long for Nepal to sort out its problems so that those with skills will stay in the country and help it to develop.



Townsend family with porters at BGP

Our trip was not all work and we also spent a week in Pokhara at the British Camp at the home of Lieutenant Colonel Johnny Fenn and with our children managed the Royal Trek around Begnas Tal and Rupa Tal. We all adored the scenery and the company of our porters who were great fun. Our daughter Bethany, who is only five, not only managed to walk the entire way but also managed to talk the entire time too! She was never out of breath! Zach, who is eight, was very proud of himself for keeping up with the porters but we do have to remind him that he didn't have to carry anything!

As a family (left) with our porters at British Gurkhas Pokhara), we are all firmly committed to Nepal and know it won't be long before we visit again, whether for my work or with Simon's Army commitments; we would absolutely love to be posted there again. It is our adopted home and our children even think they are a little Nepali; it is a source of great joy to us that we can be involved in helping, ever so little, to make the country better. If you would like to know more about Women Without Roofs (Registered Charity No. 1132931) or perhaps make a donation, please visit: www.wwr-nepal.org.

Eileen Lodge, the missionary mentioned in the article who may be known to you, is still alive though bed-bound at her home in Kathmandu.

Anna regularly speaks to groups about the charity and its work; if you would like to book her to speak please contact her at anna@wwr-nepal.org. Anna is also involved in other work in relation to Nepal and has been working for Jeremy Lefroy, MP for Stafford, researching ways in which Gurkhas can continue to help Nepal develop even though they are now settling in the UK. Do contact her if you would like to view or help her with her research.

TRAILWALKER For Life - The Queen's Gurkha Engineers

By 21171431 LCpl Santosh Gurung

TRAILWALKER is an internationally recognised charity challenge organised yearly in the UK by the combined effort of Oxfam and The Queen's Gurkha Signals (QGS). It is a highly respected challenge that demands great determination and team work. It's a once in a lifetime experience with an amazing adventure where you gain self belief, pride for yourself and also friendship amongst other participants. TRAILWALKER consists of many teams with each team of four to complete a total distance of 100km (62 miles) under the time duration of thirty hours. Since it's a charity event, money raised from the event will go to The Oxfam Charity and The Gurkha Welfare Trust.

Although TRAILWALKER is internationally popular it is particularly famous within the Brigade of Gurkhas as it was initially introduced by the QGS in 1981. Since then, every year one or two teams depending on each individual Gurkha unit participates in this event. Likewise, my unit The Queen's Gurkha Engineers (QGE) planned to send two teams to the event. Initially to start with, we had only four men for training under the command of SSgt Narendradhoj Gurung. Our weekly training included two alternative days of long runs, lower body power circuit training, spinning and swimming. In the beginning we started with 10 km and gradually increased the distance. As part of our training we went to the South Downs Way to do route recce and get the feel of the terrain. Our training went smoothly with the help of troop members and gym staff.

After a few weeks we had a full squad of thirteen as the rest of the participants were able to join after their Post Operational Tour Leave and Nepal cup. During the training session a few of the boys sustained injuries so we ended up having only eight men which then were divided into two different teams. Team Balaram and Team Ishwor were the names of our teams titled in the memory of the two brave soldiers from QGE who were killed in Kosovo and Afghanistan respectively.

On 27 July 2013 our race started at 0800. We were all running highly charged with emotions such as excitement, nervousness and high adrenaline rush. Whilst we were running we came across different checkpoints and people who constantly cheered us up with their support. At some point we were all exhausted alongside the pain and sweat but we never gave up as we knew it was all for a good cause, hence we were motivated to complete the run until the finishing line. As we finished the run, we all had a sigh of relief and pride amongst us. Team Ishwor completed the run in 11 hours 34 minutes and Team Balaram completed in 12 hours 30 minutes.

This experience has been one of the most memorable events in our lives. Without all the supporting members of Trailwalker, this event would not have been successful for us. We also would like to thank Oxfam and The QGS for giving us an opportunity to be a part of such a historic event.





THE GURKHA MUSEUM

Curator's Report 2013

By Mr Edgerley-Harris

I took over as curator of the Gurkha Museum at the beginning of July after the retirement of Major Gerald Davies. Major Davies has over the past 11 years steered the Museum through some difficult times and has left it as a technologically advanced leader in its sphere; a position which I intend to maintain and develop.

The establishment, earlier in the year, of Unit Heritage Officers within the Brigade is now working well with positive engagement by all units of the Brigade in the provision, collection and recording of historic and current data. Indeed, the feedback following visits by Brigade Units shows this new initiative is working. There is a growing enthusiasm to collect, protect and interpret the Brigade's heritage and to use the Museum as its corporate memory. The Museum holds an unparalleled and growing archive of Gurkha and Indian Army related material. All is available for research purposes and our volunteers would be only too happy to assist anyone wishing to carry out research.

There have been a number of opportunities to develop visitor numbers and I am pleased to say that there has been a significant rise in Nepalese visitors with large Nepalese community groups visiting from Eastleigh, Basingstoke, Reading and Maidstone. We are keen to encourage Brigade Units to visit for study days and to show their recruits the importance of their Museum and what it can offer. Armed Forces Day in June and the Heritage Open Weekend in September have become regular highlights in attracting visitors to the Museum with special exhibitions, displays and events being laid on for visitors by all the military museums at Peninsula Barracks. It is also a pleasure to host the many Regimental Associations who use the Museum as a venue for re-unions, lunches and meetings.

We are always pleased to attend or support Gurkha Welfare Trust branches at their fund raising events throughout the UK. The events this year included a band concert by the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas in the grounds of a country house on banks of the River Test in Hampshire which took place on a warm summer evening in July.

The Museum has put on a number of successful lectures, lunches and other events during the last twelve months and next year we are hoping to expand the lecture series, having already booked Major Gordon Corrigan to give a talk on "Kukris in the Trenches" on 04 July 2014. All events are well publicised on the Museum website www.thegurkhamuseum.co.uk and will be promoted on the new Gurkha Brigade Association website www.gurkhabde.com

Exhibitions this year have included one of photographs by Xi Chen called "They Serve the Crown" which reflected on Gurkha veterans from Reading after leaving service with the British Army. The photographer was on hand throughout the exhibition to speak with visitors about her work. In August, our main Summer Exhibition was opened by General Sir Peter Wall, the Chief of the General Staff and Colonel Commandant of the Brigade of Gurkhas. Entitled "Army 2020 - The Contemporary Brigade of Gurkhas", it concentrated on the composition, strengths and versatility of today's Brigade of Gurkhas. Artefacts supplied from units who have been serving in Afghanistan, greatly enhanced the exhibits as did the interactive screens and films that were part of the displays.



We are heading towards some important anniversaries including the 100th anniversary of the start of WWI and “G200”, the 200th anniversary of Gurkha service to the Crown and there will be a number of lectures, exhibitions and events to record the loyalty, contribution, dedication and sacrifice by Gurkhas, not only during the Great War but throughout the Brigade’s long and distinguished history.

The Museum has made some significant acquisitions, including a British Empire Medal to Rfn Bhajbir Gurung. Rfn Bhajbir was General Slim’s orderly during the Burma campaign. Also, two items relating to Victoria Cross recipients; a tunic of Colonel Ridgeway VC of 8th Gurkha Rifles and a presentation watch to Lt Col Grant VC also of 8th Gurkha Rifles and more recently, an officer’s shoulder belt plate for the Gurkha Staff and Personnel Support Company

In addition to making purchases to enhance the Museum’s collections, the Friends of the Gurkha Museum have helped fund the complete overhaul of the Museum’s air conditioning system. This assures a stable environment for the conservation of our unique collections and archives. We are always looking to enrol new Friends to help and support the Museum and, if not already a Friend, I would urge you to join. Friends benefit from free entry to the Museum, special events and discounts.

As the Museum develops over the next few years, it is reviewing its aims, needs and objectives. As part of this process we are undergoing a restructure in staffing with the appointment of two part time curatorial and administrative officers to replace the existing assistant curator’s post. This, combined with the prospect of stable provision of front of house staff, will lead to a good platform for future growth and long term sustainability.



Shoulder belt plate for GSPS

2GR Incidents in Waziristan (1937)

by Major N D Wylie Carrick (2GR)

Following the ‘Helmand Incident’ published in the Kukri Journal 2012, it brings to mind two similar events which happened in 1937, Waziristan

On 14 July 1937 while B Coy was operating SW of Razami L/Nk Dalbahadur Gurung B Coy, was attacked at close quarters by Tolkhan a noted bad character and severely wounded with this knife. L/Nk Dalbahadur seized his assailant, and wrenching the knife from his own body, thrust it into the tribesman’s throat, killing him and capturing his rifle. For this act of Gallantry and courage L/Nk Dalbahadur Gurung was given an immediate award of the IDSM.

On 20 September 1937 at about 1915 a patrol from No 12 Platoon, C Coy commanded by Subedar Siblal Thapa was in position about two miles North of Gurkha Piquet. A tribesman was seen running in the scrub near a path leading in the direction of Tamre OBO village, acting as a scout to a party. Suddenly he appeared to take fright, uttered a cry to warn his party and began to make off. Fire was opened on him with a VB gun and he was killed at a distance of 200 yards by moonlight. He was identified later as Ghatai, and a message was found on him from IPI promising him assistance to the malik of Tamare OBO. This knife was found on his body.



Waziristan 1937 Captured by No 980 L/Nk Dalbahadur Gurung B Coy Near RAZANI 14 July 1937



Waziristan 1937 Captured by No 12 Platoon C Coy, Garrison of GURKHA Piquet Commanded by Subedar SIBLAL Thapa, Near Tamre Obo on 20 September 1937

ALLIED AND AFFILIATED REGIMENTS

The Rifles 2013 Newsletter

Battalion Activities

As a result of the drawdown in Afghanistan, 1 Rifles were stood down in the middle of the year from their planned HERRICK Tour. Instead they have provided a small training team to Mali where they took over from the Royal Irish in September. Over the next six months, the team's role is to deliver intensive ten week training slots to Malian units, designed to develop skills and tactics from individual to battle group level. The training also gives the Malians a clear practical understanding of the standards of ethical conduct required of troops engaged in combat and counter-insurgency operations.

In spite of being stood down they have had a busy year. Highlights included company deployments to Kenya and two sniper pairs from 1 RIFLES sniper platoon taking top prizes in the Tri Service sniper competition on Salisbury Plain. Shooting against their opposite numbers in the RAF and Royal Marines, as well as the rest of the Army, 1 RIFLES won best pair, second place pair, best No 1 and second best No 2



1 RIFLES Pre-training for the Mali task

2 RIFLES have had a busy training year deploying contingents to Kenya, Canada, Saudi Arabia and to Germany where they joined forces with 5 RIFLES to take part in Ex BAVARIAN CHARGER. At home, Ballykinler has seen investment to improve its infrastructure and much activity on the sporting fields.

In the first half of 2013, 3 RIFLES have concentrated on recovery from their HERRICK 16 Tour, reviewing it to learn lessons and refocusing on basic field soldiering.

The emphasis has been on developing young leaders, growing conceptual understanding of our profession, sport and forging friends for life. Highlights have included a JNCOs Cadre and a Rugby tour of the USA. As the year draws to a close they are back on operations providing the Falklands reinforcement company.



4 Rifles Training in snow for their summer tour in Afghanistan!

4 RIFLES deployed to Afghanistan in March, as part of 1 Mechanised Brigade, commanded by Brig Rupert Jones formerly CO of 4 RIFLES. Acting in an advisory role to the Afghan Army their task was to assist the progressive establishment of the ANA as an independent and self-sufficient force with sole responsibility for an increasing area of operations. Amongst some notable operations were forays into the Sangin and Nar-e-Saraj districts to back up Afghan Army led operations. Snipers from the battalion have done good work throughout the tour both in their own right and training Afghan Army snipers. Mercifully the battalion has escaped without a single fatality on this deployment although there have been a number of minor WIA.



4 RIFLES briefly back to Sangin

5 RIFLES have returned to their Armoured Infantry role in earnest, with cadres followed by work up exercises in the snow in March and subsequently at BATUS as part of the QDG battle group. 5 RIFLES Battle Group completed its Foundation Training year with a Field Training Exercise, Exercise BAVARIAN CHARGER in Bavaria from 12 May - 08 June 2013.

The Battle Group comprised over 1,000 personnel. In addition to 5 RIFLES Rifleman, the Battle Group included B Coy 2 RIFLES from Ballykinler, a Close Air Defence Battery from the UK and Guns, Sappers and B Coy 1 PWRR, from Germany. The Live Firing was conducted at Joint Manoeuvre



5 RIFLES Bavarian Charger

Training Command in Grafenwoer, which provided an excellent opportunity to develop Armour/Infantry integration due to the US ranges excellent infrastructure. On completion of the Live Firing, the Battle Group were fitted with simulated weapons systems and pitted against the I/4 Infantry of the US Army, who proved testing opponents as they have been the local opposition down there for two years and know the ground intimately.

The highlight of 6 RIFLES training year was a two week exercise in Cyprus with an amphibious landing. 7 RIFLES have been involved in providing reinforcements for Op HERRICK as well as running an intensive recruiting campaign to meet their part in the projected target for a Reserve force of 30,000. They spent their annual camp in Denmark with the Danish Home Guard on Exercise VIKING STAR.

6 RIFLES on exercise in Cyprus



Recruiting

With the privatisation of recruiting, in the shape of the Recruiting Public Private (RPP) partnership, we have had a nervous year watching for the anticipated dire consequences of closing some of our most productive recruiting offices (South Shields is a particular example) and the removal of any RIFLES presence from any recruiting office north of a line from Doncaster to Shrewsbury. As a result of anticipating a crash in our recruiting and taking remedial action, The RIFLES have weathered the initial storm in reasonable shape. However we continue to look for new ways of both maintaining contact with potential recruits and making sure our profile, in the North East in particular, is maintained. Old comrades of our forming regiments have a role to play in both keeping our profile high in the public's perception and encouraging friends and family members to choose The RIFLES. In spite of the redundancy programme we still need all the young men with Rifleman like qualities we can get.

Change of Colonel Commandant

General Sir Nicholas Parker retired as the first RIFLES Colonel Commandant this year and he is succeeded by Lt Gen Nick Carter. General Parker's great contribution to the establishment of the regiment was marked by the commissioning of a portrait by Andrew Festing, PRP MBE, also a Rifleman, which was unveiled at the Regimental Dinner in July.



Remembrance Sunday 2013

For the second year running and on another glorious autumn day, The Rifles had a marching contingent at the Cenotaph parade in Whitehall on Remembrance Sunday. The contingent consisted of 40 Riflemen, who were joined by the mother of Lt Daniel Clack (KIA 12 August 2011 in Afghanistan) and Cpl Ricky Fergusson MC.

The Rifles Casualty Capability

We continue to do much to support our veterans, who are leaving the Army support cocoon, to take their place in the civilian system. The Rifles Casualty Capability (RCC) aims to ensure that all wounded Riflemen are given every opportunity



Lt Col Mike Smith, RCO and Cpl Ricky Fergusson MC on Remembrance Sunday London

to realise their full potential whether within the Army or in civilian life and if the latter, are given assistance towards their transition out of the Army and beyond. Lt Col (Retd) Mike Smith, the Rifles Casualty Officer, who co-ordinates the RCC, continues to work closely with the Army Recovery Capability and other Service charities to ensure the Regiment is able to influence Army thinking on casualty care. Part of his remit also covers the enduring requirement to provide support to the families of the wounded and to the families of the fallen. He is doing an outstanding job and we are looking to incorporate his role into the core capability of the central RHQ hub.

Our veterans have also taken on a wide variety of adventurous and sporting challenges notable amongst them being Kyle Baker, who was taken ill whilst sailing from Rio to Cape Town on the Jubilee Sailing Trust vessel The Lord Nelson and ended up marooned on Tristan Da Cunha whilst his condition was stabilised. C/Sjt Danny Spender, a double amputee, narrowly failed to complete the gruelling 125 mile Devizes to Westminster canoe race which has 77 portages.

Other sporting achievers include Lance Corporal Tyler Christopher who is a member of the Great Britain (GB) ice sled hockey team, which just missed selection for the Winter Paralympics in Sochi, and Rifleman Justin Davies who has been selected for the GB hand cycle development squad looking towards the Brazil Para Olympics in 2016.



Danny Spender on the Devizes to Westminster Canoe Race

The Royal Australian Regiment

1RAR July 2013

CO: Lt Col Eamon Lenaghan, CSC

RSM: WO1 John Stonebridge, BM

The First Battalion launched into 2013 fresh from stand-down on the brink of a year which would prove as busy as 2012. February and March focussed the Battalion on simulated training at the battle group and formation level to prepare the Brigade for Exercise TALISMAN SABRE 2013. Simultaneously Bravo Company, with Support Company attachments, was kicked out the door to the first Combat Training Centre WARFIGHTER rotation of the year, which proved to be a challenging and rewarding start to field operations for 2013.

March concluded with the first Battalion exercise of the year, Exercise CORAL WARFIGHTER. Former Ready Battle Group (RBG) attachments from 2012, together with new additions from across 3, 16 and 17 Brigades, formed into the 1RAR Battle Group to conduct a combined arms, conventional warfare exercise to defeat a fictional threat to "Tropicana". The standout activities of CORAL WARFIGHTER were airmobile operations. Combat Team to Battle Group(-) Air Mobile Operations were made possible by the level of support provided by the 5th Aviation Regiment. Based on the headquarters of C Squadron, the aviation group consisted of S70, MRH90 and CH47. During the Exercise, 1RAR provided the first personnel lift trial for the MRH90, enabling combined training between 1RAR and 5th Aviation, and writing 1RAR into the pages of MRH90 history.

Pushing through May, Alpha Company led the way, conducting integration training with the newly formed Armoured Cavalry Regiment (ACR), a capability that underpins the new Multi Role Combat Brigade (MCB). Alpha conducted a series of dry and live fire training with ASLAV, M1A1 and M113; assets to which the Battalion has had limited exposure during the previous few years.

Alpha returned in time for Coral Week, the commemoration of the Battle of Coral-Balmoral, Vietnam. The Battalion paraded and held open days in Coral Lines, to commemorate the Battle of Coral and the 20th reunion of Operation SOLACE, the 1st Battalion's deployment to Somalia. The reunion was very well attended, reuniting veterans from around the country, who returned home to the Big Blue One. Amongst them, the CDF and former Commanding Officer, General Hurley, arrived in style on parade in the last remaining M113 A1 in service. The parade was followed by a family open day which displayed the 1RAR Battle Group capabilities to an eager crowd of friends and family.

The Battalion quickly rallied following Coral Week to deploy again to High Range, this time on the Combined Arms Training Activity with the rest of 3 Brigade. The exercise was a combination live fire and field training exercise, culminating in a formation assault on an enemy defensive position, supported

by tanks, helicopters and artillery, displaying the might of a fully enabled MCB. The exercise also allowed 1RAR to field its growing rappelling capability, with rappel and suspended line extraction conducted in realistic training environments by recon and snipers. 1RAR was quick to identify the opportunities that heightened aviation support presented, subsequently increasing focus on Support Company and Battle Group attachments gaining rappelling and suspended extraction qualifications.

When Exercise TALISMAN SABRE 2013 commenced in July, the Battalion was prepared. Masked by the 3 Brigade deception plan, 1RAR conducted a battalion air mobile operation 20 kilometres South/East of Raspberry Creek in Shoalwater Bay Training Area, under cover of darkness. The helicopter landing zone was ably prepared by a team of 1RAR pioneers and 16 Field Squadron combat engineers who had rappelled in 24 hours earlier. The Battalion then moved through complex terrain to conduct a battalion attack on a Kamarian company defending the urban village. The move was conducted mostly by day to reduce the risk of injury, but the final three kilometres to the objective were covered during a period of darkness with the assault launched around 0100. The activity was a great demonstration of the continued relevance and flexibility of light infantry and the MCB construct.

Currently, 1RAR is in the thick of the Brigade courses period. Support Company courses are progressing well as the Battalion looks forward to the assumption of Ready Battalion Group responsibilities in November, support to the Afghanistan operational area, and another Combat Team Warfighter rotation with the Combat Training Centre. The Big Blue One has had an excellent 2013 so far and looks forward to its readiness responsibilities in 2014.

Duty First

2RAR

CO: Lt Col Chris Smith, DSC, CSC

RSM: WO1 Brian Buskell

When I last reported to the RAR Foundation I spoke of the beginning of a new era for the Regiment. The apparent culmination of a decade and a half of continuous operations presents challenges similar to those faced by the Regiment at the end of the Vietnam War.

At this time last year 2RAR was just beginning to deal with the challenges inherent in the change. In discussions with soldiers it was clear that many had joined specifically with a view to serving in Afghanistan. With that opportunity seemingly gone, many struggle to commit themselves fully to training with only a slim possibility that they may get to serve overseas. For veterans of recent operations, the prospect of training for the sake of being ready for an unknown contingency and being in an Army not at war was something to which they could not dedicate themselves. Consequently, many of these soldiers have moved on.

Many serving soldiers and non-commissioned officers in the early 1970s shared similar views, and there was a similar exodus at that time. Yet the Regiment continued to attract dedicated men through the 1970s and 1980s who drew intrinsic value from service in its own right. The Regiment remained well-trained and well-disciplined through the long period of “peace” despite serious underfunding and serious shortfalls in training resources.

There is every reason to expect that the Regiment can maintain the same high standards in the coming years and continue to attract dedicated young men and women. For example, the majority of the current crop of soldiers in 2 RAR (most of whom are not veterans of recent operations) fit the bill of dedicated men and women who draw some intrinsic worth from service in its own right. Moreover, there is no reason to expect the same degree of under-resourcing that occurred during the 1980s.

The lesson for 2 RAR in the last 18 months is that it is a mistake to assume that the current generation of potential soldiers are somehow unique. Efforts to appease soldiers, born of a false sense that contemporary soldiers are only motivated by novel and extrinsic incentives, seems to only create selfish attitudes, complacency, sloppiness, and a sense of entitlement. Proven methods such as firm discipline, clearly defined boundaries, the setting of high standards, and demands for professional and soldierly conduct seem to be very important (as I suspect they always have been).

One other factor has also proven important at this time and should come as no surprise to the reader. A dedicated soldier will remain enthusiastic when he is provided with worthwhile, purposeful and demanding training. While some veterans were critical of the decision for the Battalion to get straight back into a busy training schedule on return from Afghanistan and discharged, the loss of this experience has proven to be a minor price to pay. The quality of training improved when there was a general acceptance that to train well and often requires commanders and non-commissioned officers to be busy and to put in extra hours of work. One of the key factors for the general improvement in training was creating the habit for companies to get away from the barracks from Monday to Friday in a normal week. The recent performances of what is now a relatively inexperienced Battalion have been very good. These performances are noteworthy for the quality of what some might call the “one percenters”; such as efficient morning routine, good camouflage and concealment, effective sighting of weapons, noise discipline, track discipline, light discipline, inspections, and slick battle procedure. These “one percenters” have been a major focus in training.

Over a period of eleven weeks in May - July the Battalion deployed on three exercises each of duration between two-four weeks with a seven-ten day break in between. On each occasion the Battalion deployed and redeployed in good order despite the rapid turnarounds. Over the three exercises soldiers participated in an exhaustive range of tasks, which included:

Non-combatant evacuation operations;

- Security operations
- Jungle warfare
- Company-sized amphibious raids
- Company-sized airmobile operations
- Battle group (-) amphibious assault
- Mounted battle group attack and seizure of an urban objective
- Mounted battle group live fire advance, obstacle breach, and attack with live supporting fires; and
- Freeplay battle group (-) defence, which resulted in repelling an attack and destroying two enemy companies.

The most pleasing aspect of the Battalion’s performances over the last six months is that the premise for the Army’s decision to reorganise into three similarly structured brigades appears correct. A well-trained and well-disciplined infantryman is not limited by the type of vehicle or platform from which he operates. Soldiers proved capable of dealing politely with the citizens of the Atherton Tablelands one moment, and within a matter of days and weeks, completed clandestine platoon amphibious night assaults in zodiacs, and battalion-sized advances mounted in APCs and in concert with tanks and attack helicopters.

The quality of the performances of the soldiers in the field is largely a reflection of the establishment of good barracks routine. It is a reflection of the focus on the proper exercise of authority by junior officers and non-commissioned officers verses the craven leadership that has not been uncommon in the Battalion in recent years. While enforcing good habits such as marching, the paying of compliments, high standards of dress and bearing, the setting of high standards of training and the awarding of extra training when standards are not met, these are often dismissed as irrelevant relics of the past; an emphasis on these habits of mind have translated directly to the habits of paying attention to small details in the field. The measures have also resulted in a more humble and mature soldier.

The dominant characteristic of 2 RAR’s training over the last twelve months has been the development of the ADF’s burgeoning amphibious capability. I am very conscious of the risk that 2 RAR may become “pigeon-holed” by its amphibious role therefore I am somewhat reluctant to talk about it too much. This concern notwithstanding, a discussion of 2 RAR’s training and development experiences of the last year would be incomplete without some reflection on amphibious developments.

There are four prominent elements of the first year of 2 RAR’s involvement with the development of the Landing Force for the ADF’s Amphibious Ready Element. The first major development is the creation of a Small Boat Platoon. Small boats (zodiacs) have proven to be necessary and a very important capability. Without something like a USMC armoured Amtrak, the Landing Force has no way of securing a vulnerable beach landing site or a helicopter landing zone except by infiltrating soldiers via a clandestine landing in small boats at an unlikely

location. Consequently, a significant amount of effort has gone into developing a capable Small Boat Platoon (Pioneer Platoon) for the purpose of landing up to 50 soldiers by small boat in a single lift.

The second prominent development is the reorganisation of 2 RAR into a two-rifle company Battalion, each of four platoons. There are several imperatives for this change, but the effect has been to see C Company disappear from the ORBAT.

The third prominent development is the reaffirmation that, except for a few specific skills (such as small boats and expanding airborne roping skills), amphibious operations does not require 2 RAR to be anything more than a standard infantry battalion. Recognising that the Landing Force's contribution to an Amphibious Task Group is what it does once ashore, it is important not to try and introduce a new suite of specialist skills for the infantrymen lest their primary infantry skills are diluted. Employing the specialists from the other corps and services in task organised groupings provides a degree of expertise and flexibility that cannot be achieved by "multi-skilling" or "upskilling" infantryman to become pseudo-Special Forces. For example, it is apparent that attaching some clearance divers to a small boat insertion provides expert swimmer scouts thereby mitigating the need to train infantrymen and maintain their skills at swimming through surf zones.

The previous point notwithstanding, the fourth prominent development was the discovery that there are some additional and necessary capabilities for development. These include expanding roping skills to allow for the Landing Force reserve platoon to conduct Tactical Recovery of Aircraft and Personnel and to give it the ability to insert through a forest canopy; the capability to conduct level three and four vessel boarding, search and seizure; and potentially water insertions from helicopters. While these are exciting and important developments, 2 RAR regard them very much as peripheral to the role of seeking out and closing with the enemy, killing or capturing him, seizing and holding ground, and repelling attack.

2013 has been a watershed for 2 RAR. Some hard foundational work in 2012, coupled with the focus and challenges by the amphibious role, have come together such that 2 RAR is in a very pleasing state.

3 RAR

CO: Lt Col Gavin Keating

RSM: WO1 Shane McPhee

At the start of 2013, the 3rd Battalion was looking forward to entering a reset phase to remediate individual skills, and reconsolidate as a Battalion, having had personnel deployed to Afghanistan, East Timor and Malaysia over the preceding twelve months. However, with 3 Brigade moving into its readying phase, which this year included trialling both the Multi-Role Combat Brigade and Armoured Cavalry Regiment structures, 3 RAR was never going to be left alone for long and we soon entered an

'accelerated rest phase' which for some elements of the battalion morphed into an 'accelerated reading phase'. As always Old Faithful was up for the challenge, guided by its mantra of Readiness, Accountability and Reputation.

One of the first hit outs for the soldiers after the completion of mandatory training was Ex OPIE TROPHY, the annual inter-section military skills competition. This is a key activity in the calendar of the 3rd Battalion and its arduous nature has afforded it legendary status within the unit. This year was to prove no exception and after a 24 hour military skills round robin in Lavarack Barracks the sections deployed to the Mount Stuart training area to conduct a 48 hour patrols phase, in some cases covering ground over which a mountain goat would struggle. The winning section, which came from B Coy and was commanded by CPL Doug Adcock, can be proud of their achievements, as can PTE Daniel Van Stappen from Recon Platoon who was named the 3 RAR Champion soldier.

Whilst OPIETROPHY is an important competition in its own right, it also plays an important role in forging strong sections after the inevitable turnover brought about by the annual career management cycle. Thus, the sections were well bonded by the time that C Coy, followed by B Coy, deployed to Tully to conduct Jungle Training. After the hot but dry conditions of Afghanistan, the humidity and wet heat, combined with almost non-stop rain, was a healthy reminder that Australia's strategic focus is switching from the Middle East to our primary operating environment of the South-West Pacific. This was reinforced by the direction to provide training teams to deploy to Papua New Guinea in order to mentor both the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the Royal Pacific Islands Regiment. By the end of this year 3 RAR will have completed six week rotations to PNG. Reinforcing Australia's commitment to its closest regional neighbour, 3 RAR BHQ will also be running a combined Australian/PNGDF table top planning exercise in Port Moresby in September.

Back in Australia, 2013 has seen 3 RAR supporting trial of the Armoured Cavalry Regiment (ACR) concept, itself a key aspect of Army's plan for modernisation known as PLAN BERSHEEBA. Both A and C Coy conducted a week long familiarisation with 1 ACR which included live fire battleruns incorporating MIAI Abrams MBT's ASLAV and M113 AS4 APC's. Two rifle companies were detached from 2 RAR which enabled the creation of 1 ACR battle group for CATA and Exercise TALISMAN SABRE. Whilst there were obviously some teething problems, particularly regarding logistics support, overall the trial of 1 ACR has been successful and what has been particularly positive has been the attitude of the 3 RAR soldiers towards the new concept.

The Battalion continues to settle into life at Lavarack Barracks and the novel experience of being physically located with its formation headquarters. 3 RAR got off to a good start in the Commander's Trophy by winning the 3 Brigade swimming carnival in February; time will tell how well it will fare in the remaining sporting and military skills competitions which will be conducted in the latter half of the year. Whilst Old Faithful did not place highly this year during Duke of Gloucester Cup competition, the

team, led by Cpl Dane Farquhar, represented the unit well with dogged determination. Their dedication was well illustrated by Pte Nick Vullings who ended the competition by completing both the obstacle courses and bayonet assault course with a broken arm. A number of soldiers from the Battalion have also been selected for ADF representational sport, including Pte Adam Fisher and Cpl Patrick Inskip who were part of the Combined Arms Services Rugby League team which won the Defence World Cup in the United Kingdom this year. LCpl Jackleen MacArthur was also selected for the ADF Field Hockey team.

Whilst the Battalion has spent much of this year in the training area it still found the time, of course, to pause and remember the sacrifice of past soldiers on Kapyong Day. With two highly successful Kapyong Day parades under his belt as RSM, which included a Trooping the Colour and Beating Retreat Parade, the pressure was on WO1 McPhee to deliver, which he did in style. Following a family open day, which included break contact drill demonstrations by recon platoon, the crowds assembled and listened to radio traffic as a recon patrol identified an enemy held house on the rear of the parade ground. With a deafening boom, courtesy of 3 RAR's Assault Pioneers, the house disappeared and the combined infantry/tank assault appeared through coloured smoke to clear the parade ground. Following this dramatic entrance the parade took a more sober turn as the soldiers, including Maj Tina McBride, the first female 2IC of an RAR Battalion, marched on to perform a Uniting Drumhead Service. During the service the Colours were blessed and the names of those soldiers from Old Faithful who fell at the Battle of Kapyong were called out by soldiers on parade. The solemnity of the occasion was echoed the following day when a 100 man guard, along with the 3 RAR colour party, were joined by similar contingents from 1 RAR and 2 RAR to march through Townsville on ANZAC Day. The historical importance of the Colours of all three original Battalions parading together was underlined by the Prime Minister, who took the salute during the march past.

With the end of Ex TALISMAN SABRE the Battalion will commence an extended courses period to ensure that it is prepared to hit key collective training milestones in early 2014. These will be the final stage in going from returning from Afghanistan to adopting responsibilities of the Ready Battle Group. However, it is this year's Kapyong Day parade which probably best illustrates where the Battalion is today. It is a Battalion steeped in history but forever looking forward, proud of its heritage but not bound by it, skilled at working with new equipment and capabilities and yet centred on its soldiers. It is an exciting time to be part of the Battalion which was, is and always will be, Old Faithful.

5 RAR

CO: Lt Col Richard Barrett

RSM: WO1 Dale de Kock

In the last year, 5 RAR has undergone a number of transformations. The first was the de-mechanisation of the Battalion. This saw the Unit's fleet of M113AS4 Armoured

Personnel Carriers laid up immediately after Exercise HAMEL in August 2012 as part of PLAN BEERSHEBA. This presented a few challenges stemming from the need to operate lighter and slower than many in the Battalion were used to and had not done for some time. Eventually, the carriers were transferred to the 1st Armoured Regiment for the generation of the Armoured Cavalry Regiment. The final carrier departed Binh Ba Lines on 19 April 2013, passing members of the Battalion in a final farewell.

5 RAR, now no longer mechanised, began its next step into the Ready Battalion Group (RBG). This event was significant in that it would be the first time that the RBG has left the 3rd Brigade since its inception.

The 5 RAR family grew with the inclusion of company sized elements from each of the Brigade units to create the RBG. The Battalion also grew its fleet of light trucks to provide some of the mobility lost with the lay-up of the M113s.

On 13 October 2012, nearly all the vehicles of the Group were on the road from Darwin to Cultana, SA, for the Mission Rehearsal Exercise (MRE) that would result in the certification for RBG.

The MRE was designed around non-combatant evacuation and humanitarian assistance type scenarios. It tested the Battalion's ability to rapidly deploy and undertake a wide range of diverse tasks. To commence the activity, the RBG was loaded on to a "dirt ship", a marked area to simulate a transit into country via sea. An unload schedule imposed realistic constraints in getting troops onto the ground and resulted in the last elements leaving the boat late on the second day of the unload.

Off the boat and into a Forward Operating Base (FOB), the RBG faced each scenario successfully, with each company providing their own flavour to the solution. The OCs were subjected to media scrutiny and the gates of the FOB were battered by screaming mobs. Riot control was put to the test and Air Mobile Operations were practiced. The MRE culminated with a conventional attack on the enemy forces.

With the redeployment back to Binh Ba lines, 5 RAR achieved the requirements to be certified for RBG and D Coy was the first to adopt the high readiness stance as the online company, the Ready Combat Team (RCT). Each of the rifle companies would rotate through as RCT every four months and each would be kept on its toes with random checks and tests of differing degrees to confirm readiness and flexibility to react to any situation.

The New Year brought a number of changes to the Battalion with several new key appointments. Lt Col Richard Barrett assumed command and instilled a fresh perspective on the RBG. The bonds with other Brigade units created on the MRE were strengthened and new ones forged with our United States Marine Corps brethren sharing Binh Ba lines. The Marines joined in ANZAC Day activities and were most

impressed by the unit mascot, Quintus Rama, a ten year old Bengal Tiger. The Marines have also conducted regular training activities with the Battalion when the opportunity presented, which has given both units valuable experience through shared knowledge. This rotation of USMC troops culminated their visit with a deployment to Bradshaw Field Training Area at the end of August with B Coy in support.

It was a much steadier pace for training in 2013. The Battalion maintained readiness for RBG and conducted company level training within Robertson Barracks and Kangaroo Flats Training Area. 5 RAR's Duke of Gloucester Cup team took second place in the competition then June was upon us. The Battalion shook out as a whole for its Exercise "Tiger" series commencing with TIGERS WALK, an offensive operations clearance of Mount Bunday Training Area. This was then built upon with TIGERS RUN where the Battalion dug in to a Main Defensive Position. Each Company conducted a live Company Defensive Range and each platoon practiced live fire ambushing. The exercise highlighted the fundamental skills that many of the newer soldiers had not practiced since basic training and it was good to readjust the mindset that many had developed from deployments on operations in the Middle East.

The skills developed on the TIGER series were then put to good use for I BDE's major activity, Exercise PREDATORS STRIKE, which saw the RBG activated and deployed to Mount Bunday in the second week of August where it, once again, loaded a "dirt ship" then seized an airfield. The RBG was again dealing with non-combatants along with a defined antagonist. The exercise was concluded with a battle group live fire attack by night with supporting live artillery and Armed Reconnaissance Helicopter guns and rocket fire at danger close ranges.

The remainder of the year will be seen out with a courses period, normal governance and admin and the all-important blood week to determine the champion company for 2013. The year will effectively conclude with the handover of RBG responsibilities back to the 3rd Brigade.

6 RAR

CO: Lt Col Justin Elwin

RSM: WO1 David Bromwich

As Australian and coalition forces continue their draw down for protracted operations in the MEAO those of us in the Regiment are looking to the future and training for the next contingencies that could arise. The 2013 Defence White Paper clearly articulates the ADF's future operating environment, South East Asia. It is of no surprise to the men and women of the Sixth Battalion that the 2013 training year has a deliberate focus on individual and collective training requirements to achieve a Ready Battle Group in South East Asia.

At the core of 6 RAR's preparations is its transition to the Standard Infantry Battalion, the demotorisation of the battalion

and development of its readiness therein. For 6 RAR the concept of collective readiness is a departure from the often individual specialist deployments which have characterised its operations from its last tour of East Timor in 2006. The road ahead for 6 RAR is therefore easily defined; personnel must be ready to assume the RBG responsibilities in 2015.

In order to meet the requirements of the RBG 6 RAR is investing significant time and resources into the individual and collective training of its personnel up to Platoon level operations in 2013. Foundation war fighting skills coupled with specialist proficiencies has been central focus of these efforts. Promotion courses such as the Junior Leaders Course and Supervisor Infantry Operations - Section Course have yielded excellent results. The current cohort of JNCO's is a healthy mix of experienced operationally deployed soldiers and young enthusiastic junior leaders. This combination has made for a solid foundation on which sub-units have been able to develop their junior soldiers and has also enabled the raising of the Bravo Company 'Phantoms'.

In order to ensure that training is realistic and operationally focused, 6 RAR has commenced its rotation through sub-unit Training Tully for Alpha and Delta Company and Rifle Company Butterworth for Alpha and Bravo Company. Both of these training rotations have allowed commanders and subordinates the opportunity to employ the tactical techniques and procedures that they have developed in the complex environments that jungle warfare offers. It is in this environment that the investment in individual training yields its collective results. By the close of the 2013 training year Alpha, Bravo and Delta Companies will have completed rotations through RCB and SUTT.

What is unique to 7 Brigade is the integration of Battlefield Management System down to Section level operations. BMS has proven to be an excellent enabling tool, allowing commanders unprecedented command, control and communications over the battle space. 6 RAR will have fully integrated the 'digital spine' which BMS offers by the conclusion of Exercise Blue Dog III in 2014.

With great investment comes great expectation. 6 RAR has a proud operational history of deploying Soldiers and Officers of the highest calibre. 6 RAR will be ready to meet the challenges of the Contemporary Operating Environment with personnel at the core of what we want to achieve.

Duty First

7 RAR

CO: Lt Col Malcolm Wells

RSM: WO1 Richard Verall

The previous eight months, for 7 RAR has been dominated by operational responsibilities within the 'Ready' phase of

the force generation model. Since November 2012, the unit has contributed sub-unit and platoon sized elements to East Timor, domestic border security operations, and a unit sized deployment to Tarin Kot.

The 7 RAR Task Group assumed responsibility for operations in Uruzgan from the 3 RAR Task Group in late November 2012. In the final year of the Campaign in Uruzgan, the 7 RAR Task Group's role was to continue the work of previous rotations in moving the 4th Brigade of the 205th Afghan National Army Corps into the lead for security operations. The work of previous rotations that had soldiered, fought and mentored alongside Afghan Companies and Battalions in Forward Operating Bases across the Province, allowed 7 RAR's role to be providing advice to the Brigade Headquarters and specialist capabilities from Multi-National Base Tarin Kot. This is a natural evolution of the Campaign and reflects the improving security situation and growing Afghan capabilities in Uruzgan. The 7 RAR Task Group also provided reaction forces and force protection to other groups in southern Afghanistan such as the Uruzgan Provincial Reconstruction Team and the 205th Corps Coalition Advisory Team in Kandahar.

During the 7 RAR Task Group's deployment 4 Brigade continued to build its capabilities and, greatly assisted by the leadership of a new Brigade Commander, demonstrated that it is able to routinely conduct independent Brigade level operations. These operations are having a decisive effect on the insurgency. In every engagement with insurgents, included in the most remote parts of the Province where the insurgency is at its strongest, the Afghan National Army demonstrated the will and capability to win tactically. They still, however face enormous challenges in sustaining themselves over the longer term, but are certainly making progress in these difficult areas.

A significant part of the 7 RAR Task Group's mission was preparing for the end of the ADF Campaign in Uruzgan, which will wind up by the end of 2013. The return to Australia of excess stores and equipment and the reduction of infrastructure were all time consuming and important tasks. In this environment the challenges for the 7 RAR Task Group were different from previous rotations: there was less of a requirement for 'outside the wire' patrolling, that challenged the natural tendency to get on with the task of seeking out and closing with the enemy. To have done so - in the final months of the Campaign, just as the Afghan Army is moving to be fully independent - would have been counter to the overall mission. In managing this immensely difficult tension, the soldiers of the Task Group, particularly the junior leaders, showed great maturity, patience and perspective.

The 7 RAR Task Group handed over responsibility for operations to the 2 Cav Regt Task Group in mid-June 2013. In doing so a chapter in the annals of our Regimental history closed as the last infantry battalion HQ returned from Afghanistan. Bravo Company 7 RAR (commanded by Maj Sam Waite and CSM, WO2 Marcus Hovington) remains in

Afghanistan with the 2 Cav Regt Task Group and will be the final infantry Force Element to serve in Uruzgan. Coincidentally, Bravo Company was the first conventional infantry sub-unit to deploy to Uruzgan when it provided force protection to 1st Combat Engineer Regiment Task Group, in 2006.

In early 2013, 7 RAR was similarly involved with the final stages of the Campaign in East Timor. A platoon from Alpha Company (Platoon Commander Lt James Byers and Platoon Sgt Nathan Ross) was an important component of the final Timor Leste Task Group. Soldiers from Alpha Company have also contributed to Operation RESOLUTE in the middle part of 2013. 7 RAR also supported the Ready Battalion Group with soldiers prepared to act as reinforcements as 'shadow posts' throughout 2013.

As the operational tempo changes after a year that will have seen all 7 RAR soldiers either deployed on operations or directly supporting operations, the unit faces new challenges. As is usual, retaining and capitalising on the wealth of experience from these operations will be critical, particularly as the overall operational landscape changes in the years ahead. With a period to reset in the immediate future, the unit will return to a focus on Foundation Warfighting and building individual and small team skills. As has always been the way, this will be a section commander's fight. 7 RAR will continue to transition from a mechanised to a standard infantry battalion within the 1st Brigade Multi-role Combat Brigade. While the M113 will always hold a special place in the heart of 7 RAR, new structures present exciting new opportunities, particularly with the longer term plans for the 1st Brigade in Edinburgh.

8/9 RAR

CO: Lt Col Kahlil Fegan

RSM: WO1 David Trill

The 8th/9th Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment (8/9 RAR) returned in mid-2012 from a very successful deployment to Afghanistan as Mentoring Task Force - 4. The return signalled the end to a busy four year operational period that began with a deployment to Timor Leste in 2010, Operation Flood Assist in 2011 in the Lockyer Valley and the recent deployment to Afghanistan.

After returning from post-deployment leave and moving into the new 8/9 RAR Uruzgan Lines, the members of the Battalion were ready to enter the 7th Brigade "Reset Year" in 2013 however, the tempo has been as high as ever. The year began with preparation of the follow-on force assistance to Operation Flood Assist II in Bundaberg, followed by Bravo Company deploying to Malaysia as Rifle Company Butterworth, 8/9 RAR hosting a French Army delegation from New Caledonia, a full suite of Support Company courses and Alpha Company deploying as a fully digitised, motorised Company as part of the OPFOR Battlegroup Warhorse to Exercise TALISMAN Sabre 13, and all between February and August 2013.

As an infantry Battalion returned from operations in the "Reset Year", the primary focus of the Battalion is individual and small team training. However, very importantly the Battalion must also focus on the welfare, refurbishment and maintenance of the Battalion's personnel, weapons, stores and equipment. There have been many challenges on each front, all overcome by the various subject matter experts and responsible delegates within the Battalion through dogged perseverance and minute attention to detail. This effort in a "Reset Year" had yielded some pleasing results.

From a command perspective the greatest challenge during "Reset" has been dealing with a distinct surge in personnel issues predominately of a medical or psychological nature. The number of complex cases the unit is dealing with was unexpected; by both the Unit and Garrison support agencies. There has been a distinct spike in soldiers who are MEC 3 or below, some of whom have been downgraded for more than 12 months, and in the last six months the Unit has lost a large number of soldier work-days due to sick or convalescence leave. In this "Reset" Year, a key concern for 8/9 RAR was how to best manage and support an increased number of wounded, ill or injured (WII) soldiers through their rehabilitation in order to facilitate their return to work as quickly as possible. This was a particularly pertinent point following such a high operational tempo.

"Soldier rehabilitation is a mission critical task, both to prevent the loss of capability to the Unit and to maintain soldier well-being; "Soldiers of the 8th/9th Battalion are a close knit group and it is hard to lose a mate, whether from physical or mental wounds sustained in combat or similar injuries that may occur in barracks or training. It is important to maintain strong connections between the wounded, ill or injured soldier and their teammates, both to assist with individual recovery and so that their comrades know they are doing well and can focus on their tasks at hand."

Embodied by the CO's motto "H.A.R.D. (Hard, Adaptable, Responsible, Deployable)," rehabilitation management within 8/9 RAR has focused on rehabilitation within the Company (where possible). This also helped soldiers focus on the goal of returning to work (Goal 1), by constant exposure to the Unit readiness philosophy. WII soldiers in the Companies assisted with DPI checks, non-technical inspections and other tasks which help their mates get ready, thus remaining a functional part of the Company team. To continue this company focus, when Alpha and Bravo Companies deployed, the Commanding Officer temporarily re-raised and manned Charlie Company to provide stability for the remaining soldiers left out of battle.

One of the biggest lessons learnt by the Battalion after returning from operations is that one of the best sources of support for a WII soldier is their co-workers; or the other soldiers in their section. Many of them served in the same places and may have been involved in the same events. While removing WII soldiers from this support group and moving them to another call-sign within the Unit may be necessary depending

upon the complexity of their individual circumstances, it increases the member's feelings of detachment and also increases the amount of effort required to return to work.

For more complex cases requiring extended periods of convalescence, complex rehabilitation or counselling, or potential medical/psychological downgrade leading to Corps transfer or discharge, members are internally posted to Coe Platoon, within Administration Company, which has implemented a highly effective reorganisation of complex WII cases which enabled effective daily employment of 60% of members (within restrictions) to maintain their active engagement and contribution to the Battalion and Army environment. This year, Coe Platoon members have provided 2,291 effective days of work to the Battalion, and average time in Coe Platoon has dropped by over a third.

Rehabilitation in 8/9 RAR in 2012/2013 has not been without its challenges; however with the resources available is proving successful, in large part due to the fact that the chain of command, from the section commander up, has taken a great interest in the effective and efficient rehabilitation of their soldiers within the Battalion.

Another key issue resulting from the high operational tempo was that at the commencement of 2013, equipment health in 8/9 RAR had declined, predominantly due to carryover operator and technical maintenance that had not been completed on the Unit's vehicle and weapons fleet while the Battalion was deployed. OC Administration Company identified the causal factors as a backlog of vehicle maintenance while the Battalion was deployed to Afghanistan and an operator maintenance culture that only conducted tasks "on occurrence" or when non-technical inspection periods expired. He and his staff implemented a weekly Senior Equipment Manager's Conference with sub-unit stakeholders to discuss vehicle, plant and weapon safety and maintenance issues and instilled a "competitive maintenance culture;" briefing the Commanding Officer and all sub-unit Commanders on comparative company and brigade statistics weekly. This changed the operator maintenance paradigm to a "forecasted proactive" approach which has resulted in the Battalion achieving high equipment health for the majority of the first half of 2013.

The other major focus for this "Reset Year" has been Work Health and Safety (including Hazardous Chemicals Management). Upon moving into the new Uruzgan Lines, it became apparent that the construction of the new lines had not included safety signage, adequate hazardous chemicals storage, safety noticeboards or installation of first aid kits. In the year of the ComCare Enforceable Undertaking for Hazardous Chemicals, this required a concerted effort by all members of the Battalion remaining in location to rectify, however by June, the Headquarters 7th Brigade WHS Audit Team declared 8/9 RAR the best Unit in the Brigade for WHS.

While the "Reset Year" has been a very high tempo year, with an "inwards looking focus" for much of the Battalion,

there have been a couple of other highlights, including the opening of the new Uruzgan Lines at Enoggera Barracks on 27 March 2013. Uruzgan Lines are purpose built for a Motorised Battalion, and are unarguably the best Infantry Battalion facility in the Army. For the ceremony, the Battalion paraded in hollow square for review and address by the Chief of Army Lt Gen David Morrison, AO and a Laying of the Colours ceremony to consecrate the new lines. The ceremony also included a drive past of the Battalion's Bushmaster PMV fleet.

Another highlight was the success of the 8/9 RAR Duke of Gloucester Cup team who achieved equal 3rd place overall. The section also won the Ghurkha Trophy (shooting) and the OSCMAR Trophy (Urban assault) while placing second in the Falling Plate Trophy (falling plate shooting practice) and the Sir Arthur MacDonald Trophy (Night Navigation and Firing). It should be noted that this is the best result of an 8/9 RAR team since re-establishment.

This year has been a challenging year for 8/9 RAR. While it is hard going back to routine work after the excitement of a deployment as rewarding as a Mentoring Task Force - 4 or a similar deployment, it is essential that a battalion's focus in the "Reset Year", in addition to individual and small team collective training, be to square away all governance, equipment health, and most importantly soldier health and wellbeing in order to enable the Battalion to focus on rebuilding soldier skills and teams in the "Readying Year" to follow.

SOI

CO: Lt Col Marcus Constable

RSM: WO I Darren Much, OAM

The School of Infantry (SOI) has continued to deliver high quality officers and soldiers to the Regiment and the Corps during 2013 ranging from the newest Rifleman and Platoon Commander to the CSM's Course. A key theme of development has been training and doctrine for the Standard Infantry Battalion.

The routine of training Riflemen has continued to maintain the focus of the School and the mandate to prepare soldiers for Infantry Battalions was reaffirmed when the new Rifleman Wing command team of Major Ben Lanskey and Warrant Officer Class One Ian D'arcy assumed their appointments. The IET course length was reviewed in the past six months and with the prospect of additional weapons, new radio equipment and the need to adequately condition soldiers physically, approval was granted to extend the course by one week, to make it a 14 week course.

Fitness has always been a key ingredient to our trade and last year much preparation was done for the introduction of the Physical Employment Standards Assessment (PESA). 2013 has been the year for the introduction of PESA and our Physical Training Instructors, led by Warrant Officer Class Two Justen Taylor, have been central to this. An intensive program

has successfully been developed in close consultation with Rifleman Wing and the School's rehabilitation experts. To date there has been a 100% pass rate of those trainees who make it to Week eight

Like most units in Army, SOI received its allocation of the new digital radio suite. Trainees will be qualified on this equipment as Operators during the second half of 2013 once the TMP is developed. Medical training has developed in large steps this year where the School of Health has approved a training package that qualifies soldiers in "Care under Fire". Combat Shooting continues to gather momentum with the realisation that this type of shooting is not only required within an urban environment but within the three operating environments that Army doctrine is based: Defensive, Offensive and Security Operations - effectively Instinctive Shooting. SOI has completed a Corps Training Note that aligns shooting techniques and range practices to a common baseline within the realms of "straight-leg Infantry". This training has been exported to some Battalions who have provided excellent feedback. These three training mediums have maintained the relevance and employability of each trainee when they arrive in the Battalions.

Tactics Wing trains a similar number of trainees each year as Rifleman Wing but the diversity of each skill set confirms the capability the SOI provides to Army. The command team of Major Damian Green and Warrant Officer Class Two Andrew Egan ably lead the team of experienced instructors while keeping a keen eye on developmental opportunities.

Relevance is an ongoing search in all of the expert fields, none more so than within the leadership courses. A TMP review was conducted late last year and approval was granted to separate the TMPs of the Infantry Platoon Operators' Course. The separation recognises that the Regimental Officer Basic Course (ROBC) qualifies officers to command and lead and the Platoon Sergeants Course (this is the new course title) to lead and manage. Both courses are still conducted at the same time to allow trainees on the course to form an Infantry Platoon and operate tactically for a three week period. As defined by the course aims, specific and focused training is conducted for distinct course and rank groups. Importantly, a review was done of the Supervisor Infantry Operations Company Course, which acknowledged the views of Battalion and Brigade command teams. The course title has been changed to the CSM's Course stating its relevance up front. Lead and manage are the driving responsibilities the TMP targets and are supported by tasks, events and activities that Infantry CSMs are exposed to, with less tactical TEWTs and more opportunities to support the commander.

The Advanced Recon Course has been a success for the Corps as the five week course covers previous gaps with the Reconnaissance Trade Model and adequately prepares non-commissioned officers and officers to be patrolmen and commanders within Recon Platoon. The course allows a non-qualified officer or sergeant to attend the course and leave with

a full qualification. The Sniper Trade continues to search for ways to build and maintain its personnel and not see them leave in search of other career options. A key part of the answer is to train more Snipers. This year the Battalions have filled all of the panels for the Team Leader and Supervisor Courses and where possible international trainees are sought to attend. Work is also progressing on identifying the best training continuum for the surveillance capability within the Standard Infantry Battalion.

Direct Fire Support Weapons Team has been heavily engaged in the concepts and training of the heavy weapons available to the Battalion as well as identifying a path for Manoeuvre Support. Valuable interaction with units and discussions with the trade and policy managers have provided an insight into the direction the Standard Infantry Battalion needs to develop.

The Urban Operations Team continues to provide training for a directed training requirement but, unfortunately, this is lost when the trainees return to their units. SOI has entered into discussions to improve the effectiveness of this course and have it embedded within existing methods of delivery, such as the leadership, range qualifying and pioneer courses.

SOI hosted the Duke of Gloucester Cup April/May 2013 where each Battalion submitted a team. In previous years, the competition has been Afghanistan specific but as Army considers its way into the future, Foundation Warfighting requirements, within a spectrum of environments, has once

again become important. This year the competition was based on Defensive Operations, requiring sections to apply themselves to this highly demanding routine that remained within a tactical setting throughout the entire period. The winning section was from 2 RAR with sections from 1 Brigade and 7 Brigade featuring high in the list.

Engagement within the region is important for the School and the relationship with Singleton and its surrounds is extremely strong. ANZAC, Vietnam Veterans and Remembrance Days are key opportunities to be involved with the veteran community. The School was asked to participate in the Singleton Arts Festival in July, which led to a unit open day at the Showgrounds and was attended by thousands of people. Community relationships with the RSL and the Singleton Diggers Club has also grown in strength with scholarships for JNCOs and SNCOs to visit Gallipoli every two years and a junior officer to Kokoda as part of a leadership activity.

The School of Infantry has had an extremely productive year with training officers and soldiers in the array of skills, knowledge and attitudes required to be an Infantry soldier. There have been individual successes that include achieving promotion, CSM appointments, honours and awards and representation opportunities. The unit has accomplished much this year and strives to do so based on the Army Values of Courage, Initiative, Respect and Teamwork that are so important in preparing officers and soldiers for Infantry Battalions.

2nd/1st Battalion, The Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment

By Lieutenant Colonel Pete Hall (CO 2/1 RNZIR)

The Commanding Officer's end of year address to the Men and Women of the 2nd/1st Battalion of the Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment (2/1 RNZIR)

It has been an honour and a privilege to serve with you this year and have the opportunity to experience first hand what it is like to work amongst committed individuals, both civilian and military who are proud to be members of a Unit with a distinguished operational record, a desire to do the right thing and to get things done.

Once again there have been many achievements throughout the year and all in the Unit have continued to work hard to achieve a good degree of proficiency in firearms, fitness, first-aid and field-craft, we will continue to build on those standards in 2014.

In 2013 the Unit undertook a new chapter in operational commitments and for the first time in over ten years we have had a 12 month respite from operations as we conformed to the Brigade operational cycle of campaigning, contingency and re-set. That is not to say though that we didn't have individuals from this unit continually serving on missions overseas, as they have done so since the Battalion was formed.



2/1 Bn Officers visit the Christchurch Cathedral, partially destroyed by an Earthquake on 22 February 2011.

It was my hope in 2013 to slow the tempo of the Unit down to a point where we could all once again take stock, do the basics right and enjoy our soldiering. To that end next year the focus will be on getting light and getting back into the fight in the close country environment.



Cultural Activities: LCPL Shannon Thompson leads the Haka to welcome our sister Battalion (1 RNZIR) for the annual Rugby match which contests The Lone Pine Trophy

Many in this Unit have some form of operational experience and whether it has been in a combat, peacekeeping, observation or support roles your service and experience is no less important to the upkeep of the standards that this Battalion strives to achieve. For those of you who have not yet deployed your time will come and probably sooner than you expect and when you do deploy I have no doubt that you will acquit yourselves well, whilst experiencing the best and worst humanity has to offer.

Since its formation on 1 July 1974 from 1 Bn Depot which in turn traced its lineage back through the 2nd New Zealand Regiment to units that fought in WWII and as is depicted on our colours WWI and the Boer War, this unit has produced many warriors, men and women who have been prepared for and deployed on operational service, this has included in recent times unit and sub unit deployments to Bosnia, East Timor, Afghanistan, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and numerous individual deployments throughout the world. Because of the collective efforts of the Unit they have been able to do this, often at short notice and conduct themselves in a professional and credible manner.

So what is it that has enabled this Unit to deploy and conduct itself so well? It is simple really, it is hard work, realistic training, the extra efforts that you go to ensure that you are operationally capable, the extra time and effort that you put into understanding and exploiting the enemies' weakness and your strengths.

A word of warning though no matter how much you prepare, we are warriors and warriors, by the very nature of the tasks we are expected to undertake, will on occasion find ourselves in harms way and some will be wounded some will

be killed. We all need to be prepared for that eventuality and the preparation we do cannot be just about the skills needed for war-fighting or peace keeping. It also needs to be about ensuring that we have the mental robustness required to deal with the realities and the brutalities of combat.

In order to continue to be able to undertake operations, whilst maintaining the reputation that has been built by our predecessors and yourselves in recent times, we need to continue to foster an attitude of self reliance, tenacity, resourcefulness, and the pursuit of professional excellence. We must be masters of the environments where we are required to operate, and versatile enough to rapidly adapt from one environment to another.

Our core business remains that of close combat, and everything we do must ensure we are optimised for this role across the range of environments where we could be required to operate. Be in no doubt that the performance of the unit is directly attributable to the personal, professional and collective standards and attitude that we the current members maintain.

We must understand clearly in our own minds what it means to be light infantry. We must be highly conversant and proficient in the tactics of light infantry operations. We need to be agile, flexible, audacious and adaptable, it is my expectation that we develop our light infantry war-fighting ethic to the highest level and achieve an unequalled level of expertise, within our Army, in the conduct of close country and FIBUA operations.

We must also continue to develop a professional understanding of the key capabilities other units bring to the table to enhance our effectiveness and reduce our

vulnerabilities. We need to ensure our equipment husbandry and administration receives the same commitment as our fitness, first aid, firearms and field-craft.

It goes without saying that I will continue to ask and expect much of you in the new year, I do though believe that we have an opportunity in the next 12 months to enjoy soldiering without the constant pressure of deploying to or reintegrating from operations. I believe we can achieve all of the above whilst at the same time reducing our tempo by ensuring that we are applying our effort at the right time and right place.

It is important though that we confront new challenges as the 2nd/1st Battalion has always done - with both an eye on the future and knowledge gained from the lessons of our past and behind all of this it is important that we never lose sight of who we are and what it is we represent. Thank-you all again for your efforts in 2013 and I look forward to working with you again in 2014.

Kura Takahi Puni

ONWARD

Lieutenant Colonel Pete Hall CO 2/1 RNZIR



1 RNZIR receive the Haka



D Coy on Ex Dawn Blitz with the USMC in Camp Pendleton, California



1 RNZIR (in green) receive another thrashing (48-5) and 2/1 retains The Lone Pine Trophy



The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada

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Regimental Point of Contact

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Regimental Appointments

Regimental Headquarters

Colonel-in-Chief	Her Royal Highness Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall
Honorary Colonel	Honorary Colonel (HCol) LN Stevenson
Honorary Lieutenant Colonel	Honorary Lieutenant-Colonel (HLCol) BT Caldwell

Battalion Headquarters

Commanding Officer	Lieutenant-Colonel (LCol) PMR St Denis MSC, CD
Deputy Commanding Officer	Major (Maj) S Banerjee CD
Operations Officer	Captain (Capt) FD Lamie
Adjutant	Capt AFM West CD
Regimental Sergeant Major	Chief Warrant Officer (CWO) MT Shannon CD
Quartermaster Sergeant Instructor	Master Warrant Officer (MWO) PR Martin CD
Operations Warrant Officer	Warrant Officer (WO) WJ LePatourel CD

Bufs Company

Officer Commanding	Capt KJ Haupt CD
Company Sergeant Major	WO DE O'Halloran CD

60th Company

Officer Commanding	Capt MAC Timms CD
Company Sergeant Major	WO JR Thorn CD

Victoria Company

Officer Commanding	Capt SM Stewart CD
Company Sergeant Major	MWO FA Haire CD

Newsletter

By Captain Adam West, Adjutant

The past few years have been quite busy for the Regiment, marked by many significant events. 2010 marked the sesquicentennial for the Regiment, the first unit in the country to achieve this monumental occasion. The celebrations were highlighted by the final visit to the Regiment by the outgoing Colonel-in-Chief, Her Royal Highness Princess Alexandra, the Honourable Lady Ogilvy, who served the Regiment for 50 years.

2012 was highlighted by the first visit to the Regiment by our new Colonel-in-Chief, Her Royal Highness Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall. The Duchess was selected to be the new Colonel-in-Chief at the special request of Her Majesty the Queen. Since taking on the position, The Duchess has taken an especial interest in the Regiment. Her visit, though extremely short, was at her own insistence, during her and the Princes of Wales' visit to Canada as part of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations. Her time within the unit lines was primarily spent meeting and conversing with young soldiers and their families, where it was noted that the warmth and keen interest she demonstrated were indicative of the care for the Regiment she has.

2013 was a very busy, but rewarding period for the Regiment. The Battalion was tasked as the lead element for 32 Canadian Brigade Group's Training Group B. Training Group B is a tactical grouping of three different infantry units, along with support elements. In this construct, our Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Peter St Denis acted as a Battle Group Commanding Officer and the unit's key leaders as his headquarters staff, as he brought the different units together to act as cohesive unit. Though this construct had its challenges at times, the Commanding Officer and his key staff pushed the boundaries of the Training Group's operational ability, often increasing efficiency and capability. As a result of the increased successes of the Training Group in 2013, the model set in place by the unit will be the basis of future operations of the Training Group.

In July 2013 Corporal Brisbane-Babin, an augmentee to Operation ATTENTION, Canada's contribution to the NATO Training Mission - Afghanistan and the Regiment's final member to deploy to Afghanistan, returned from an eight month deployment. In the more than a decade of Canada's Afghan mission, more than 60 members of the Regiment deployed to South West Asia, some serving multiple tours of duty. With the unit's strength being approximately 240, that number accounts for more than one quarter of the unit, which proportionately is extremely high

for a Reserve unit in Canada, where operational deployment is strictly voluntary. All members of the Regiment who deployed to Afghanistan brought great credit to Canada and the Regiment, including one member who was awarded the Medal of Bravery.

In September, the unit acted as the lead element for Exercise SOUTHERN BEAR, a combined exercise with elements of the 48th Brigade Combat Team of the Georgia (United States) Army National Guard, which took place at Fort Stewart, Georgia. The two week long exercise, which was focused at company level was an excellent opportunity for members of the Regiment to train with soldiers from the United States Army. As a result, our soldiers were exposed to different equipment and tactics, thereby increasing their ability to operate in more complex environments and under command of coalition partners. The exercise was an extreme success at both the individual soldier and unit level.

2013 marked yet another milestone for the Regiment, the 30th anniversary of the unit's parachute tasking. In the three decades of the tasking, the Regiment consistently pushed the envelope of employment of Reserve personnel, including qualifying the first Reserve Jump Masters and Parachute Instructors. Moving into the anniversary year, the Regiment again set a precedent by staffing and conducting the first ever Basic Parachutist course run completely by Reservists for Reserve candidates. Based on its success, the course has been run a second time and become institutionalized for annual running. The jumpers of the unit, past and present celebrated the anniversary with a reunion held in January. In February, a platoon from the parachute company once again demonstrated the relevance of the unique skill set as they conducted a parachute insertion for an operation as part of a domestic response exercise in Northern Ontario. The platoon was commended for their skill by the Division Commander, who was present at the drop zone. In November, members of the Regiment took part in a formation drop, the first of its size in two decades, at special request of our affiliated Regular Force unit, 3rd Battalion, The Royal Canadian Regiment.

2014 promises to be another year of progress. After turning over command of Training Group B in September 2013, the Regiment will focus on expanding the unit's parachute capability whilst continuing to refine the core infantry skills of every member of the unit.



Colonel-in-Chief Inspection. Her Royal Highness Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall speaks to Warrant Officer Donovan O'Halloran as she inspects a 100 man Guard of Honour during her inaugural visit to the Regiment as Colonel-in-Chief. The Duchess spoke to nearly every member of the Guard, demonstrating her warmth and genuine care for the soldiers.



Above: Ex MAPLE DEFENDER. A Light Machine Gunner engages an enemy sniper as part of Exercise MAPLE DEFENDER, a combined exercise with participation from reserve units from across Canada.



Right: Ex TRILLIUM RESPONSE. Members of the Regiment's Parachute Company insert via parachute as part Land Force Central Area's Ex TRILLIUM RESPONSE, a domestic response exercise in Northern Ontario.

Royal Brunei Armed Forces

By unit correspondent

Commander of the Royal Brunei Armed Forces pays farewell visit to IRGR and British Forces Brunei

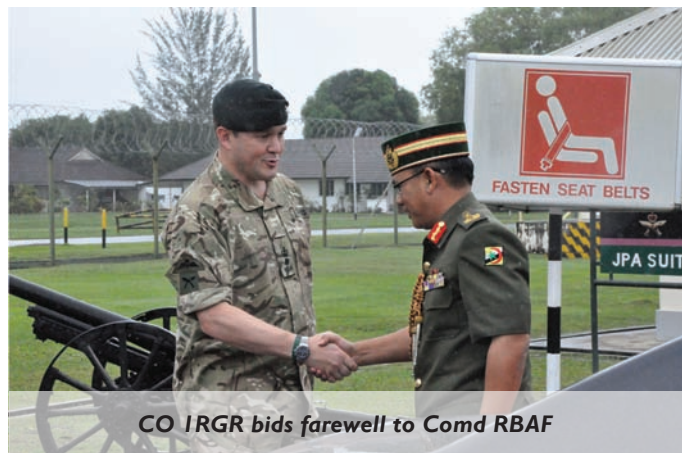
On Monday 27 January, British Forces Brunei were paid a visit by Major General Dato Paduka Seri Haji Aminuddin Ihsan bin Pehin Orang Kaya Saiful Mulok Dato Seri Paduka Haji Abidin DPKT SMB PJK BSc (Hons) Fellow of ACDSS MA psc, commander of the RBAF, who is relinquishing his command later this year. The General was accompanied by the British High Commissioner to Brunei Darussalam, His Excellency Mr David Campbell, and the Defence Attaché, Wing Commander Mike Longstaff OBE RAF.

The visiting party were welcomed by CO IRGR / Commander BFB, Lt Col Jody Davies MBE along with the COS, Maj Chris Boryer MBE and Maj Ram Bahadur Pun, Gurkha Major IRGR. Comd RBAF then inspected an honour guard commanded by Sgt Rajesh Pun of A Coy IRGR. The visitors were then given a brief of the Garrison's current and planned training activities. The General then visited members of IRGR, including the Mortar Platoon who demonstrated the weapon drills for the 81 mm mortars, and the dismounted close combat trainer, supervised by WO2 (QMSI) Varley SASC.

The visit was a reminder of the close ties of partnership and friendship which continue to thrive between the British Garrison and their colleagues of the RBAF. The General expressed his fondness and admiration for the Gurkhas and the high regard placed by the RBAF on their shared training. Before leaving, the General was presented with a Gurkha Hat and a set of RGR cufflinks by CO IRGR, a reminder of a long and successful partnership.



Comd RBAF is presented with an RGR Mallah by Gurkha Major IRGR, Maj Ram Pun



CO IRGR bids farewell to Comd RBAF



Comd RBAF inspects the Guard of Honour, accompanied by CO IRGR/Comd BFB



Comd RBAF, Maj Gen signs the BFB visitors' book, accompanied by CO IRGR, Lt Col Jody Davies MBE; RSM IRGR, WO1 Ganesh Gurung, and the British High Commissioner to Brunei Darussalam, HE Mr David Campbell.

THE GURKHA BRIGADE ASSOCIATION

GBA & Regimental Association Staff List

President:	Lieutenant General Sir David Bill KCB		
Life Vice Presidents:	Field Marshal The Lord Bramall of Bushfield KG GCB OBE MC JP Field Marshal Sir John Chapple GCB CBE DL Brigadier Sir Miles Hunt-Davis GCVO CBE General Sir Sam Cowan KCB CBE		
Chairman:	Brigadier J A Anderson		
Secretary:	Maj N D Wylie Carrick MBE		
Chaplain:	The Rev P Clemett CF(F) BSc		
Office:	c/o Headquarters Brigade of Gurkhas Trenchard Lines Upavon Pewsey Wiltshire SN9 6BE		
Telephone:	01980 615714	Fax:	01980 618938

Regimental Associations

The Sirmoor Club (2nd King Edward VII's Own Goorkhas (The Sirmoor Rifles))

President	Lieutenant General Sir Peter Duffell KCB CBE MC (Tel: 0207 184 7424 (W))
Chairman	Brigadier B C Jackman OBE MC (Tel: 0117 9733317)
Hon Secretary	Maj N D Wylie Carrick MBE (Tel: 01980 615714 (W))
Hon Treasurer	Major J W Kaye (Tel: 01730 828282)
Editor of Sirmooree	Major J J Burlison (Tel: 01892 782013)

6th Queen Elizabeth's Own Gurkha Rifles Regimental Association

President	Brigadier J A Anderson (Tel: 01189 841724)
Chairman	Colonel P D Pettigrew (Tel: 0208 265 7644)
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10th Princess Mary's Own Gurkha Rifles Association

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The Royal Gurkha Rifles Association

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The Queen's Gurkha Engineers Association

President	Lieutenant General Sir David Bill KCB
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Queen's Gurkha Signals Association

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The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment Regimental Association

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1st King George V's Own Gurkha Rifles (The Malaun Regiment) Regimental Association

Former Chairman	Lieutenant Colonel E Gopsill DSO OBE MC (Tel: 01543 432571)
Former Hon Secretary	Capt J H Burges (Tel: 01582 821087)

3rd Queen Alexandra's Own Gurkha Rifles Officers' Association

Former President	Major General R W L McAlister CB OBE (Tel: 01843 862351)
Former Hon Secretary	R J Turk Esq (Tel: 01732 761856)

4th Prince of Wales's Own Gurkha Rifles Officers' Association

Former President Major D S Day (Tel: 01444 482854, Fax: 01444 482869)
Former Hon Secretary R M R Lloyd Esq (Tel: 01449 740376)

5th Royal Gurkha Rifles (Frontier Force) Regimental Association

Former Chairman Major E N Buckley (Tel: 01372 462541)

8th Gurkha Rifles Regimental Association

Former Chairman Lieutenant Colonel ET Horsford MBE MC (Tel: 0208 789 2924)

9th Gurkha Rifles Regimental Association

Former Chairman B T Roberts Esq (Tel: 01235 771422)

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GBA Calendar of Events 2014 (as at 15 October 2013)

UNIT	DATE	LOCATION	EVENT	REMARKS
GBA	10 Mar 14	London	Memorial Gates Ceremony (Commonwealth Day)	
	07 May 14	Gr Museum	Briefing by Col BG	
	11 May 14	Romsey	Hillier Gardens	
	07 Jun 14	RMAS	GBA Memorial Service and Reunion	
	08-10 Jul 14	RMAS	Brigade Week	
	11 Jul 14	Aldershot	Nepal Cup Final, All Ranks Reunion & Beating Retreat	
	23 Sep 14	NMA	Inauguration of Gurkha Memorial	
	01 Oct 14	Gr Museum	GBA Trustees Meeting	
	06 Nov 14	London	Field of Remembrance	
	06 Nov 14	London	Gurkha Statue Ceremony	
	06 Nov 14	A&N Club	GBA Committee Annual General Meeting	
	06 Nov 14	A&N Club	GBA Brief & Annual Dinner	
	09 Nov 14	Cenotaph	Remembrance Sunday	
	12 Sep 14	Newbury & Crookham GC	GBA Golf (QOGLR)	Brig BC Jackman
The Sirmoor Club	17 May 14	A&N Club	Sirmoor Club AGM & Reunion Luncheon	
	14 Sep 14	Farnborough	Sirmoor Sathis Delhi Day Reunion	
4 GR	14 May 14	Stoke Poges Memorial Garden	4th PWO GR Association UK Annual Reunion.	
6 GR	22 Mar 14	Nepal	Nepal Branch Reunion, Katmandu.	
	07 Jun 14	RMAS	6GR Association Reunion at RMA Sandhurst	
7 GR	17 May 14	Greenwich	All Ranks Reunion (Eltham Palace)	
	20 Sept 14	Gurkha Museum	Annual Reunion Lunch	
9 GR	26 Apr 14	Gurkha Museum	Curry Lunch Reunion	
10 GR	10 May 14	TBC (Ashford/ Shorncliffe)	AGM & Lunch Reunion	1st Sat in May
RGR	26 Apr 14	Twickenham	Reunion	
QGE	Tbc Sep 14	Maidstone	QGE Birthday, AGM and H/O of Col of Regt	
QG Sigs	Sep 14	Bramcote	Regimental Birthday & AGM	
QOGLR	09 May 14	Gale Bks, Aldershot	Association AGM	
	28 Jun 14	Gale Bks, Aldershot	Regimental Reunion	
	17 Oct 14	Gale Bks, Aldershot	Association Annual Dinner	

UNIT	DATE	LOCATION	EVENT	REMARKS
Gurkha Museum	11 Apr 14	Winchester	Lecture and Curry Lunch 'The UK Foreign Policy after Afghanistan. What is our Defence Policy'.	Prof M Clarke Dir RUSI
	06 Jun 14	Winchester	Friends Lecture and Curry Lunch 'Lali Gurans. The Richness of Plants from the Himalayas'.	Mr Wolfgang Bopp
	04 Jul 14	Winchester	Lecture & Curry Lunch: 'Kukris in the Trenches- Gurkhas on the Western Front in the Great War'.	Maj Gordon Corrigan
	02-30 Aug 14	Winchester	Summer Temporary Exhibition 'Across the Black water'.	
	10 Oct 14 Tbc Oct 14	Winchester Winchester	GM Theme Lecture and Curry Lunch; tbc Friends AGM and Tea	Curator
Brit/Nepal Society	20 Feb 14	Pont Str, London	Brit Nepal Society Supper (St Colomba's Church Hall)	
	07 May 14			
	07 Oct 14			
	13 Nov 13		Talk: 'Darjeeling Past & Present' C Brown	
	04 Dec 14	Nepal Embassy	AGM & Talk 'Gurkhas in WWI' by Gordon Corrigan	
Nepali New Year/ Hindu Religious Festivals	14 Apr 14		New Year	
	03 May 14		Sansari Mai Puja	
	14 May 14		Budda Jayanti	
	17 Jul 14		Saune Sankranti	
	Aug 14		Naag Panchami	
Aug 14		Rakchhya Bandan		
	2 - 4 Oct 14		Dashain 2014: Ghata Thapana Phulpati, Kalratri, Maar & Tika	
	23 - 15 Oct 14		Tihar 2014: Tihar Luxmi Puja, Gobardhan Puja & Bhai Tika	
Buddhist Religious Festivals	Jul 14		Choekor Duchan (the first turning of the wheel of Dharma)	
	Jul 14		Guru Tse Chu (Birth of Guru Rinpoche)	
	Nov 14		Lhabab Duchan (Buddha Shakyamuni Descent from heaven)	Dates tbc
	Feb 14		Chotrul Duchan (Day of Miracles)	
	May 14		Buddha Jayanti	

President Of The Gurkha Brigade Association

Lt Gen Sir David Bill CB

Lieutenant General Sir David Bill KCB took over as President Gurkha Brigade Association from General Sir Sam Cowan KCB CBE after the GBA Reunion at RMA Sandhurst on 8 June 2013. Lieutenant General Sir David Bill was born in 1954 and following education at Charterhouse and Welbeck College was commissioned into the Royal Engineers in 1973.

His early service was spent mainly in Northern Ireland or with the Queen's Gurkha Engineers in Hong Kong, Belize and Chatham.

After attending the Army Staff College Camberley in 1986, he spent two years in MOD in Military Operations, before returning to Northern Ireland to command 33 Independent Field Squadron for two years. A brief stint on the Directing Staff at Camberley was followed by command of 39 Engineer Regiment and in 1994 he returned to MOD for three years in Army Staff Duties during the time of the change to a Labour Government and the Strategic Defence Review. After attending the Higher Command & Staff Course he moved to HQ Land Forces for four years, initially as Commander Engineers and then as Brigadier General Staff covering strategic and financial planning.

Following attendance at the Royal College of Defence Studies in 2002 he was appointed General Officer Commanding UK Support Command (Germany), for which he was awarded a CB in the 2006. He then moved to Italy as Deputy Commander NATO Rapid Deployable Corps (Italy) in Milan, before his final military appointment as UK Military



Representative to NATO and the EU based in Brussels, for which he was appointed KCB.

Until recently he was Colonel, The Queen's Gurkha Engineers and Colonel Commandant, Royal Engineers, as well as serving as a Gurkha Welfare Trustee. As President GBA he sits on the Brigade's Council of Colonels and is able to influence matters within the serving Brigade as well as the retired community.

Lieutenant General Bill is married to Gabrielle, a professional artist, and they have two sons and a daughter. Away from work, his interests include a passion for downhill skiing and watching cricket, mediocre tennis, inaccurate golf, and the occasional hand of bridge.

Gurkha Brigade Association (GBA) Newsletter

Gurkha Brigade Association Trust Objectives:

- *Relieve either generally or individually Gurkhas and the dependents of Gurkhas who are in conditions of need, hardship or distress.*
- *Advance the education of dependents of Gurkhas who are in need and to provide for the training of such dependents and the retraining of Gurkhas upon discharge in a trade or occupation.*
- *Foster esprit de corps, comradeship and the welfare of Gurkhas and their dependents and to preserve Gurkha history and traditions.*

Over the past decade, the Regimental Associations Nepal (RAN) has taken on a new lease of life and has become an integral link between BGN and the Nepal ex-servicemen community. Similarly, with the increased numbers of ex-servicemen now living in the United Kingdom, the GBA and its component associations must be viewed as the natural organisations to which ex-servicemen can turn. Every effort is being made to encourage Gurkha ex-servicemen to take advantage of both their Regimental/Corps Associations and the GBA.

GBA Memorial Service and Reunion and the Presentation of the 'The Gurkha Soldier' to the GBA by Mr Michael Uren

Mr Michael Uren and his partner Janis Bennett were invited to attend the GBA Memorial Service and Reunion Lunch held at RMA Sandhurst on 08 June 2013, as guests of the GBA. After the Memorial Service, Mr Michael Uren presented a magnificent silver statuette called 'The Gurkha Soldier' to the Brigade of Gurkhas as a mark of the high regard in which he holds the Brigade of Gurkhas, past and present.

Mr Michael Uren is a prominent and ardent supporter of the Gurkha Welfare Trust. He was first attracted to Gurkha Soldiers in 2007 after reading a small Gurkha Welfare Trust leaflet, 'Too old to Fight. Too proud to ask'. As a result he made contact with General Sir Philip Trousdell KCB CB, Chairman of the Gurkha Welfare Trust, and has since donated significant sums of money to the Trust in order to build Residential Homes in Nepal along the lines of the Royal Hospital Chelsea, London. The first Residential

Home has already been constructed in Kaski, Pokhara, and was opened in 2010. A second Residential Home, is currently under construction in Dharan and is due to be completed in September 2013, with a formal opening in February 2014, where it is hoped that both he and Janis will be able to attend and officiate at the Opening Ceremony in Nepal. With the continued support of Mr Michael Uren and the Michael Uren Foundation Trust, the Trustees of the GWT(UK) are currently considering the location of a third Residential Home to be constructed in the Kathmandu Valley.

Following the opening, of the Kaski Residential Home, Mr Michael Uren commissioned a silver statuette of a Gurkha Soldier, equipped and armed as worn by Gurkha soldiers on Operation HERRICK tours in Afghanistan. The statuette was to be known as 'The Gurkha Soldier', and was presented to the Gurkha Welfare Scheme in Nepal.

He has since commissioned a second silver statuette of the 'The Gurkha Soldier' which he has presented to the whole of the Brigade of Gurkhas. After a short speech by the President of the Gurkha Brigade Association, General Sir Sam Cowan KCB CBE, Mr Michael Uren presented the 'The Gurkha Soldier' to Field Marshal Sir John Chapple GCB CBE OSTJ DL, who on behalf of the whole Brigade of Gurkhas, past and serving, accepted this most magnificent piece of silver. 'The Gurkha' Soldier' is now held at Headquarters The Brigade of Gurkhas. The Statuette has two silver inscription plaques, one in English and the other in Deva Nagri, with the following inscription *THE GURKHA SOLDIER Presented to The Brigade of Gurkhas By The Michael Uren Foundation 08 June 2013:*



Mr Micheal Uren presenting the Gurkha Statue to Field Marshall Sir John Chapple



New President of the Gurkha Brigade Association.

Following the GBA Reunion Luncheon on Sunday 8th June 2013, Lieutenant General Sir David Bill KCB has taken over as the President GBA from General Sir Sam Cowan KCB CBE.

Dedication Service for the Gurkha Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum

In honour of 200 years of Gurkha service to the British Crown, a Gurkha memorial - 'Chautara' (a resting place for travellers on hillside trails) was formally opened on 23 September 2013 at the National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas, Staffordshire. The service was attended by representatives from all UK-based Gurkha units, members from the Gurkha Brigade Associations (GBA), Gurkha Welfare Trust, Gurkha Museum and local dignitaries.

The President of the GBA, Lt Gen Sir David Bill KCB, opened the service, which was then followed by a brief dedication and blessing of the Memorial by Pandit, Lama and GBA honorary chaplain. The Chairman GBA, Brig John Anderson led the Remembrance Service and one-minute silence was observed in remembrance of the fallen.



The Memorial, in the form of a traditional Nepalese 'Chautara', was erected as a result of two years of voluntary work by Mr Andrew Brown-Jackson and his team of volunteer workers from the Queen's Gurkha Signals.



Field of Remembrance

The President of the GBA, Lieutenant General Sir David Bill KCB led the Gurkha Brigade and Gurkha Regimental and Corps Associations in laying out the Gurkha Brigade Plot (Plot 77) at the Field of Remembrance Ceremony outside Westminster Abbey. His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh followed by Prince Harry, both stopped in front of the GBA Plot where they were greeted by Lt Gen Sir David Bill flanked by the two QGOOs, Capt Kumar Gurung and Capt Sureshkumar Thapa, to review the GBA plot.

After the Field of Remembrance Ceremony, the GBA contingent moved to Field Marshal Viscount Slim's statue in Whitehall where Viscount Slim and Chairman GBA, Brigadier John Anderson, laid the GBA and 6 GR wreaths respectively, before moving on to the Gurkha Statue at Horse Guards Parade. The Gurkha Statue Ceremony followed the traditional format with the President leading with the Prayer to the



GBA Dinner & Presentation of the Gurkha 'Khud' Runner to General Sir Sam Cowan KCB CBE.

The Annual GBA Dinner took place at the Army and Navy Club on 7 November 2013. In total 86 GBA Members attended the dinner. All those attending were invited to assemble for a briefing given by Colonel James Robinson, Colonel Brigade of Gurkhas on the achievements and challenges facing the Brigade. Champaign and pre-dinner drinks set the tone for what was to be a very convivial evening, surrounded by friends and past acquaintances from the Brigade. It was however with some regret that the Chairman Brigadier John Anderson, gave a formal farewell to General Sir Sam Cowan who as President of the GBA since 2005 has steered the GBA through a period of immense change. As a token of the GBA's appreciation, General Sir Sam Cowan was presented with a copy of the 'Khud Runner', the Brigade of Gurkhas 'Khud Race' trophy that had been competed for on an annual basis within the Brigade of Gurkhas between 1951 - 1995. General Sam Cowan has generously donated his presentation to the Queen's Gurkha Signals for it to be used as the 'Sam Cowan TRAILWALKER Trophy' to be awarded to the fastest Gurkha Team taking part in the annual TRAILWALKER UK event sponsored by OXFAM, to raise funds for both OXFAM and the Gurkha



Gurkha, followed by the representatives of the Brigade and Regimental and Corps Associations laying their respective wreaths around the base of the Gurkha Statue. The ceremony concluded with a lone piper provided by 2 RGR playing a lament. The wreaths remain *in situ* for the remainder of the year, a visible reminder to the general public passing through the area of the Gurkha contribution to the British Crown since 2015.

Welfare Trust. As a former Colonel of the Queen's Gurkha Signals, this was a particularly apt presentation.

The GBA Contingent at the Cenotaph Ceremony

The GBA Marching Contingent took part in the Remembrance Sunday Cenotaph Ceremony on Sunday 10 November 2013. Over the past few years the GBA Marching Contingent has steadily increased its numbers of allocated places from 36 in 2012 to 48 in 2013. Led by the President and Chairman of the GBA, Lieutenant General Sir David Bill KCB and Brigadier John Anderson respectively, there was an excellent turnout from the Regimental Associations, including Lieutenant Generals Sir Peter Duffell KCB CBE MC (President of the Sirmoor Rifles Association) and Peter Pearson (formerly IOGR and RGR), Brigadier Ian Rigden OBE (former Col BG), Lieutenant Colonels Brian O'Bree (Chairman of the 6th QEO Gurkha Rifles RA) and Willy Bicket (Chairman of RGR RA). Our most senior marcher was Captain Bill Smyly (2nd Goorkha Burma veteran) who marched unaided, astounding everyone with his fitness.



Bishop of London's Address to the Gurkha Brigade Association at the Gurkha Memorial Service 08 June 2013

The Rt Rev and Rt Hon Richard Chartres KCVO, Bishop of London kindly gave the address at the GBA Memorial Service held at RMAS RMC on Saturday 08 June 2013. The text of his thoughtful and inspiring address is set out below and will be of interest to all GBA members. The GBA was immensely grateful to the Bishop for taking the time out of an extremely busy programme to speak to members of the Brigade, both past and serving.

"The Emperor Ashoka said that there are many spiritual traditions and whosoever 'exalts his own way by condemning the ways of others in reality inflicts the severest injury on his own tradition.' As I speak in the name of the most holy Trinity, it is in this spirit that I salute a military partnership which has brought together different races and creeds from the ends of the earth in a 200 year alliance.

I feel especially privileged to have been invited to join you today to do honour to the Gurkha tradition and in particular to remember those who have been killed and wounded in the World Wars and especially in what for Gurkhas is the 4th Afghan War. This war has seen the most protracted, savage and high intensity fighting for the British Army since World War II. We remember especially this year Lieutenant Ed Drummond-Baxter and Lance Corporal Siddhanta Kunwar of 1st battalion

Royal Gurkha Rifles who were killed on active service in October 2012. In all the Brigade has lost 15 killed in action (four officers and 11 Gurkha other ranks). Rest eternal grant unto them O Lord and let light perpetual shine upon them.

In addition 49 Brigade members have been wounded and seven of them have undergone amputations. We salute in particular Lance Corporal Netra Rana who lost his left leg in 2008. With Gurkha courage and determination, he represented Great Britain in the men's sitting volleyball during the London Olympics last year.

I am named after another entry in the book of remembrance here which recalls those who fell in earlier wars. Lieutenant John Chartres was intelligence officer in the 1st Battalion the 5th Royal Gurkha Rifles. He was killed in December 1943 alongside Gurkha comrades in the Italian campaign. He was just 22.

The relationships formed by such shared memories have an intensity which is hard to convey to others which is one of the reasons why associations like this one are very valuable. But one of the good things about contemporary Britain is the respect the armed forces deservedly enjoy. When I first began to participate, last century in the cenotaph Remembrance

Sunday observances, the first question which any journalist would ask was "Isn't the war a long time ago? Shouldn't we move on?" No one is saying that now and indeed it is remarkable how many young people are participating in the various acts of remembrance.

As a priest I am grateful that the beginning of the Gurkha story is associated with mounting guard over a guru. I read about this incident in Chris Bellamy's 2011 book *The Gurkhas - Special Force*. The warrior Bappa Rawal found the 8th century Gorakhnath meditating and stood guard over him while he was thus employed. When the guru emerged he gave Bappa a kukri as a gesture of gratitude and said that Bappa's followers should be called Gorkhas and would be world famous for their bravery and so it has proved,

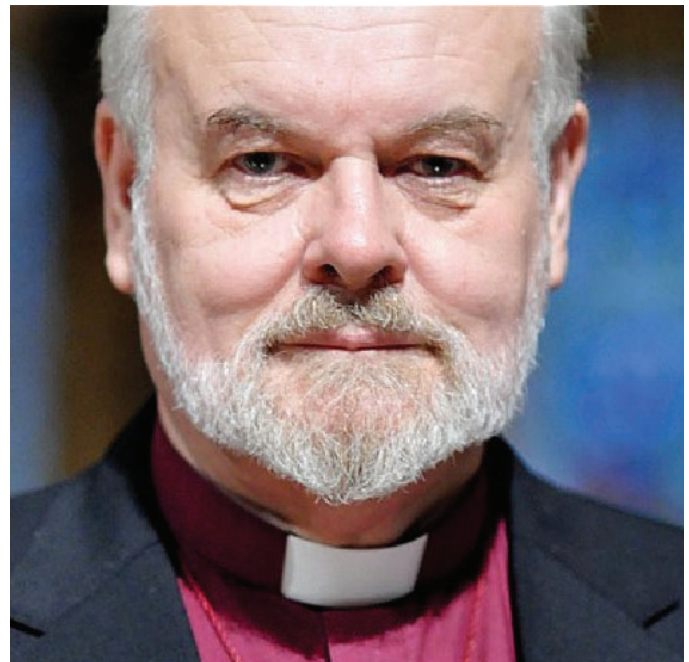
Courage is of course a vital ingredient in any life worth living. I remember being taken around a mouldering church by the churchwardens. One of them said to me "you know bish, I think it's only inertia that keeps us going". The other warden simply said "Courage mate".

The courage we need is not of course only physical although that is to be admired but at every stage of our lives we need moral courage to take risks, to live life to the full, to persevere in illness and to stand up for our beliefs especially when the crowd is against us.

Courage is an expression of our deepest being, the spiritual heart, and the word is ultimately derived from *cor*, the Latin for heart. It is often an instinctive striving rather than something you think about. Because courage is an expression of our deepest being it may involve the sacrifice of many desirable things - pleasure, comfort and even existence itself. But life in all its fullness only becomes possible when we have found the courage to confront death and strive after our deepest being.

It is the faith of a Christian that you need to confront death in order to know life in all its fullness. This is the meaning of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The calling of the Christian religion is to resist death in all its forms through participating in the life of God. We are called to join Jesus Christ in confronting the anti-life forces which we see in unawareness of a neighbour's need; in hatred of those whose colour and creed are not like ours; in the immobilising fear which causes us to shrink into ourselves. The anti-life force has many disguises and is literally deadening.

We live in a dangerous world but one of huge opportunities. One of the major threats in these circumstances is that many nice people seem to lack all conviction and are not strenuous in their living and working for the common good. The Gurkha Brigade with your proud history fulfils a very contemporary purpose. After rigorous selection and deployment far from home, Gurkhas are perfectly equipped for the security requirements of the 21st century when a highly professional army will be needed for limited operations. This is a day for celebrating the Gurkha tradition and giving thanks for your



example of courage and comradeship. Thank you also for the charitable work you do in supporting the Gurkha soldier and for the legacy you are passing on.

I have encountered the Gurkhas many times in the course of my own duties, in Kosovo for example in the dangerous early days of KFOR; unveiling the memorial to the Gurkha soldier in Whitehall with the unforgettable sight of the Gurkha band coming round the corner like a rocket. My first memory however is of Hong Kong more than 30 years ago. I was carrying the bags for the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Gurkha Major asked me "Who is this Archbishop? What does he do?" I tried to explain after which the Gurkha Major said "I see, he is like our Raj Pundit who casts horoscopes for the royal family". "That's it" I agreed.

I conclude by returning to my main theme of courage. True courage in life and death consists being aware and faithful to the spirit which lies at the heart of our deepest and truest selves. It is a personal truth which unites us to the truth at the heart of Universe.

It is expressed in different ways in our scriptures. In the Gita, Krishna says "Beyond this creation visible and invisible, there is an invisible higher Eternal: and when all things pass away, this remains for ever and ever. This Spirit Supreme is attained by an ever-living love. In him all things have their life and from him all things have come."

St Paul in his letter to the Christians of Rome declares that "I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord."

Amen'

Dedication Of The Gurkha Memorial National Memorial Arboretum - 13 September 2013

by Major N P Wylie Carrick MBE

The Gurkha Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA) has been long in the planning and construction phases but after four years was finally completed in September 2013 in time for a short but moving Dedication Service held on 13 September 2013. The Gurkha memorial can take its rightful place amongst the many other memorials, whether they be large or small, that commemorate all servicemen and civil agency staff that served the British Crown.

The Gurkha Brigade Association was well represented at the Dedication Service by both the serving Brigade and all of the Regimental and Corps Associations that make up the Gurkha Brigade Association. Only the Gurkha Band was unable to be represented as they were on duty in Cottesmore Barracks, Leicestershire for the Royal Anglian 'Talevera Day'.

The Brigade of Gurkhas has had, and continues to have a glorious record of service. Every individual who has seen service with Gurkhas will have made, and will have seen many personal sacrifices given in the cause of Gurkha service. This Gurkha Memorial is for every single person who has in whatever capacity, contributed to the Gurkha name.

'The Gurkha Memorial Chautara'

A chautara is usually of a solid rectangular construction built in stone comprising a long seated step around a rectangular base, with the seat at knee height and supporting back rest. The flat top is usually flagged, and is set at a convenient height to rest the porters heavy 'doko' basket, or 'gangri' (copper water pots) carried by the women of the village, whilst resting.

It is common in Nepal for a chautara to be constructed in memory of a recently deceased loved one or in memory of a respected member of the community. It can be of any size and is built by the family or community along a commonly used route used by that family or community. Traditionally the chautara is planted with two trees (the Bar and Pipal trees) representing male and female, respectively. The trees planted during the construction phase grow together side by side, a symbol of intertwined longevity and unity.

Once constructed the chautara is used as a resting point for porters and travellers, who can take advantage of the shade provided by the two long standing Bar (male) and Pipal (female) trees, that over time provide wide spreading branches under which one can rest, eat, or pass the time of day in reflection and contemplation.

The Bar Pipal tree is also a symbol of bringing people together, and the shaded area is often used as a meeting place for the community.

'The Gurkha Chautara' is a fitting memorial and was dedicated 'to all the past and present Gurkha and British Officers and Soldiers, who served so loyally together in times of peace and in times of war, whether they were in the former Gurkha Brigade of the Indian Army, or in the Brigade of Gurkhas of the British Army today.'

Dedication Service

The Dedication Service itself was an informal occasion led by the President of the GBA, Lieutenant General Sir David Bill KCB who gave a short introductory speech to the 112 GBA members assembled around below the Gurkha Chautara, before handing over to the Brigade religious representatives to conduct dedication prayers in the Hindu, Buddhist and Christian faiths. These were conducted by:

The Hindoo Pandit, Mr Shivachandra Niraula.

The Buddhist Lama, Mr Kalsang Ghale.

The GBA Honorary Chaplain, the Reverend Peter Clemett CF(F) BSC,

Following the Dedication, the Chairman of the GBA, led the Act of Remembrance, during which time the Last Post, a Lament and Reveille were played by a Bugler and Piper provided by 1 RGR.

GBA Luncheon and Presentations

Following the Dedication Service all members returned to the NMA Reception Centre where a sandwich and cake lunch was provided. The President of the GBA, Lieutenant General Sir David Bill KCB took the advantage to publically thank all those involved in the Gurkha Memorial project, in particular:

- Lieutenant Colonel 'Fairy' Gopsill DSO OBE MC who originally conceived the idea and who despite early setbacks, provided the initial drive, determination and vision to see a Gurkha Memorial constructed within the National Memorial Arboretum.
- Tribute was paid to the Gurkha Chautara Committee under the patient leadership of its Chairman, Brigadier John Anderson who kept the project going and to all the committee members:

Brigadier John A Sanderson

Lieutenant Colonel Bob Couldrey

Mr Gavin Edgerley-Harris

Major Rob Cross (QGERA)

Mr Simon Lord

Major Nigel Wylie Carrick MBE

- Major Rob Cross (QGERA) was singled out as the man on the ground who volunteered to establish routine liaison with the NMA authorities, the Queens Gurkha Signals, and with the volunteer stone wallers.
- The President placed on record the tremendous support and advice given by the staff of the National Memorial Arboretum. He reflected on the breathtaking vision of the National Memorial Arboretum and echoed the thoughts of all those present who cannot but be touched by the overwhelming sense of respect, dedication and sacrifice that is being remembered every day of the year. The NMA is a very special place, one that provides some semblance of solace, comfort and pride to the families of those remembered. He thanked Ms Sarah Montgomery, the Managing Director of the NMA, Mr Paul Kennedy, Curator NMA, and Mrs Dianne Rivers and Aileen Beesley the Event Coordinators, all of whom provided such worthwhile support and assistance to the GBA.
- The fine engraving was carried out by Mr Allan Cannell of GA Cannell Memorials, who made the magnificent and flawless slate dedications inserted into the chautara.
- Last 'thanks' went to all those corporate and individual fund-raisers and donors that enabled the Gurkha Memorial project to go ahead, in particular to Sarah Walton of the Derbyshire Environmental Trust (Landfill Communities Trust - Lafarge Tarmac) and to Mr Ross Halley, of Lafarge-Tarmac, who made a significant and generous grant towards the construction of Gurkha Memorial Chautara.

Presentations

The two stone wallers, Mr Andrew Brown-Jackson and Mr Steve Clifton, who volunteered their time and skills to design, construct and supervise the Gurkha 'volunteer' work force led by Sgt Mohansing Rai from 248 Gurkha Signal Squadron, were each presented with a No 1 Service Kukri in appreciation for their voluntary contribution to the project, successfully concluded.

6GRR Durbar Pokhara March 2013

By Col P Pettigrew (6GR)

The 6GR Durbar held in Pokhara on Saturday 30 March 2013 was a huge success with a gathering of some 1,200. In addition to those travelling from Kathmandu and other parts of Nepal, groups came from Darjeeling, Hong Kong and the UK. Nearly a hundred British Officers and their families came from the UK, Europe, the USA, Canada, Australia and China.



As a welcome to overseas visitors, the night before the Durbar itself a reception was held at the Gurkha Haven Hotel of Major Gyan Bahadur Gurung, Chairman Nepal Branch of the Association. At the last 6GR Durbar in 2005 the Battle of Mogaung was especially remembered and Hon Lt Tul Bahadur Pun VC was the guest of honour. Sadly, Tulbahadur Saheb is no longer with us. However, this year Elizabeth Allmand came from Australia in honour of her uncle, Captain Michael Allmand VC,



Lt Col Paul Pettigrew (Chairman 6GRR) and Major Gyan Bahadur Gurung (Chairman Nepal Branch) at Gurkha Haven Hotel

who also won his VC at Mogaung. Other very welcome guests were Anne Griffith, widow of Lt Col Adrian Griffith, and their two daughters, all of whom had spent so much time and given so much in Pokhara.





Major Gopal Bahadur Gurung

The venue, BGC Pokhara, with kind permission of Colonel Andrew Mills, Comd BGN, and thanks to the great support from the acting OC and his staff, was perfect. The weather too was the nicest day for a week with bright sunshine making the Centre's leafy chauntaras popular places to sit.

After the welcome speeches given by Lieutenant Purna Bahadur Gurung, the Durbar Committee Secretary, Major Gopal Bahadur Gurung, Durbar Chief Coordinator, Brigadier John Anderson, President 6GRRRA, and Major Gyan Bahadur Gurung, there was a minute's silence to remember those who had died in the last year. Some 70 pensioners 80 years old or more were then recognised by presentation of khadas and certificates by Major General Ray Pett, former Colonel of the Regiment and President 6GRRRA, by Brigadier John and by Major Gyan.

One of those unable to be present was 6GR's oldest pensioner, 99 year old Capt Bakansing Gurung. Enlisted in 1933, he served with 1/6th in India's North West Frontier and in Burma during the war, where he was seriously wounded and only rejoined the Battalion after war's end. He opted to stay with the British Army, served in Malaya with the 1st Bn

and retired as a Captain in 1957. Remarkably, Bakansing has lived to see his great-great-great-granddaughter and of his 78 descendants, 72 are still alive. Bakansing lives near Lt Col John Cross and his story is told in John's book *Gurkhas at War*. It was John who arranged a visit to Bakansing's house on 28 March for him to be presented with his khada and certificate by Brigadier John and Majors Gopal and Gyan.

After the opening formalities were over old friends searched each other out, often not having seen each other for many years. Old stories were re-told, beer was drunk, delicious tipan-tapan and bhat was served until, late in the afternoon, good-byes had to be said. "See you at the next Durbar!" was heard many a time. All agreed what a wonderful occasion this had been. But, it was only possible with the generosity of those who had donated towards the Durbar costs and with the superb bandobast of Major Gopal Bahadur Gurung, the Durbar Co-ordinator and his first class committee.

Below Capt Birbahadur Thapa, renowned singer, dancer, Nepal Cup footballer and sometimes clerk enjoys the Durbar Brochure containing hundreds of photographs of men who had served from the 1950's onwards.

Jai Sixth! Jai Gorkha!



Capt Birbahadur Thapa



Major Gyan, Brigadier John, Capt Bhakansing Gurung, Major Gopal and Lt Col John Cross

Postscript. Sadly we received news that Captain Bakansing, mentioned in the article, died in Pokhara on 05 September 2013 in Pokhara.

Message From Colonel Of The Regiment 9th Gorkha Rifles

By Maj Gen AK Bhatt, SM, VSM

On behalf of all ranks of the 9th Gorkhas fraternity in India, I wish to convey our heartiest greetings and best wishes to all ranks, veterans and the families of the 9th Gurkha Rifles Regimental Association, United Kingdom and I pray to 'Maa Durga' to continue to shower her blessings on all of us.

I have taken over the 'Colonelcy' of 9th Gorkhas in July 2013 and it gives me immense satisfaction and joy to see that there is a regular contact between us and the 9th Gurkha Rifles Regimental Association, United Kingdom. I have very special and fond memories of my personal contact with the members of the Association in 1992 when I was there at Camberley for my Army Staff College. The affection and special care showered on me and my wife and daughter is fondly remembered by us all.

I take this opportunity to inform you all 'Burhos' that our Battalions including 32 Rashtriya Rifles and Regimental Centre are doing a commendable job in the varied roles assigned to them. This year 3/9 GR has made us proud by winning the Cambrian Patrol Competition in India and representing the Indian Army at Wales, United Kingdom where they won a Silver Medal.

The visit by Mrs Louise McKenna, daughter of Late Major W (Bill) Travers, MBE, who put in the special effort to



meet us in Delhi and visit our Regimental home at Varanasi in September last year is a fine example of our continued wonderful relationship.

I am also very grateful to Captain Bruce Roberts, ex Chairman of the Association who always makes that special extra effort to stay in touch with us. On behalf of the 9th Gorkha Rifles fraternity, I wish to convey our special thanks to him.

'JAI GORAKH'

'JAI HIND'

The British "Burhos" of the 9th Gorkha Rifles

By Capt Bruce Roberts Former Chairman of 9th GR Regimental Association

Re-printed from The Gorkha-2014 Journal of the Indian Army Gurkha Brigade by kind permission of Maj Gen Anil K Bhatt VSM, Colonel of the 9th Gorkha Rifles

We send warm greetings to all presently serving and past ranks of our Regiment.

Now, nearly 70 years after we had to depart from you all, the respect, admiration and affection which we hold for all things Gurkhas, the brilliant history and the high standards of the Regiment, remain undiminished. We are all better people for serving with the 9th Gorkha Rifles.

After forming an Association in 1947 of about 250 British Officers who served with the Regiment, we now are very few and quite old, but our sons and daughters, and even grandchildren, are keenly interested their father's service and all the Regiments' history. We continue to hold annual Reunions in the Gurkha Museum when about 50 people attend and enjoy a specially cooked curry lunch surrounded by reminders of all the glorious history of Gurkha Soldiers over nearly 200 years.

The Gurkha Museum in Winchester is a huge and growing record of the history. It is a very popular place for many

visitors, schools and serving soldiers including Gurkhas with the British Army. Many famous battles are depicted in paintings on the wall. Newsletters of the Regimental Association, War Diaries and books of Regimental History are available for those seeking information of their forbears. A large painting of the 1/9th on Hangman's Hill at Cassino is on display. The library has a number of books, written by Burhos, which tell tales of the unbelievable courage in the most arduous circumstances in campaigns all over the World. A special room displays many sets of medals of well-known British and Gurkhas members of the Regiment.

We take great pleasure in meeting anyone from the Regiment visiting England and those of us visiting the Regiment in India are given a huge welcome. We were delighted to meet the 3/9th entry for the Cambrian Patrol exercise this year before they went on to gain a silver medal. Being in touch with the Colonel of the Regiment through a very warm correspondence is greatly appreciated.

We are now also members of the British Army Gurkha Brigade Association and invited to attend many events. We take great pleasure in the event held every year in London when a wreath is laid in memory, in company with all Gurkha Regiments, for all those who gave their all in their service. They are not forgotten.

The 2013 Cambria Patrol - The 3/9th Gorkha Rifles Excels

By Capt Bruce Roberts (Former Chairman 9th Gurkha Rifles Regimental Association)

The Cambrian Patrol exercise, held in Wales for more than 50 years, is a supreme test of basic military skills, the Olympic test for Infantry Patrolling. It is a challenging test of skills and endurance in wild mountainous country and usually in tough weather conditions; internationally it is understood as the toughest test for the present day soldier. The event is held every year and is open to the British Armed Forces as well as Commonwealth and other international Armies, as well as some from Reserve Forces. In this year there were over 100 entries including 16 from countries overseas. The event is organised by HQ 160 (Wales Brigade) for HQ Land.

The teams have no prior knowledge of the exercise. They are tested and marked over a range of skills, such as comprehension of the ultimate object, navigation skills, obstacle crossing, recognition of aircraft, vehicles, equipment, helicopter drills, recce techniques, first aid and casualty handling and more, as well as completion within the set time.

The 3/9th Gorkha Rifles from the Indian Army, formerly the 3/9th Gurkha Rifles and of Chindit fame, represented the Indian Army after being exhaustively chosen through successive levels against over 350 infantry Regiments of the Indian Army under their Manager Captain Yumnam Romen Singh and Patrol Leader, Captain Singh Amit Dinesh.

They were awarded a Silver Medal and special mention for Navigation coming in third, 45 minutes before the deadline, having been the last of 16 in their group to be started. The sand and cloth models for the teams comprehension was considered outstanding and retained by the organisers as a model for 160 Brigade. They were also commended for their high spirits and boldness at the river crossing which six teams refused. Their survival skills were judged at 100% and all answers were correct at de-briefing and they brought out a detailed recce report and identified the enemy.

The team from the 3/9th Gorkha Rifles proved, once again, the Regiments' and Gurkha's high standards, evident throughout 200 years of history. I was delighted to meet the Team and wish them, on behalf of all former British Officers and families, every success

The 3/9th Gorkha Rifles is the second battalion of the 9th Gorkhas which has represented India in the Cambrian Patrol Exercise. The 4/9th Gorkha Rifles were awarded Gold in the same event in 2011. It is an outstanding achievement for the Regiment that two of the five Battalions have represented India so distinctively.

J'ai 9th



A Few Burmese Days

By Major John Patchett

With the recent increase in tourism in Burma, now known as Myanmar, imports of paperback novels in a variety of European languages have flooded the market stalls, along with the local delights of silk, cotton and lacquerware. Most prominent is George Orwell's *Burmese Days*, his first novel, which tells a grim and tragic tale of corruption, racism and the evils of empire. I am not sure if the marketing of this book is targeted as direct propaganda on behalf of the country's still military-influenced government or, more likely, it is thought to be a popular choice based just on the title. As a great fan of Orwell I, on the other hand, see an unintended irony, thinking ahead to his seminal work on the totalitarian state: *1984*. The Influence of some 'Big Brother' is hard to miss in Burma today but *1984* is not readily for sale there.

It was a long standing plan of ours to go there. My first, very brief visit was in 1979, when stationed in Brunei with the 10th Gurkhas. My main impressions were of overwhelming poverty and yet genuine hospitality and friendliness from the people on the street. The Regiment was formed in Burma and our mess silverware reflected this, with a huge replica of the Schwedagon Pagoda and some very large rose bowls.



My wife Durga had even stronger ties. Both sides of her family had settled there from Nepal. On her mother's side her great grandfather had enlisted there and been killed at Gallipoli, where my grandfather also served with the Royal Field Artillery, though, unsurprisingly, there is no record of them meeting. In 1942 her mother's family had joined the long retreat on foot through Assam and ended up in the town of Biratnagar in East Nepal. Durga's father enlisted in the Burma Rifles and then the Burma Regiment to fight the Japanese. At the end of the war he was unable to find any trace of his first wife and family and continued for a couple of years after Burmese independence in the Kachin Rifles. The new government did not suit him and he also ended up in Biratnagar, remarried and joined the Nepalese Army, then the police and ended up as Deputy Inspector General in Kathmandu. But the family always talked

about how Burma had once been a rich and fertile country, the rice bowl of South-East Asia.

In 1991 we renamed our new house in Kingussie 'Mandalay' but in retrospect Maymyo would have been more appropriate. Mandalay is rather a sprawling mass but Maymyo, once IO GR's home, is a hill station with character. We planned to follow Kipling's 'Road to Mandalay' but time and cost prevented us until this year. We wanted to see the mainstream accessible locations but also have the opportunity to visit some military sights. After much study we decided on Mountain Kingdom's Golden Trails of Burma, which included some easy walks as well as travel by rail, pony trap, buses, boats and surprisingly efficient local airlines. Perhaps the most important of the many books we read before we went was Peter Popham's *The Lady and the Peacock*. The battles fought and largely won by Aung San Suu Kyi so well illustrate the horrors the military dictatorship inflicted on a peaceful and progressive population. She is now an opposition Member of Parliament and hopefully will lead the country after the next elections in 2015, though the crushing hold by the Generals could still be brought back to bear.

Britain's occupation of Burma came about through three wars of conquest in the 19th century, provoked initially by Burmese raids on the frontier with India. There was fear of French expansion from Indo-China and there were also grounds for British economic exploitation. The Burmese kings practised a form of self-protective barbarism against potential rivals in their own family, which provided further justification for invasion. The different hill tribes in Burma rarely showed loyalty to the Burman rulers and this situation played into the British hands when they showed them favours, particularly to the Karens who soon took largely to Christianity, in the face of the Buddhism of the majority. During the Second World War the Burmese independence movement initially welcomed the Japanese but soon saw that they were less likely to grant them freedom than the British and changed sides. Although there was a well educated Burmese middle class they failed, unlike the Indians, to pick up the ideas of a liberal democracy and ultimately fell victim to their own people once more in the form of a ruthless military junta which has only slowly, and as a result of international pressure, given way to a form of democracy. On gaining independence in 1948 they never showed any interest in joining the Commonwealth and pursued an isolationist policy, with some help from China, Russia, India and Japan.

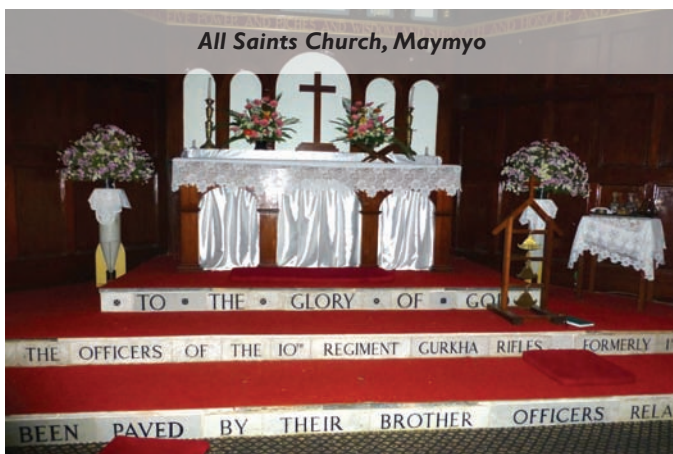
The junta did some useful things, as most dictatorships do, but not many; the roads are well maintained and there is little traffic outside the towns. Rangoon, now Yangdon, is really clean as big cities go, and motor cycles and scooters are banned, though Mandalay makes up for this. To make the pagoda area more attractive for tourists, the population of Old Bagan was moved out *en masse*. Fearing a possible US sea landing in Rangoon, the capital was relocated to a completely new, remote site at Naypyidaw, which contains nothing but government offices. As a tourist you can still only see a small part of the country. Only a quarter of homes have electricity and only one person in a hundred has internet access.

Our trip lasted sixteen days and our group of ten like minded souls were kept very busy throughout, thanks to our amusing and highly educated local guide. We went from Rangoon and the impressive golden might of the Schwedagon Pagoda to the hill station of Maymyo, now known as Pyin U Lwin. There as well as walks and pony trap rides, we took the train out to the stunning Goteik Viaduct.



Goteik Viaduct

This was built by Americans in 1900 and it is mentioned at length in Mike Calvert's *Fighting Mad*, concerning its strategic significance and how he was ordered not to blow it up and then was reprimanded for leaving it intact; you'll have to read the book to unravel this. We also visited All Saints Church which has 10 GR's dedication on the altar steps and many more mementoes of British units stationed there.



Next stop was Mandalay where we began the pagoda trail but also climbed Mandalay Hill to see the sunset and admire the 4/4GR memorial plaque, commemorating their assault in March 1945.

Here we saw the hold that Buddhism exerts on Burmese life. All boys have to spend some time as a monk but there is no pressure from either parents or the monastery as to the duration of this period. Our guide had only done a week, others had spent months and only left when they wanted to. They rise at dawn and have a small meal. They beg until about



Memorial, Mandalay Hill

eleven o'clock and then eat their second and last meal of the day before they study till nightfall. In Mandalay we watched 1,500 young monks stand in total silence for half an hour with their begging bowls before sitting down to eat. It was fairly scary. Scary in a different way were the villainous looking jade merchants who haggled with the itinerant miners, arriving with some huge chunks of the precious material.



Young Buddhist monks

We took an eight hour trip to Bagan by ferry and the might of the Irrawaddy was self evident. The thought of having to swim across made me feel rather faint but many had to and many drowned in the attempt, 70 years ago. Bagan is pagoda country and the scale and variety of this is amazing. Next came Kalaw, back in the hills, with a fairly large Nepali and Punjabi population. The walks from there were very pleasant in rolling countryside, admiring the lush vegetation and huge variety of crops, not to mention three rice harvests per year.

From Kalaw there was a relatively short hop to our final holiday spot at Inle Lake Resort. The French manager has been there 17 years and is married to a Burmese lady. He gave us many insights into the local way of life. Though poor the people try to give about a third of their earnings to the monastery in the form of gold leaf to hammer onto the Buddha images there, thus ensuring, perhaps, a favourable re-incarnation. Inle Lake is a very relaxing spot, with high speed boat travel out to a variety of walking trips and a feast of pagodas and markets. The hotel was extremely well run and after more than quite a lot of rice meals, the manager's "nouvelle cuisine" went down very well indeed.

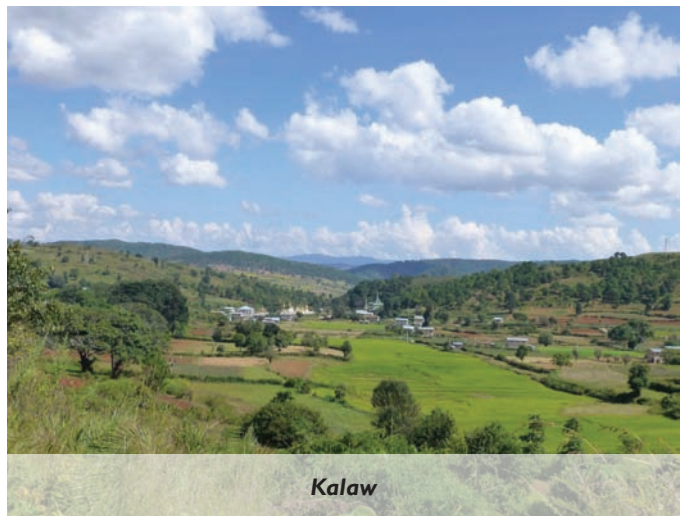
We had a final mad shopping dash round Rangoon and I was able to visit the Strand Hotel which was the only place open to foreigners when I visited in 1979. The quiet old place is now a hub of top end tourism. Though our new friends flew back home the next day Durga and I had made time to spend at the CWGC at Taukkyan.

There are 6,000 graves and 27,000 without graves remembered on the memorial walls. We had both been to Monte Cassino and I had experienced most of France and Flanders and particularly Thiepval but none of them had quite the same effect as Thaukkyan. The large number of nationalities represented is, perhaps, unique. We had three names to record and remember, two from 3/6GR killed in the Second Chindit Expedition and one from 10GR, also with a link to Morrison's Academy where I still serve in the CCF. Inle Lake was one highlight but this was certainly the other, though obviously very different. Our return to Kingussie coincided with the first winter snows, quite a contrast to thirty degrees plus in Burma.

For those wanting to visit Burma, go as soon as you can. Soon it will be overrun with tourists. It certainly isn't cheap but it's so worthwhile and utterly different. Above all the people, though still poor, are so very welcoming.



Sunset on the Irrawaddy



Kalaw



Inle Lake



Taukkyan CWGC



60th Anniversary of the 1953 Climb of Mount Everest

By David Mallam July 2013

(Editors Note: Sadly shortly after forwarding this article, David Mallam died on 7 July 2013)

'It is not the mountain we conquer but ourselves'

Sir Edmund Hillary 1989

Introduction

Charles Wylie was already engaged as organising secretary for the 1953 Everest Expedition before John Hunt was appointed leader. In the early pages of *The Ascent of Everest*, Hunt records that 'as a serving officer of the Brigade of Gurkhas; Charles had spent most of the war in a Japanese prison camp. That he had weathered this so well was doubtless due to his selflessness and sympathy for others, his faith and his cheerful disposition. We have to be grateful to him that the expedition's equipment was so meticulously prepared and documented, that every minor detail was thought of and provided for.' At this stage there was no mention of the further immense contribution he was yet to make to the success of the 1953 Expedition.



From George Band's Eulogy (with assistance from Stephen Goodwin) given at the Thanksgiving Service in a packed Sandhurst Chapel, 26 September 2007

This is the third extract from *Peaks and Troughs*, Charles's as yet unpublished autobiography, and allowed to be used by his family for the 10 GR B&K Journal/E-newsletter, to add to his stories of fighting in Malaya in 1940 and being a Jap POW on the Burma Road. I am very grateful to Alison and Jeremy who kindly allowed this, and grateful also to Mary Lowe and Dr Huw Lewis Jones, for allowing me to use the four photos from the recently published book *The Conquest Of Everest* by George Lowe and Huw Lewis Jones, that shows the original and superb photos taken by Lowe. All the other photos were taken by me on the 1993 Reunion.

Nepal Map, Arrival at Kathmandu

The first time at a new place is always exciting.

In 1993, ten days before the Everest team was due to fly to Nepal to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the Everest Climb, Charles, asked if I had meant it when I had offered to accompany him should the Gurkha escort not be able to come from Hong Kong. Looking across to Carolyn, Chappie Dawe's daughter, she generously though firmly nodded. Charles's doctor had advised that he must not go too hard or climb higher than ten thousand feet. These restrictions suited my unfit frame and idle nature well, and twelve days later I arrived at Lukla Airstrip to find Lord Hunt, Sir Edmund Hillary, Charles, Mary Lowe and one or two others in position in a most beautiful campsite, a field of blue Spring flowers and ahead of the trekking group. The potatoes by which the Sherpas survive, were brought to Nepal from the Peruvian High Andes (Alpaca Farmers), where those people also cannot live at that height without them. As did the Bougainvillea and hugely prolific Rhododendrons, the Milke Dande in East Nepal probably being the largest, and standing out in satellite pictures, but most of our British flowers were brought to this country by the Victorians.

The next day, led by Lady Hunt at over 80 years old, George Band, Mike Westmacott and their wives followed having replicated the 1953 walk in from Kathmandu, though this time from the road-head at Jiri. What a joyful reunion!

Lord Hunt

Arrival at Lukla Airstrip. No problem for the Russian helicopters, daunting for those in an aeroplane, and makes flying distinctly tense! There were several wrecks on the Strip, and of course we did not know what might have happened in the valley. The Katabolic wind was needed for landing during the first few hours of the day, and then the wind reversed and only takes-off were possible.

Ama Dablam

As the Team passed by this beautiful well known Mountain they remarked that it would never be climbed - it was, of course.

After a couple of days, the trekking group moved on to climb the Island Peaks, just short of Base Camp, whilst the main



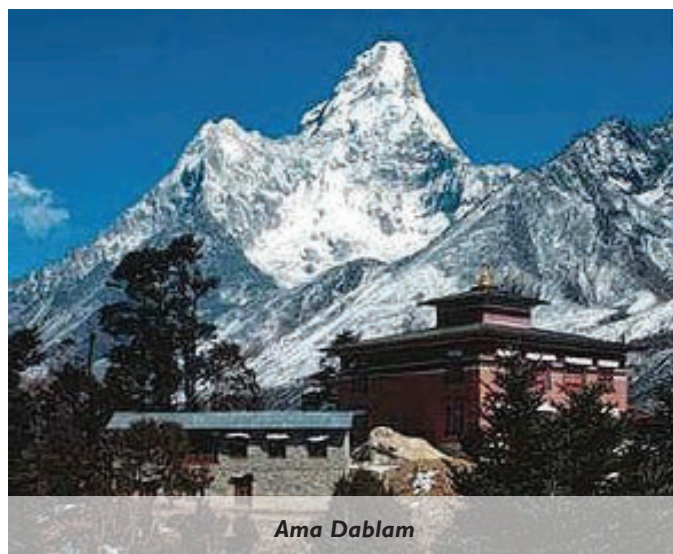
Ama Dablam

players, Hunt and Hillary moved by Helicopter to Thyanboche Monastery, and Kunje to meet the same Abbott from 1953 and visit the Hillary Schools and Medical Centre. Charles and I moved gently upwards, also visiting Kunje, including seeing the Yeti skull, and with Charles pointing out Ama Dablam (used in the well-known insurance advert, and which the 1953 team members considered could never be climbed) and other peaks, being feted all the way by climbing Sherpas and others, and even greeting a Japanese group in their own language, which caused quite a stir!

First View Of Everest From The Track Below Thyanboche

A long way still, Everest has the tip of the plume of cloud.

Charles was a most wonderful companion, full of knowledge, and I accompanied him to pay our respects to the Abbott (who I believe was acting Abbott in 1953) with the customary exchange of silk scarves. We shared the bivvy and I was aware of a fair amount of worrying (to me, not Charles) wheezing, but his 'puffer' seemed to work and we drifted up to about 13,000ft, me gazing in awe at the beauty of the mountains, and listening to Charles's descriptions of them and the Sherpa



Ama Dablam

people. We returned to Lukla, via a thriving Forestry Project, Namche Bazaar's weekly market, that included Yak meat and salt from Tibet, for a pleasant two days on the way back to Lukla. What a first visit for me! An excellent TV Documentary was made without intrusion.

Monastic Art At Thyanboche

The Monastery is in the centre, and a Yeti is shown at one o'clock. To the left and right are local villages and activities, and upwards on both sides the yaks, porters and climbers, until the not imposing Everest with its famous white plume of cloud. The detail is considerable and one should look at it carefully and long.

The Artist



The diminutive artist, with his mother and Carolyn at 5'2", was born deaf and dumb, something which filled his father with dismay as he would not be able to attend school or, perhaps as important, work in the potato fields. However the Abbot took him in and he was taught the skills of Monastic Art. We watched him at his work, sitting crossed legged on a deep south facing window ledge. He worked with the picture upside down and had two designs ready for sale (this for a well-deserved \$100, overall bringing in an incredible income for his family), and the other of village life and farming.

Everest - The Approach and Acclimatisation

As transport officer, and a fluent Urdu and Nepali speaker, Charles calmly undertook the mind-boggling task of marshalling the hundreds of porters and forty Sherpas without whom Hillary and Tenzing would not have reached the summit of Mount Everest. He was almost literally responsible for keeping the show on the road, both to and up the mountain, soothing porters' grievances and keeping their spirits up. In this he worked closely with Tenzing whom he had helped persuade to join the expedition as sirdar. Indeed, the

partnership between Tenzing and Wylie as they handled the Everest bandobast was probably as central to the expedition's success as the pairing of Tenzing and Hillary for the summit bid.

Imperturbable, modest and unfailingly polite, Charles really did fit the image of the quintessential English gentleman. Yet with his family's three generations of association with Nepal and its Gurkhas, his very gentleness might be said to have more of a Nepali quality than English. As team member Wilfrid Noyce, observed: "It would have been difficult to find two more gentlemanly military men to rule over us than Charles and John."

Ibid

One interesting point is that in 1953 there was no road into Kathmandu and all the gear came in using the cable railway. There were roads in the Kathmandu valley, the cars having also to use the Cable. Charles's Memoirs now tell his story.

It felt wonderful to be on the way at last. The cares and worries of the past months just fell away and we had ample time to enjoy the delights of a trek in Nepal. The weather was superb; hot but not too hot, and getting cooler the higher we rose. (Temperature decreases by 1°F every 300 feet climbed). It was spring time and many trees, shrubs and flowers were in bloom. The most spectacular blooms are rhododendrons, but sadly it was a little early for them. Sometimes whole hillsides are ablaze with their scarlet blooms. We were to see one such hillside just below Thyangboche monastery, the destination of our long trek from Kathmandu - an unforgettable sight.

At first we had to descend to cross the wide Sankosi river by a very solid bridge built high above the river to avoid the danger of it being swept away by floods during the monsoon. Bridges over the smaller rivers or streams which we were to cross later were usually hung from strong chains linking the banks. These suspension bridges, usually built by a Scottish engineering firm, were of course only built to carry a certain weight. If that was exceeded disaster could follow. One of the Swiss expeditions had relied too much on the solid chains for one bridge, when a large number of porters was on the bridge, it collapsed throwing the porters and their loads into the river. No one was hurt, I understand, but several loads were lost. In our case we made sure that there were never more on a bridge than we judged it could hold.

We were going across the grain of the country, that is, roughly eastwards while the rivers flowed south from the great east-west range of the Himalayas. So we had many rivers to cross and many a long pull uphill from the rivers, often a climb of several thousand feet. We had to average about ten miles every day, so depending on our progress we would try to camp for the night at the top of the climb from a river. In this way we would

get stupendous views over the lesser foothills to the great plain of northern India, and to the north to the massive white chain of white peaks stretching from one horizon to the other - a tantalising view of what was to come. East and west were the hills, which form the greater part of Nepal, and where most of the population live. Virtually every inch, it seemed, was meticulously cultivated by terraced fields, strips of land hewn out of the hillsides into level patches, often only a few feet wide along the borders of which "juls", or channels had been laboriously and carefully dug so that water could be diverted from the nearest stream or spring and fed down through the terraces. In this way even in the dry season, fields could be thoroughly watered and a good harvest ensured.

The hills were dotted with the white or ochre spots, houses where the farmers lived. Sometimes there would be a village, often strung out along a ridge where there was comparatively level ground. From these houses and villages the inhabitants would sally forth as soon as it was light, the men folk to tend their fields and buffaloes and goats, the women to go the nearest spring to fetch clean water. The children too were put to work almost, it seemed, as soon as they could walk and carry a load or look after the buffaloes and goats with a small stick and shrill shouts delivered with great authority.

While on the mountain, Wylie received news of the birth of a son, the telegram being forwarded over the Indian radio link to Namche Bazaar and then on by runner. The head of the radio station added his own note: "Dear Sir, I am transported with exultation at this wonderful news. May God grant you a similar blessing at least once a year. Please pay the bearer one rupee baksheesh."

These were the people from which we recruited our Gurkha soldiers. Theirs was a hard life where every one had to pull their weight to eke sufficiency from this land. It was not hard to see how a lifestyle such as theirs produced the fine people who have become known the world over for their excellent qualities. Everyday we would see them hard at work in their fields or at some other farm related task. There would always be a smile and a cheerful greeting, and never a grumble or moan at their lot. They knew hardship and took it in their stride, thinking nothing of it.

For me, speaking their language was an added bonus. When we rested or were in camp, crowds of inquisitive villagers would cluster round and we would exchange news. Sometimes someone would have a relative in a Gurkha regiment and a link would be forged. Did I know Balbahardur? "Well, he's my brother-in-law and he hasn't written for ages. Can you tell him when you get back to write and soon!" Often there were ex-servicemen in the crowd, who would insist on standing to attention when they spoke to me. Dressed as they were in shabby, worn

out old clothes, most still proudly wore their regimental badge and often medals too.

The Hills are populated by different ethnic groups or tribes, each in its own particular region. For instance, we passed through one region where the Sunwar tribe predominate. This led us into the Rai tribe's country. Although all hill tribes are basically similar, it was possible to notice slight differences, for instance in stature, between the Sunwars and the Rais, the latter being generally shorter than the Sunwars. It is from these and from the other ethnic groups living in the Hills that Gurkhas are recruited. It is not until they have been enlisted that they come under the broad term of Gurkha. Ask any civilian hillman if he is a Gurkha and he will not understand you. The term Gurkha has been used to denote Nepalese soldiers ever since the Nepal wars of 1814-15, when the soldiers of the army of the ruler of the Gurkha district in Central Nepal, Prithi Narayanan Shah opposed the army of the East India Company. At that time there was no such country as Nepal, only a number of small principalities. Prithi Narayanan's soldiers were known as the Gurkhalis because they came from Gurkhas dissent. They fought with great gallantry, and so won the respect of the opposing British and Indian forces that, when the second Nepal War ended, the Treaty of Segauli demarcated the boundaries of what is now Nepal, as an independent country. Many of Prithi Narayanan's soldiers volunteered to serve in the British Indian army and the first two regiments of Gurkhas were formed.

My companions in the second convoy were Michael Ward, our doctor, and Griffith Pugh our physiologist. "Griff", as Pugh was known, was from the Medical Research Council and was an authority on high altitude medicine. Our expedition was an excellent opportunity for him to find out at first hand how the body reacted when subjected to strenuous exercise at altitude. An enthusiastic scientist, he had brought with him special equipment for testing us in varying situations. In the basic test Ward and I would have to get up a stretch of steep hillside as fast as we could and then blow into special bags until our lungs were empty. This test would be repeated at different altitudes to give Griff the data he needed. Our approach march was of course at a comparatively low altitude, so I doubt if our results were of much value to the expedition, but Pugh continued his tests after we had begun the ascent of Everest and his conclusions and advice were of considerable value to John Hunt as he made his plan for the assault on the summit.

We were glad to have several Sherpas with us with experience of an approach march. These 'old hands' would take charge when we arrived at camp, organising the younger Sherpas who soon learned what had to be done to get our large party fed and happily bedded down for the night. We three 'sahibs' of the climbing team, were given priority treatment, especially in the mornings when we would be woken by a smiling sherpa passing a welcome mug of tea through the slim entrance of our

tents. Tenzing had detailed a Sherpa, specially chosen by him as an "orderly" for each of the climbing team. Mine was Nimmi, a diminutive lad, rather older than the others, a distant relative of Tenzing. "I've detailed the best one for you" he said. Nimmi certainly looked after me very well, my tent was always one of the first up, and inside my lilo was blown up with my sleeping bag neatly laid out. Soon after, as soon as Kirken, the deputy cook (Thondu, the first cook, was with the first party) had firewood and water had been boiled, along came Nimmi with a much needed mug of tea with biscuits to refresh me after the day's march. Thus revived I would go down to the stream, if there was one nearby to wash and shave, or I would take a stroll over to the cooking place and have a chat to the Sherpas and the Gurkha NCO to make sure the precious "treasure" boxes were safely under guard. The small army of porters would have dashed off very soon after arrival to the nearest village to buy their food and find somewhere to sleep. For this I had given them an advance of pay before we left Kathmandu.

Mike Ward, the doctor might have a few minor cases to deal with, Griff Pugh would write up his notes and I my letter/diary. Some members of our team kept daily dairies. I did too, but used mine as letters sent off every few days by the dak (mail) runner to Kathmandu addressed to Diana.

Darkness falls easily in Nepal and fairly quickly, so after supper, perhaps of chicken and rice, we would turn in contentedly to our tents. And so to bed as Sam Pepys would have said.

In this pleasant way we passed over the middle Hill area, and crossed the Lamura Bhanjyang (pass) 11,000 feet into the upper Hill or Himalayan area. Here we entered much more forested country. The middle Hills area, heavily populated, had long since been denuded of trees to provide firewood and also to free forest land for cultivation. The Sherpa districts of Solu and Khumbu which we were now entering were more sparsely populated and trees, indeed forests, still existed in many areas. It was a delightful walk from the Lamjura down to Junbesi, one of the larger villages in Solu, the lower of the two Sherpa districts which we had to pass through to reach the upper districts of Khumbu.

A steep pull up from Junbesi brought us to the crest of the ridge bordering the Dudh Kosi river, which drains the Everest area. On the ridge was the monastery of Taksindu near which we camped. Up till then the local people had been Hindus, but we were now in Buddhist country, and evidence of their faith was to be seen everywhere. Prayer flags fluttered from bamboo poles at strategic points, for instance passes and on individual houses to keep away evil spirits and to praise Buddha with the prayer inscribed on each flag "Om mani pemme hum, (Hail, jewel in the lotus)."

With wind power, - that free gift from the gods - harnessed in this way to ensure safety from evil, so is that

other source of life giving energy, water power, so freely available in the mountains, harnessed likewise for the same purpose through prayers written and secured inside prayer wheels, which revolve continuously as they are placed in streams. Often very large prayer wheels, some eight to ten feet high, and therefore containing a great quantity of prayers are erected above the water and driven by a water wheel ingeniously connected to the prayer wheel. Each time a prayer wheel turns the prayers inside it go to heaven automatically.

Along the tracks were mani walls built of stones inscribed with prayers. These were in the middle of the path, and it was important to pass them on the left, rather than the right. Prominent boulders too, some 20 feet or more in height, would be covered all over with prayers carefully carved out of the rock by the local stone mason.

Then there were monasteries, massive buildings rightly lordling it over the surrounding houses of the local people. At the end of our trek from Kathmandu we were due to camp for a few days on the meadow outside Thyangboche monastery, the most important in Khumbu. We were invited inside, so I will describe that monastery rather than Taksindu, were we were only in transit.

Sherpa youths all have to do a spell as monks in their monastery and the girls in a nunnery so it is not surprising that Sherpas and Sherpanis are very devout, taking their religion very seriously. Many return to their monastery or nunnery on a more permanent basis.

Many Sherpas, whether they have been lamas (monks) or not carry hand prayer wheels which they revolve as they walk. These are usually beautifully carved and painted with a short length of cord, weighted with a stone to help the wheel to turn easily.

As we continued next day down to the Dudh Kosi river we joined the track to hill districts and towns where trade was carried on. We would meet Khumbu Sherpas carrying heavy loads of salt from Tibet to exchange for rice or household implements not available in Khumbu. In 1953 most Sherpas were still pigtailed, the plaited 'tail' being wound round the top of the head, or hanging loose down the back. They wore a heavy dark coloured garment which wrapped both ways over the chest and hung like a dressing gown to below the knees. If the weather was warm enough it was customary to take one arm out of the sleeve and let it hang loose thus exposing a naked shoulder. The garment was held in place at the waist by a long rope - woollen if I remember rightly - wrapped round many times. Not only was the rope useful for many purposes, but also held one or other of the wrap-overs to form a pocket. Sometimes a passer by would by way of greeting roll a large baked potato out of this pocket and present it to us as a gift. Potatoes are one of the main crops in Khumbu. They are usually carried when on the

move as a form of reserve ration. They would have been baked, taken hot from the oven, opened so that butter and salt could be inserted then closed again, put into the 'pocket' described above and kept warm through body heat! The result was delicious!

Moving up the valley we crossed the boundary between Solu and Khumbu, the higher Sherpa district. The bulk of our expedition sherpas came from Khumbu. Previous expeditions had found that Sherpas from Khumbu were better than those who came from Darjeeling, at 7,000ft. Khumbu's lowest main village is Namche Bazaar to 10,000 ft; most of the other villages are above this level. Having been born and bred at these heights they can obviously climb to great heights more easily than people - such as us - who live nearer sea level.

Moreover in 1953, sherpas were entirely unsophisticated, living as they were exactly as their forebears had for centuries.

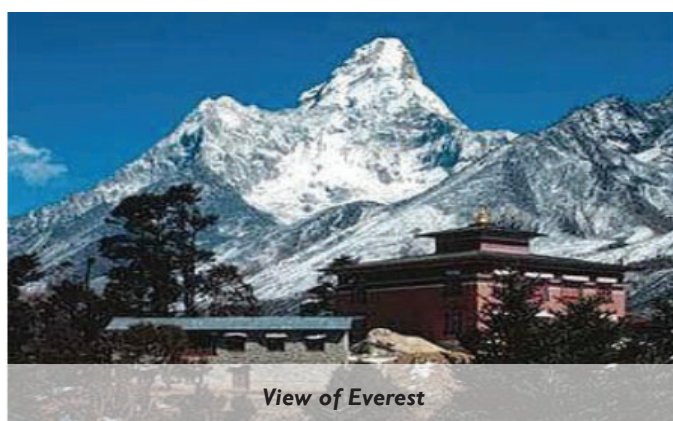
There were no roads, railways or airstrips, so they were cut off from life as it was lived in the rest of Nepal. The writ of the Nepalese Government did not stretch as far as Khumbu; there were no schools, no hospitals and communications were rudimentary, just a single radio link with Kathmandu. Everything to be brought in to Khumbu had to be carried on someone's back.

Charles Crossing

The track followed the river for some way until it was joined by the Imja river, which flows from the glaciers south of Everest and its satellite mountains. At this junction there were three rickety log and bamboo bridges - temporary ones which would be washed away during the monsoon and rebuilt afterwards. The Scottish engineering firm which had built most of the suspension bridges in the rest of Nepal had clearly not penetrated as far as this.

First View Of Everest

As you climb up the steep tract to Namche Bazaar, you see Everest for the first time. It is still 12 miles away, and not as yet imposing, but the telltale plume of cloud is often to be seen.



View of Everest

Once over the bridges we tackled the steep 2,000 ft hillside up to Namche Bazaar, the 'capital' of Khumbu. Half way up we rested and had our first view of Everest. Great excitement, but in fact it is a disappointing sight. Only the top few hundred feet can be seen, peeping over the massive Lhotse - Nuptse wall, which hides the rest of Everest. Nevertheless we photographed our summit as conscientiously as any tourist. Sherpas, like the Tibetans, are shrewd business men with an eye for the main chance and a tea house has now been built there for tourists doing the Everest trek to have a refreshing mug of coffee while they take their photos.

Namche Bazaar, Water Wheel

"Om Mani Pemmi Hum"



Namche Bazaar

We passed through the metropolis of Namche without stopping, except to note the huge water-driven prayer wheel and the shops in the bazaar which displayed a fascinating array of local and Tibetan wares.

I rose early from this our final night of the march, and collected the Gurkha NCOs and senior Sherpas. I wanted to check all the loads to make sure they arrived as planned at Thyangboche and none 'disappeared' to some Sherpa's home at the last moment. We positioned ourselves where we could not be seen from the camp site, in such a way that every porter would have to pass me so that I could check his tally number and his load number against the entry in my load book. I need not have bothered, every load was there!

So on we went, down again to the Imja river, across it and up the long steep 2,000 foot climb to Thyangboche at about 12,500 ft. On the right, as we approached the archway to the monastery meadow, the red rhododendrons, a complete hillside of them were coming into bloom, a truly staggering sight. The monastery itself, surrounded by houses for the monks, is on a knoll at the forward edge of the meadow, high above the river, 2,000 ft below. To the right and the left the hillsides fall foripitously to the river.

All around, in every direction was a stupendous array of high peaks. Everest itself, some 12 miles away, still peeped shyly over the vast Lhotse-Nuptse wall. Much nearer the beautiful and spectacular peak of Ama Dablam, thrusting its tilted tower to the right side, it seemed, directly above us. Further south was another lovely peak, Kangtega; with the monastery's chorten in the foreground it made an awe inspiring sight. Further south along the mountain chain bordering the Imja river was Thamserku, the colmelations of its icy ridge so delicate that they became transparent in the early morning sunlight. To the west, across the valley another spectacular peak, Taweche, rose above Phorcha, the village of Sen Tenzing, who Eric Sipton and his companions nick named "The foreign Sportsman" completing the circle of those peaks, all above 20,000 feet was the white wall of Kwangde and its ridge, beyond Namche. John Hunt wrote "my senses were intoxicated by the fantastic surroundings; Thyangboche must be one of the most beautiful places in the world. It provides a grandstand beyond comparison for the finest mountain scenery that I have ever seen whether in the Himalaya or elsewhere."

Thyangboche Breakfast

In 1993, our Sirda looked after us immaculately.

The surroundings he refers to include the alp or meadow beside which the monastery stands and the rhododendrons, silver birches and alpine flowers which grow round it.

The Buddhist religion forbids the taking of life in any form, even a fly. The area round the monastery therefore is in effect an animal sanctuary. Imonal pheasant (called Damphe by the Nepalese) strutted around like chickens, small deer, which I took to be Sika, grazed unconcerned by the human hubbub going on at the other side of the meadow. Later the acting Abbot or High Lama of the monastery - the actual Abbot was away possibly in Tibet - told us that some time ago a yeti had come down to the meadow and had basked in the sun on a prominent rock which was pointed out to us. Seeing a Yeti brings bad luck, so the monks had made as much noise as they could with the monastery horns, conchas and cymbals until the beast had shambled off. All this was confirmed by the other monks for whom we gathered seeing a yeti was no exceptional experience. Luck or no luck, we would have been glad to a yeti ourselves and form our own opinion on the Abominable Snowman, but none appeared while we were there. In fact to avoid bad luck and ensure our safety on the mountain the acting Abbot announced his intention of blessing our party before we left for Everest. Such a ceremony had been carried out at the Rongbuk monastery on the other, Tibetan, side of Everest for some of the pre-war expeditions attempting the mountain from the North.

During this visit to the acting Abbot we had the opportunity of seeing the inside of the monastery. To reach it one had to enter the gate through the wall of the outer courtyard where the unique Mani Rimdu festival ritual dances are carried out in the autumn each year. The courtyard is normally bare. Ahead a wide flight of steps leads to the entrance of the monastery proper. Inside is a huge room with an immense figure of Buddha sitting cross legged, which was beautifully painted in gold and other colours. All around were shelves for the library of holy books printed in Tibet. The outer covers of all these books were pieces of wood, one for the front and one for the back held by cloth tapes wrapped round and tied. Each page is hand printed on locally made paper in Tibetan writing. Obviously an incredible amount of work must have gone into each book and there appeared to be hundreds if not thousands of them. I imagine they are produced by the monks at one of the many monasteries which abound in Tibet, but I have no information of this.

This large hall must have been the "classroom" for the novitiate monks. There were no schools in Khumbu then and the only education available was provided by Thyangboche monastery. So all the young monks would be enrolled as novitiates and would be taught how to read and write Tibetan script, and at the same time learn the Buddhist theology contained in their 'school' books. It was no wonder that the sherpas, who had come a few generations before from Tibet were such devout pupils. This is the reason too that the Sherpa language, which is basically Tibetan, is the language of Khumbu rather than Nepali, the *lingua franca* of Nepal, which is for the Sherpas their second language.

Back on the balcony overlooking the courtyard we were served Tibetan tea. This is flavoured with rancid butter which many Westerners find unappetising to say the least. But regarded as soup it can be tasty and enjoyable.

On the meadow there was much going on. I had paid off the 350 porters, who were already on their way back to Kathmandu, leaving us with 35 sherpas we had engaged for the actual climbing on Everest. These 35 were now engaged on reorganising loads for the next phase of our preparations - acclimatisation.

This phase, an essential part of John Hunts overall plan, was designed to get everyone, the climbing party and Sherpas, acclimatised up to the height of 21,000 ft. When this level of acclimatisation had been achieved we would all move up to Mount Everest and establish an Advanced Base Camp about 21,000 ft without resort to our precious stack of oxygen.

During the acclimatisation phase we were to split into three parties to climb and explore in three different areas for one week. We would then return to Thyangboche, rest for a day or two and reorganise for a second week with three parties differently composed to climb to different areas.



Trekking Gp With Gurkhas On Hill Behind

Members of the 1953 Everest expedition on the first day of our approach march. Back row from left to right: Stobart, Pugh, Noyce and Evans. Middle Row: Band, Ward, Hillary, Pugh, Boudillon and Evans, Front Row: Gregory, Low, Hunt, Tenzing and Wylie. (George Lowe Collection)

The party I was with for the first week was made up of Ed Hillary, Wilfrid Noyce and Michael Ward. We continued up the valley to the point where it is joined by the chola Khola. Here we turned to the west and traversed over pleasant high pastureland to the glacier from which the Shola Khola flows. Using the track along the ridge of the side moraine, we reached the glacier's source and then took to a broken rock and snow slope, pitching camp at about 18,000 ft near the col which leads over into the next valley.

Next day we climbed an attractive rock spire which we named "Pointed Peak" to the south of the col. It was about 19,000 ft - a suitable height for our oxygen trial - one of the objective of our acclimatisation. It proved to be an excellent and enjoyable climb. At first I doubted if the oxygen was working at all. Oxygen is completely invisible, just like ordinary air, so I felt I might be just breathing air. But then I looked round and saw the superb view. Range upon range of snow clad peaks. Up to then, without oxygen, the view had made no impression

on me at all. then I remembered being told that oxygen enlivens the senses. Here was the proof, my faith in oxygen was restored! With Wilfrid, a rock climber *par excellence* in the lead, we completed the climb, which we were interested to learn later was a first ascent. As Nepal had only opened its frontiers to mountaineers three years before, virtually every peak in Nepal was still unclimbed - a mountaineer's paradise!

Back at camp, Ed Hillary, who had been forced to remain at Thyangboche with a sore throat and a temperature, had arrived, fully recovered.

Crossing the col in the morning we descended to a side valley of the Duoh Kosi, at the head of which we camped for our attempt on a fine snow peak to the west. this, we estimated was about 20,000 ft and was called Kang Cho.

This was a more strenuous climb than Pointed Peak, involving a lot of kicking and stamping out steps in the snow. At the top of the main snow slope there was a steep, almost vertical chimney. Having seen photographs of "Hillary's Horror" - the snow and ice chimney on the summit ridge of Everest - it looks much like it. Ed however had little difficulty in leading the 'horror' on Kang Cho, and were soon on the ridge leading to the summit - another first ascent. This was the first time I had climbed with Ed Hillary; and I was most impressed with his technical skill and his stamina.

The view was tremendous, dominated by two of the highest peaks in the world Gyachungkang and Cho Oyu, both about 26,000 ft. Beyond Cho Oyu we could see the Nangpa La, the highest trade route in the world used by Sherpas and Tibetans for trading between Tibet and Khumbu.

On the descent my left crampon suddenly broke. We were all wearing our high altitude boots and because of their bulk we had to get crampons larger than those we wore on our ordinary climbing boots. There had not been time before we left England to fit everyone's crampons to their respective boots. So this had had to be done by the local blacksmith in Namche Bazaar, and several, not only mine - broke under the strain. Fortunately for me the descent was not difficult and I got down quite happily with one crampon.

We returned to Thyangboche after a very happy week's climbing. We felt thoroughly fit, well acclimatised and glad to have had the opportunity of climbing together - a necessary prerequisite before attempting Everest. The rope is not just a safety measure it also forms an invisible bond between those joined together by it. The two other parties returned to Thyangboche at about the same time as we did. Both had had similar experiences to ours, climbing virgin peaks exploring new areas and knitting together as climbing teams. Thondu prepared a gargantuan meal which we ate round a huge camp fire as we related our stories.

The second party I was with was made up of Charles Evans, Alf Gregory and Tenzing. This time we followed the Imja Khola to the glacier it flows from, the Imja glacier, and camped on the moraine below the peak we intended to climb, which Evans had named the Island Peak as it was surrounded by a sea of ice. This was another virgin, a 20,000 footer. It proved to be a comparatively easy climb in snow without special problems. We put a second camp about half way up to the top. From our tents we had wonderful views of the peaks across the Imja glacier, unnamed, unclimbed and even unmapped, mostly about 21 - 22,000 ft with the beautiful ice fluting which is so typical of Himalayan peaks of this height.

This was the first time I had climbed with Tenzing and I was glad to see how familiar and confident and competent he was with rope work and his ice-axe. It was clearly right that he should have been included in the climbing team. Not only was it right and proper that the leader of the Sherpas, on whom we were relying so heavily, should be distinguished in this way but Tenzing was obviously going to be an asset as a climber, especially with his experience at extreme altitude.

We returned to Thyangboche and had two days of rest, which in fact were very busy ones. We were about to leave Thyangboche and move to Everest. Nothing could be left behind. Here the inventory proved its value. Everything

was repacked according to our lists, so it could be found again easily on the mountain. I was busy with Tenzing engaging 100 local Sherpa porters for the carry to Base Camp; Johnny and James Morris sent their despatches off to the *Times*. Noyce got busy with his boot repair outfit and patched up any boots needing attention. John Hunt organised the provision of new crampons for high altitude boots, a crisis solved amazingly effectively by our supporters in the UK and India so that new crampons arrived in time for the climb at altitude when our high altitude boots were worn. Thondu the cook was sorting out food bought locally for the Sherpas. Tom Stobart and his assistant Sherpa were packing film reels, those already used for dispatch back to the UK and new reels to be shot on Everest. Gregory was doing the same with still film. George Band was dividing the ration boxes, our Army Compo boxes for the low camps and our special high altitude packs, designed by Griff Pugh, for the higher camps. It was a scene of purposeful activity tinged with an air of excitement at what was to come.

In the morning we packed up our tents and moved up the valley past Pangboche and Pheriche to the Khumbu glacier. Leaving the glacier snout to our right we took to the Ablation valley which separates the glacier from the mountain side. A little way up a small lake had formed and low stone walls had been built showing that this had been the site of the Swiss Base Camp for their pre-monsoon expedition of 1952. It had also been used by Hillary's second acclimatisation party which had been sent ahead to choose a site for Base Camp and reconnoitre a route up the icefall. Although we were now well above tree level where even grass hardly grew, it was a delightful camp site.

During the night, to our surprise, there was a heavy snowfall. We awoke to find four inches of snow. We had not expected snow falls as early as this and for once we were unprepared. Although climbers and expedition sherpas were equipped with snow goggles, the 100 sherpa porters were not. Something had to be done, and quickly as snow blindness can set in fast. Tom Stobart rose splendidly to the occasion. Using disused cardboard boxes and string he improvised temporary goggles for all and a crisis was averted. He knew from his antarctic experience that only a small aperture is needed to enable a man to walk safely. While the material in which the aperture is made can exclude all other light, so using cardboard for side protection over both eyes. He made small slits through which the wearer could see all he wanted. Two holes for a string to be tied round the head and "Bob's your Uncle!"

Thus protected our long caravan took to the glacier and made for Base Camp. We had of course seen pictures of the extraordinary ice pinnacles on the Khumbu glacier, but we were still astounded when we saw them for ourselves. They were huge, up to 100 feet high, quite dwarfing us as we picked our way through them. If these seracs, for that is what they are, were as high as this below

Base Camp, what would seracs be on, say, the Lhotse Face glacier some 8,000 feet higher up, we wondered. Quite soon we came to a flat, open part of the glacier and there were tents, a flag, and Hillary, Band, Lowe, Bond and Westmacott. They had found this eminently suitable site for Base Camp. It was large enough to take all the tents we might put up there, it was close to the foot of the Icefall. The start of the actual mountain and it was, to some extent at least, sheltered from strong winds by large seracs.

When the porter carrying the tree-trunk which we had used as a flagpole at Thyangboche arrived we erected it and unfurled the Union flag.

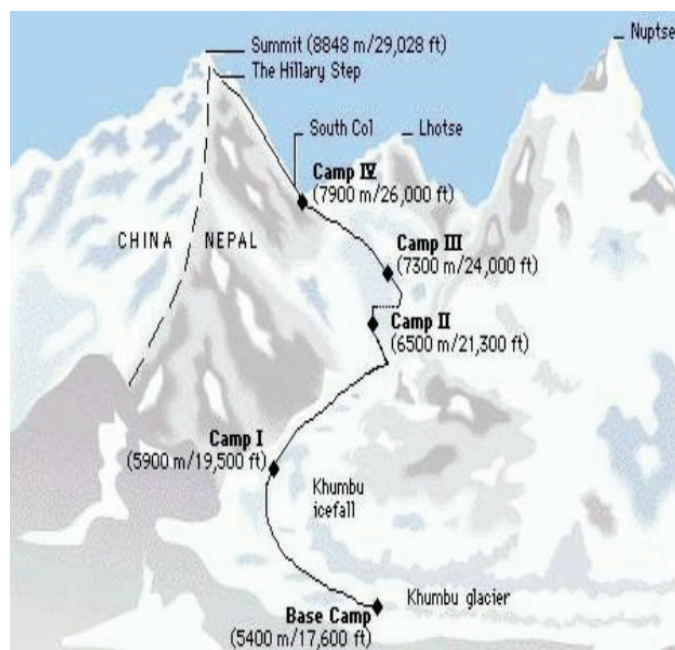
Meanwhile our expedition sherpas seized the loads they were concerned with as they were brought in, and soon our little encampment began to take on the aspect of a small village. Two large tents formed the nucleus - one for the Sherpas and the other for the team members - each of these was used as a community centre and also as a Mess tent, for eating our meals. Most important was Thondu's cook house, a rather ramshackle affair made up not only of a tent but also of an assortment of tarpaulins. Wood piles, ration boxes and other paraphernalia, which despite its appearance used to produce endless mugs of tea and meals on demand at all times, the expedition owes a great debt to the tireless Thondu and his deputy, Hirken, and their assistants.

Our approach march was over, but before we could concentrate on the next phase, the Icefall, other matters had to be attended to. First I paid off the 100 Khumbu porters, who scampered off delighted with their pay, mugs of tea, and their improvised goggles. They would all be back in their own homes before nightfall. Then there was a yak who we had brought with us to provide us with fresh meat on the hoof, as it were. We knew it could not be slaughtered by the Sherpas, so we had brought a rifle to do the deed ourselves. George Lowe performed this unpleasant task quickly and efficiently while the Sherpas looked on and indicated this disapproval with much tut-tutting. Once the poor animal was killed, however the Sherpas had no qualms about eating its meat. A yak is a big animal and we were assured of meat for all four of us (35 sherpas and 13 team members) for some time to come. Refrigeration was no problem; there were crevasses galore to provide deep freeze.

That night, after a beef steak supper, we slept soundly. We had arrived at the start line.



Everest - The Climb



Our route to the summit is shown in this Indian Air Force photograph. The three great peaks of the the massif, Everest, Lhotse and Nuptse, together with their high connecting ridges, enclose a basin that Mallory named The Western Cym. The assault was made up the Lhotse Face, to the saddle of the South Col, where the route swings to the left. Our staging camps ranged from Base at about 18,000 ft, to a final tent, Camp IX, alone on the ridge at 27,900 ft. (George Lowe Collection)

This, I believe is the right place to explain John Hunt's overall plan for the climb now about to begin. It fell into three phases. First, the establishment of an Advanced Base at about 21,000 ft, the height to which we were all now acclimatised, which therefore was the maximum height at which we could live without physical deterioration or altitude sickness. This phase meant making a safe route up the icefall and ferrying some eight tons of stores up to the Advanced Base, Camp 4, which was to be our 'home' for the rest of the expedition.

The second phase was to climb the 4,000 ft Lhotse face, traverse across to the South Col at 26,000 ft and lift some 700 lbs of stores to the Col, enough for two summit attempts each by two climbers with their support parties to live for the period of the attempts plus a few extra days in case bad weather or other emergency caused delays or changes of plan.

The third phase was the actual summit attempts, one from the south Col using the new closed circuit oxygen sets, as yet untried at high altitude and, if that attempt failed a second attempt using the old, well tried but weaker oxygen system from a camp to be established as high as possible above the South Col.

That was the plan set out by John Hunt in England, which we were now about to implement. The climb had, in fact, already started. Ed Hillary's second acclimatisation party had been sent, not to another area, like the other parties, but up the Khumbu glacier to reconnoitre and make a route up the icefall. By doing this, much valuable time would be saved for the whole expedition.

Going ahead of the main party, Ed and his group, George Lowe, George Band and Michael Westmacott had found a relatively safe route up the icefall and had begun to make it safe. While the rest of the expedition were arriving at Base Camp, they had been fixing bridges across the bigger crevasses, using either sections of our aluminium ladder or tree trunks which had been cut from the forests 6-7000 ft below and carried up by the Sherpas. Ed's party had also been cutting steps and fixing ropes in the more difficult places.

At the very top of the icefall Hillary had made a brilliant ascent of a vast vertical ice block; bigger than a house, which had not begun to break up as the glacier moved slowly downwards. A rope ladder, had been fixed up to make it climbable by laden Sherpas. This ladder was a gift from the Yorkshire Ramblers and very useful it proved.

Michael Westmacott, who had been an officer in the Royal Engineers during the war, had the rather thankless task of putting the bridges into position and maintaining them thereafter. Every bridge had to be checked virtually every day for the duration of the rest of the expedition in case the movement of ice had either buckled the bridge or opened the gap further causing the bridge to drop into the crevasse below. The route up the icefall was our lifeline and it was essential to keep it open.

Beyond the final ice block, mentioned above, the going was easier, leading to the Western Cym. This is the name given to the high level valley glaciated and snowfilled, between Everest on one side and Nuptse on the other. It was about a mile long, sloping gently up to Lhotse, the 28,000 ft peak - the 4th highest in the world, - at the end of the Cym.

Although the route through the icefall was made as safe as we could make it, the icefall is always a dangerous place. Because of the huge weight of ice coming down from the great mountains above the Cym the glacier, moving for a glacier, quite fast, is squeezed through the comparatively narrow exit at the lower end of the Cym. As it moves out of the Cym it falls about 2,000 ft down to the Khumbu glacier, breaking up into great chunks of ice, which themselves get broken up into smaller chunks as they continue to move downwards. At the same time cracks, or crevasses, open up as the ice moves over its rocky floor.

It is impossible to tell when a block, or serac, might crash down, or when a crevasse might open. Once, a crevasse started to open under the tents of Camp 2, which

was half way up the icefall. The climbers who were sleeping there moved out pretty fast!

The ferrying of loads up the icefall was organised so that every day two or three ropes of two or three Sherpas, each rope led by a member of the climbing teams would carry loads up to the Cym. Camp 3 was set up at the near end of the Cym, just beyond the top of the icefall. Depending on the time and weather, loads could be dumped at Camp 3 if necessary and ferried on to Camp 4 later. Camp 3 could also be used for ferry teams to spend the night if they were too late to return to Base Camp.

The first time I went up the icefall I took three Sherpas with me, for one of whom this was his first experience of serious mountaineering. As we passed a pretty large crevasse his sleeping bag, which must have been rather badly secured slipped off his main load and plummeted far down into the crevasse. A sleeping bag is a very important item of one's equipment when camping out on snow and ice, so I decided it had to be retrieved. Not surprisingly, the sleeping bag owner agreed and readily volunteered to be lowered down to fetch it. The other two Sherpas and I then carefully lowered him a full 60 ft into the void until he could grasp the sleeping bag and joyfully give us the signal to haul him up. Even with three of us pulling it was quite an effort, but finally we got him up, none the worse for his adventure, and vowing to secure his sleeping bag properly in future.

Some time later I was approached by a young Sherpa who was not a member of our Sherpa team but was nevertheless helping Thondu in the cook house. He said he badly wanted to be a proper climbing Sherpa, so could I take him up the icefall please? He was so insistent that I relented, and had him properly kitted out by Tenzing. All went well next day, he carried his load up to Camp 3, and we began the descent back to Base Camp. He was in the middle, with me on one end of the rope and an experienced Sherpa on the other. As we were descending I, as leader, was at the rear. When we came to the first log bridge, I was horrified to see him when he was half way across, lose his balance and fall straight into the deep crevasse. We were naturally well belayed at each end of the rope, so his fall was stopped with him dangling in mid air above the abyss. We then had to pull him out. I must have pulled harder than the Sherpa on the other side of the crevasse as he came over to my side. I was then left with his dead weight to pull up 60 ft over the lip of the crevasse. With the rope biting into the snow and ice, I found this quite a job. But gradually he rose and emerged, shaken and exhausted, but otherwise none the worse for his ordeal. We lay panting side by side in the snow for sometime. After that he went back to the cookhouse!

Beyond Camp 3 the Cym was split from one side to the other by a series of immense crevasses, too wide to be bridged forcing us to traverse across to the side of the Cym to get round them. Moving parallel to a crevasse, one had to keep well clear of the snow cornices overhanging

the crevasse. Often however we were near enough to the crevasse to see down to its terrifying depth - several hundred feet disappearing into a black void, apparently bottomless. We used up most of our marker flags to make sure no one strayed off our track.

As we progressed up the Cym, crevasses became smaller until they could no longer be seen. We knew, of course, that they were there, just bridged over by snow. One could tell by experience perhaps by a slight change in the appearance of the snow, where a crevasse was, and then take adequate precautions to cross it. This would be by what amounted to a snow bridge. The rope leader would move gingerly forward, prodding with his ice axe. If the bridge was a flimsy one, the ice axe would go through easily, and it was prudent to try to cross elsewhere.

Young Topke, a relative of Tenzing's, perhaps encouraged by the apparent lack of crevasses, became careless and went through a flimsy snow bridge. He was of course roped and was easily pulled out. The gaping hole he had made became known as 'Topke's hole' clearly showing all subsequent users of the track that a crevasse was there.

Apart from the minor mishaps described above the ferrying of stores continued as planned and our Advanced Base, otherwise known as Camp 4, took shape as a fully stocked spring board from which to launch the next phase of the climb - the Lhotse face.

At Camp IV the photograph shows the "Tigers", the incredible Sherpa porters who reached the South Col with Noyce and Wylie. Front Row Left to right: Noyce, Phu Dorji, Ang Dawa, Dawa Thondup, Ang Namgyai, Ang T emba Gompu, Pasang Dawa, Topkie, Ang Dawa II, Ang Tsering, Wylie. Back row: Ang Dorji, Pemba, Pasang Phutar, Da Tenzing, Ang Tenzing, Ang Norbu, Gyalzen and Annullu. (George Lowe Collection)



This is a steep snow and ice wall rising 4,000 ft from the CWM to about 25,500 ft just below the ridge which connects Everest to Lhotse. the most direct route to the

lowest part of the ridge, the South Col, where we planned to establish a base for summit attempts, was a steep couloir, or gully, leading straight up almost to the col itself. The Swiss had used this route, but two Sherpas, sadly, had been killed on it. So John Hunt decided that we should try to make a route further to the south, up the Lhotse glacier. This was less direct, but should prove to be safer.

George Lowe, with Ang Nyima, an excellent young Sherpa, were sent ahead to prepare such a route. George, like his fellow New Zealander, Ed Hillary, was well experienced as an ice climber since the New Zealand alps are glaciated much lower than mountains nearer the equator.

In the final assault, Noyce and Wylie were allocated the South Col "carry", the vital job of getting two teams of Sherpas - 14 in all - with their loads to the Col at 26,000ft - a height equivalent to that of Annapurna, then the highest summit yet climbed. Some 500lbs of equipment and stores were needed on the Col prior to any determined summit bids. But for 12 days the expedition was close to being beaten by fresh snow, cold and wind on the Lhotse Face - the 4,000ft barrier that had to be climbed to reach the Col from the Western Cym. Noyce, with a single Sherpa Annullu, made the first breakthrough to the Col on 21 May when the other Sherpas needed a day's rest. Then came Wylie's major contribution. It was an inspiring moment for those of us at Advance Base in the Cym when we saw 17 figures strung out on the Traverse between Camp VII at 24,000ft and the Col. Hunt had rushed up Hillary and Tenzing to give fresh impetus, and in their footsteps on the face came Wylie now escorting all 14 Sherpas, each with a 30lb load. One Sherpa failed to make it, but Wylie took over his load, completing the ascent to the Col despite running out of oxygen. As they dumped their loads at the Col, the expedition's progress was back on course. It was the Sherpas' finest hour

Their first problem was to find a place for a camp to house about ten people. To stock a really adequate base on the South Col required some 700 lbs of stores to be carried there. We reckoned we could not expect any of our Sherpas to climb, fully laden and without oxygen to the Col more than once during the expedition. I also planned to reduce the normal 60 lb Sherpa load. Only a very few Sherpas had ever carried loads to such a height (26,000 ft). In consultation with Tenzing, we decided to reduce the loads to about 40 lb each, if possible. This meant that about 16 Sherpas would be needed. Unlike the stocking of Camp 4, when ferry teams went to and fro every day for 3 weeks, the South Col carry had to be done in one lift, since we were not planning for any laden Sherpa to go to the South Col more than once.

As well as preparing the route to the South Col, George Lowe and Ang Nyima had to find sites for two camps on the way up. The first was needed to house George and Ang Nyima themselves while they worked on the route, cutting steps and fixing ropes. After a considerable search they found a small ledge, just big enough to take their two man tent. Using this, they worked for nine days, far longer than John's plan had

catered for, until they were recalled. John Hunt had rightly guessed that they were slowing up, working as they were at nearly 25,000 ft without oxygen, our limited stocks of which had to be saved for the actual summit assault.

They had, however, reached the top of the Lhotse glacier, leaving only the easy traverse to the Col to be climbed. Furthermore they had found a site big enough to act as a staging camp site. This camp (Camp 7) would be required to house the large number of Sherpas making the South Col carry. Ideally this big carry, we hoped, would be made by one party making one lift. Unfortunately however the site for Camp 7 could not hold the 16 Sherpas needed for the lift. So John decided that the lift should be made by two parties, one following a day behind the other. Each of the parties would be of eight Sherpas led by a member of the climbing team.

Wilfred Noyce would lead the first party and I the second. Wilfrid's party would also have to complete the track from Camp 7, across the traverse to the South Col.

Wilfrid's party duly left Camp 4 on 21 May and made their way slowly up to Camp 7. Next morning we watched anxiously to see them on their way to the South Col. To our dismay only two figures appeared, instead of nine. Something had clearly gone wrong. I know all the Sherpas Tenzing and I had chosen were all madly keen to reach the Col, so I reckoned, they must be suffering from altitude sickness. Their camp was 4,000 ft higher than Advanced Base, well beyond the height to which we were acclimatised. Moreover the plan did not allow for oxygen to be used by anybody except the summit climbers and their supporters at this stage. I consulted Michael Ward, our doctor, and he gave me a good quantity of pills for the Sherpas. These, I felt, together with the day's rest, would see Noyce's party on their feet again next day. I and my eight Sherpas then started off for Camp 7. Going fairly slowly with frequent rests to reduce the effects of the lack of oxygen, we arrived in reasonably good shape. I went at once to the Sherpa tent and found them as I had expected, rather sorry for themselves but also very apologetic for having let the side down. I distributed Ward's medicaments and these, I believe, had a good psychological effect, quite apart from a physical one and they began to perk up. They had another boost a little later when Wilfred Noyce and Annulen arrived back, having reached the Col. They had been unladen, on oxygen and made a good track all the way. Seeing the two of them both quite hale and hearty in spite of having been to the Col and back put great heart into all the Sherpas. Before I left their tent I was assured that Wilfrid's Sherpas, as well as mine would make the carry next day.

Then, to our great surprise two more figures arrived in the camp, this time from below - none other than Hillary and Tenzing, one of the two pairs due to make a summit attempt. So much store did John Hunt put to getting the big carry through to the South Col that he had sent a summit

attempt pair to give us a hand. Tenzing went at once to the Sherpas tent and was assured by all of them that they would carry their loads to the Col next day, come what may.

So now, in spite of our careful planning these were two parties in the camp for the night instead of one. Somehow, we all squeezed in to the tents. The Sherpas were used to cramped accommodation and I believe thought little of so many in such a limited space. "Needs must", however, goes the adage and even Hillary, Tenzing and I managed reasonably well in the two man tent. (Wilfrid and Annulen had gone on down to Camp 4 after returning from the Col).

It was not overcrowding, however, that gave us all a bad night. A storm, the worst we had experienced up to then, raged most of the night. A violent wind threatened to whisk our small tent away, and I was glad that there were three of us in it not just two for which it had been designed.

The good Tenzing got us all up early since we had a long day ahead. Cooking was difficult in both of the overcrowded tents; cookers need space and that was something we did not have! However I think we all had a cup of tea. No doubt the Sherpas added tsampa to theirs and I remember trying to eat grape-nuts with a spanner, as my spoon had got lost in the prevailing chaos. Tenzing redistributed Annulen's load as he had gone down to Camp 4 with Wilfrid after reaching the South Col the day before. Finally we were ready, all 15 of the Sherpas, and three of the climbing team. Hillary, Tenzing and I, who were on oxygen. Ed Hillary asked me how he and Tenzing could best help us. As yesterday's normal daily snowfall, together with the night's storms had obliterated the track made by Noyce and Annulen, I asked Ed and Tenzing to go ahead and remake the track. So off they went, going fast on oxygen while I led the long line of 15 Sherpas, going much more slowly, with loads and no oxygen. We first climbed a snowfilled chimney between a serac and the main ice slope. This led us out onto the great snow field leading to the Col, perhaps half a mile away.

The difference in pace between Hillary and Tenzing and us was only too apparent. As we plodded slowly along the pair ahead became smaller and smaller becoming two specks diminishing into the dim distance.

We were now at over 25,000 ft and the Sherpas were experiencing the effects of altitude. They could take only a few steps before one of them would whistle - the request for a halt - and they would all flop down gratefully in the snow. When they had regained their breath they would go slowly on, probably no more than 20 or 30 paces before someone would whistle again and they would stop and pant and pant and pant. Progress was painfully slow. I wondered what John Hunt and others down at Camp 4 could be thinking. We would be clearly visible to them, especially through field glasses, 16 small black specks on the huge white Lhotse Face.

At each halt I would go down the line with words of encouragement. I knew all of them had a burning desire to reach the Col and felt confident they would succeed, even though it might take a long time.

Slowly, oh so slowly, we crossed the big snow field. Approaching the rocks of the Eperon des Genevois - the Geneva Spur, named by the Swiss, one Sherpa, Kancha, gave up: he could do no more. It was obvious he had reached his limit.

The feeling of guilt I had experienced since leaving camp - guilt at being on oxygen without a load (albeit in accordance with John's plan) fell away. I gladly took on his load. Having assured myself that he could safely be left where he was until we returned from the Col, I and my followers, now 14 in number, continued. Shortly after we saw two figures striding confidently down the broken rock and snow of the Spur. Hillary and Tenzing were on their way back from the Col. We met and swapped news and views. They assured me we had not much further to go, and off they went swinging easily down the now well marked track on their way back to Camp 4.

Now we turned up the Spur and progress now straight up hill, became even slower. My account to John Hunt as recorded in his book read: "We went through our pockets and finished off our sweets." By now we had been on the move for more than five and a half hours - longer than my single oxygen cylinder allowed and, sure enough, it ran out. I thus found myself in the same boat as the Sherpas, without oxygen and carrying a Sherpas load. The rest of the climb of course needed much more effort, but I felt strangely elated, perhaps because I could now appreciate through personal experience what the Sherpas had been going through all day.

Ed Hillary's route across the Spur was higher, by about 150 ft, than the South Col, and we now had a clear view of this promised land. Although its position had been clear from below, its surface had been hidden - a bleak and barren area of ice and snow dotted with boulders, measuring perhaps as much as two acres in extent.

Bleak as it is, at that moment we were thrilled to see it. This was our goal. We trudged happily down to the Col itself. For me, and for the Sherpas this was our main contribution to the expedition. Every load, about a quarter of a ton in all, had reached the Col and the assault teams who were to follow, would have all they needed to get a summit pair to the top and back, with adequate stores to provide all support needed, in an emergency including if necessary a protracted spell on the Col in bad weather. This major carry, and later the establishment of an assault camp (Camp 9) as near the top as possible were the two most important features of John's plan, which in the event assured success.

The Sherpas achievement cannot be given too much prominence; without it Everest would not have been climbed in 1953. As great a quantity of stores as was carried that day to the South Col had never been carried before to such a height (26,000 ft), we felt that Everest's back had been broken; but there was still much to be done and still the last vital 3,000 feet to be climbed. The expedition was clearly well planned, it had the climbers, it had the determination, now it had the wherewithal in the right place. With good weather it now had a real chance of success.

We piled the precious stores as carefully as we could in this windy, inhospitable spot and turned thankfully to our descent.

I however, had one last ploy. George Lowe and I had each been given a hand-held 16 mm cine camera to enable high altitude film shots to be taken. Tom Stobart our professional film camera man who was in charge of taking the official expedition film was not scheduled to climb beyond the Western Cym. I therefore took a few shots of the Col and of our stores piled there. If readers who have seen the official film can remember some really wobbly shots of the Col, I was the culprit.

Without loads now, climbing up again to the crest of the Geneva Spur was no problem. Nor in fact was the rest of the descent to Camp 7. We picked up Kancha none the worse for his wait in the snow. Fortunately the weather had been good, with little wind, otherwise his wait might have been a bit chilly.

At the bottom of the Spur, as we started the traverse back across the snow field I noticed one Sherpa straying badly off the route heading dangerously close to the top of the very steep couloir, which ran down to the CWM. The Swiss had used this couloir and one of their Sherpas had been killed on it. I raced after him and fortunately reached him before he got to the top of the couloir. I had never thought that any Sherpa would stray off course in this way. Perhaps it was a case of anoxia causing mental aberration, as does happen sometimes.

We arrived back at Camp ten and a half hours after we had left it - all that on a single cup of tea. The Sherpas were all in good heart, very pleased to be "South Col Sherpas". They had done a splendid job and I think were rightly proud of it.

We made a leisurely start next day and were soon back at Camp 4. On the way we passed the first summit pair Charles Evans and Tom Bourdillon using closed circuit oxygen, to save as much energy as possible for the summit bid next day. With them was their support pair, John Hunt and Da Namgyal. I made some enthusiastic remark to John about the South Col which, he told me later, had been a welcome encouragement to him.

When the first summit pair and their supporters John Hunt and Da Namgyal arrived on the Col they were met by such a strong wind that it took them a very long time to put up their tents. Having reached the Col the summit pair were no longer using oxygen and their struggle with the tents left them so exhausted that, reluctantly, they had to abandon their attempt on the summit which had been planned for the next day. Instead they would rest for a day and make their attempt the day after.

Meanwhile the second summit pair, Hillary and Tenzing, with their support pair, Lowe and Gregory were making their way to the Col. After a day's rest, Evans and Bourdillon started off on their summit attempt. John Hunt and Da Namgyal followed carrying the tent and stores for a top camp (Camp 9) should the first attempt fail and a second attempt was needed, launched from a camp well above the South Col. At about 8,350 metres Da Namgyal realised he had reached his limit, so he and John dumped their loads and returned, decidedly groggy, but safely. It was a typical outstanding effort by John, who was 42 years old.

Evans and Bourdillon benefiting from the closed circuit oxygen system, reached the South summit, higher than any man had ever climbed before. There they checked their supply of oxygen and found that they did not have enough to get them to the top and safely back to the South Col. So, reluctantly, they returned to the Col. They arrived there exhausted and no doubt depressed. But although they had failed to reach the summit they had climbed up and down 3,000 ft in a day and that paved the way for the second attempt.

Next day the second summit pair, Hillary and Tenzing, who had arrived as planned on the Col with their support pair, George Lowe and Alfred Gregory should have started for Camp 9, but the weather had deteriorated badly and a postponement was imperative. Fortunately, anticipating such delays John had made sure that there were sufficient stocks on the Col to make this possible.

After a welcome night on the Col, Evans and Bourdillon started down. An hour later Evans reappeared at John's tent with the news that Tom was in a critical state, unable to continue. Help was needed urgently. John did not hesitate; he abandoned his planned position "at the front" where he could make decisions quickly for the second assault, due to start next day, in order to help Charles Evans get Tom down to Camp 7. This was successfully achieved and after a good night at Camp 7 they all went on down to Camp 4.

While they were descending, Hillary and Tenzing with Lowe and Gregory to support them, had begun their climb to a high site for Camp 9. All were using open circuit oxygen and the weather was excellent. They reached the south east ridge and passed the remains of the tent in which Tenzing and Lambert had spent the night before their gallant summit attempt in 1952. Higher up they came to the loads dumped

by Hunt and Da Namgyal the day before. Hillary wrote later "This was still far too low for an effective summit camp" So, although they were already carrying heavy loads, they now took on the extra gear, bringing their loads to between 50 and 63 lbs. (22-25kg) apiece. They continued, albeit now much more slowly. They still could not find a small ledge anywhere on which to pitch their tent. Then Tenzing spotted a relatively flat spot off the ridge. There they pitched their little tent at 8,500 metres, far higher than any camp had ever been made before. Although this was the highest, it must have also been just about the most uncomfortable ever pitched as it was on two levels and held in place with their ice axes. They set up the tent made sure it was properly secured and weighted down with rocks, crawled in and prepared for the night. Thanks to the forethought of the planners and the efforts of all concerned, from supporters to porters, they had with them all that they needed: oxygen with special breathing attachments so that they could sleep using oxygen, adequate sleeping bags and clothing, and best of all a cooker in good order. At altitude there is a great need for plenty of liquid - at least eight pints per person per day. They each had four hours good deep sleep, in two spells of two hours each, taking turns to cook while the other slept. Snow takes a long time to melt down and heat, but they managed to drink a really good quantity of tea, lemon and soup.

At 0600 they looked out and saw it was a fine day. They lost no time in their preparations for the long day ahead. Hillary had taken his boots off to sleep and these were now frozen stiff and had to be warmed over the cooker, before they could be put on. Tenzing, the experienced high camper had sensibly kept his boots on inside his sleeping bag. Doing these simple things may well have taken about two hours as they were not using either the special sleeping oxygen system nor the climbing system and their actions would have been slower due to anoxia (lack of oxygen). But at last they were ready and on the move. Climbing slowly but with great care, they reached the South Summit. They each left an oxygen cylinder there for use on the descent. Ahead they could see the narrow summit ridge leading to a vertical 40 ft chimney between rock on one side and snow on the other. This was clearly the crux, the only serious problem between them and the summit, now a mere 300 feet above and perhaps 300 yards distant.

Well belayed by Tenzing, Ed now tackled the chimney. He found he could squeeze his lanky body into it and gradually work his way up, pressing the prints of his crampons into the ice behind him and taking advantage of every little hold on the smooth and almost holdless rock in front of him. He levered and wriggled his way up praying fervently that the snow behind him, which was in fact a cornice, would remain in position. Fortunately it did and Ed emerged breathless but successful at the top of the chimney. Tenzing followed and when they had recovered from this unexpected exertion continued up the snow ridge. Later Ed wrote: "For the first time I really felt the fierce determination that nothing could stop us reaching the top." Continuing along the summit ridge,

keeping well clear of the cornices overhanging the 8,000 ft Kangshung face, they still could not see the summit; as they climbed each bump, there would be another, higher one ahead. They were now conscious that they were tiring rather rapidly and they wondered just how long they could keep it up. "It was turning into a grim struggle", Ed records, then they realised that the ridge ahead was mapping away instead of rising, and they could see the North Col. "A few more whacks of the ice axe in the firm snow and stood on top". Man had reached the highest point on earth for the first time. It must have been a fantastic moment. Hillary's main feeling was one of relief; Tenzing was overjoyed. Tenzing unfurled the flags of Britain, India, Nepal and the UN from his ice axe shaft and Hillary took some photographs. He also buried a crucifix which John had asked him to leave on top while Tenzing buried a bar of chocolate, some sweets and a packet of biscuits as an offering to the gods who Buddhists believe live there.

After a quarter of an hour they began the descent. Going with great care as they both knew that accidents often happen on descents when climbers are tired and do not concentrate as well as they should. But they were going downhill and could use the footholds they had cut or stamped out on the way up. Going down the chimney was much easier than going up it. In one hour they were back on the South Summit. After a refreshing drink of lemonade there, they started down the long snow slope below. On the way up they had found two oxygen bottles left by Evans and Bourdillon which contained enough oxygen to get them back to the South Col. These they picked up and changed with the bottles they were using, now all but exhausted. Just below was Camp 9. Then they took on their sleeping bags and mattresses which they would need on the South Col.

Now very tired, they went on down the ridge, past the Swiss Bridge Camp and down the steep couloir to the South Col. George Lowe came up to meet them with what they needed most, emergency oxygen and hot soup. As Hillary reached the tents of Camp 8 his oxygen ran out. They had just enough to complete the job, but no more.

After a somewhat restless night, battered again by the South Col wind, they continued on down. First they had the 150 ft climb up to and over the Geneva Spur which, tired as they were, they found quite a trial. Even on the long traverse across to Camp 7 they had to take frequent rests.

After the South Col carry I had returned with the Sherpas to Camp 4, our Advanced Base. While I was there news came down from the higher camps that there was some doubt about many of the oxygen cylinders. It was thought that they might be empty of oxygen. John Hunt had already left to support the first assault team, so I took it upon myself to take up as many bottles as there were at Camp 4 in case the bottles at the higher camps were indeed empty. As we were approaching the bottom of the Lhotse

Face, a young Sherpa, Ang Namgyal suddenly collapsed in the snow and said he could go no further. I could see that he was telling the truth. He was no doubt beginning to suffer from altitude sickness. Having made sure he was capable of returning to Camp 4 by himself, I took on the most important item of his load, a 22lb RAF oxygen cylinder. We then went on with the climb to Camp 7. I was in the lead, but was finding the Sherpas progress painfully slow. Just below the camp, where there was a steep but perfectly safe snow slope, I suddenly decided that I must go on at my own pace to the tents. I unroped and receiving reassurances from the Sherpas still on the rope, tackled the remaining 100 ft below the camp in a totally inexplicable state of ferocity. I still have no idea what came over me. Possibly it was a symptom of anoxia, as we were now at 25,000 ft and without oxygen. I also experienced relief at release from the slow pace at which we had been climbing. Whatever the cause was, I shot up the slope at high speed and arrived sniffling and gasping for breath at the two main tents now occupied by Wilfrid Noyce.

Having divested myself of the icicles hanging from my eyebrows, beard and balaclava I crawled into the tent and, I hope, returned to normality! One effect of my behaviour - which to this day never ceases to astonish me - however remained. I felt I could not go up to the South Col next day, as I had planned to do, and indeed after a reasonable night's rest my attitude was unchanged. I knew that I would only be a liability to others. I drew comfort from the knowledge that the Sherpas with me were perfectly capable of carrying their loads of precious oxygen without me and to boot, Wilfrid Noyce would be with them instead.

This was why I was at Camp 7 as Hillary and Tenzing came down from the South Col. I had no idea if they had reached the summit or not. But in either case they would need a drink and I had been up for some time melting snow and making as much hot sweet tea as possible. Knowing Ed's liking for lemonade I had also made a special brew of it for him.

As their party tramped into the camp I heard the wonderful news of their success. When the back slapping and hand shakes from my Sherpas had died down, I pressed my carefully brewed hot drinks on them; my lemonade, I made sure, I presented myself to Ed, but to my eternal chagrin, it was refused! Today we always have a good laugh about this. Ed says I have never forgiven him, and nor have I! But, in fact, I think that someone who has just reached the highest point on earth has every right to accept or refuse anything he chooses!

So, without stopping for drinks, they went on to meet the rest of the expedition in the Cym. Tom Stobart caught that historic meeting expertly on film. John Hunt's expression of joy at learning the great news is still wonderful to see on Stobart's film. And John is to be excused for the spontaneous manifestation of his feelings in, as he himself admits, such an unBritish way!

Up at Camp 7, we were now the last on the mountain. Coming down to reality, we packed the Camp up properly and descended in good order to Camp 4. Great was the rejoicing there that night as we began to realise what the expedition had achieved. This was what we, and all our helpers had worked so hard and so long for, but when success came, we could hardly believe it. But it was true, and it was a truly wonderful feeling to know it was true. John held a meeting and said it was the greatest achievement of his life. Although he continued to be very successful in many other fields I, for one, hope that Everest remained for him his greatest achievement throughout his life.

A few days later we were all back at Base Camp. It was Coronation Day and we turned on our radio, and were astonished to hear that the news of our success had reached England and the Queen just in time for her Coronation. Later the Queen herself told us what encouragement the news had given her before she went into what for her must have been a tiring, taxing and emotionally draining three hour long ordeal watched by millions the world over on TV. Prince Philip, Patron of our expedition, told us that in Westminster Abbey during a break in the service, they had drunk a toast to the expedition!

But what had amazed us, as we listened to the Coronation broadcast, was that the news should have reached England so quickly, only four days after Hillary and Tenzing had reached the top. This had been, we learnt later, mainly due to James Morris' careful planning and forethought. First, realising that the outcome of the expedition was imminent, he (not a mountaineer) left Base Camp, and came up to the Advanced Base, where he heard the news first hand. Luckily he arrived at almost the same time as the submitters. James returned to Base Camp immediately, typed out a telegram and gave it to a fleet footed Sherpa waiting to take it to the Indian Check Post radio operator in Namche Bazaar.

The telegram was in code, previously arranged with The Times, and was sent to the Indian Embassy in Kathmandu. A member of the staff there passed it to the British Embassy and our Ambassador sent it on to the Foreign Office in London, who passed it on to the Times and to Buckingham Palace on 1st June in time for the Coronation on 2nd June; and also in time for The Times to carry the news on Coronation Day.

The code had been necessary to prevent the news reaching other papers before the *Times*, who had the copyright. Encoded, the message related how the expedition had been abandoned due to strong winds experienced by Hillary and Tenzing on May 29. Decoded this meant that they had got to the summit on 29 May. So the *Times* published the correct news on 2 June, while a rival popular national daily (which shall be nameless) came out with the opposite story. Clearly the wireless operator in Namche had been persuaded to pass James Morris's encoded telegram to the rival paper's representative.

The sequel to this episode came when we had all arrived back in Kathmandu. Christopher Summerhayes the British Ambassador kindly held a garden party to commemorate the expedition's success. Everyone concerned, including the rival paper's journalist, as well as those of many other papers, were invited. The rival British paper's man then called all other journalists over and told them that the story of Everest was over and the story of the Ambassador would now begin. He then went on to explain how the Ambassador had insulted the King of Nepal by radioing the news of the ascent of Everest to Queen Elizabeth before telling King Tribhuvan. This new line however had little impact. A point of diplomatic etiquette was far outweighed by news about our expedition. I was present when Christopher Summerhayes spoke to the King about his handling of the Everest news. Was he worried that Queen Elizabeth had heard the news before he had? The King was clearly surprised that the Ambassador had even considered informing him first. "Oh no, certainly not, it did not worry me at all" said the King. And that was that. In fact the message had reached the Ambassador so late that he felt he could not disturb him then.

Later the Queen was to give the Ambassador a Knighthood in gratitude for the assistance he and his staff had given the expedition.

But all that was in the future. We were packing up Base Camp before moving back to Kathmandu. I and some Sherpas, were the last to leave Everest. We salvaged all re-usable equipment and stores and made our final trip down the ice fall. As leader I was last on the rope. After me no one would need our marker flags, so I pinched a few as souvenirs for my grandchildren! At the bottom of the icefall I experienced a strange phenomenon. I looked at my watch but could not tell the time. Try as I might, the watch hands and their position meant nothing to me. This worried me, so I turned to the Sherpas and told them I was 'pogal' (mad). They laughed, which was reassuring, and we continued to Base I reported to Mike Ward and he diagnosed sunstroke!

We were a happy band, all together again that evening in the Mess Tent. We drained the rum barrel, a present from the Indian Army, and passed a convivial evening, while we listened to message passed to us by All India Radio. Among them were telegrams from the Queen, our Patron HRH Prince Philip, the Prime Minister and the Chairman of our sponsoring Himalayan Committee, Sir Edwin Herbert and Christopher Summerhayes. We began to realise what an impact our success had made on the public generally. Locally too the Sherpas' joy was only too apparent. Even the Indian operator of the wireless at Namche sent his congratulations on "your thumping Victory over the King of Adventure". For us it was all very exciting, rather emotional and so unexpected.

As we left the glacier for the last time, John decided we should fire off our stock of two inch mortar bombs. We had brought a stock of 12, provided again by the Indian Army, in case we needed to bring down loose snow or ice

threatening to avalanche on us. In fact we had not used them and there was no point in carrying them back. So we fired them off across the glacier, to the amazement of the Sherpas and the Sherpanis who had come up from their villages to help evacuate Base Camp. Like us, they were in a festive mood - aided by a liberal supply of chang, the rather lethal rice beer brewed by the Sherpas. They decided this was an occasion for a dance. Forming a long line with both sexes linked, arms round each others waists they shuffled and stamped forward and backwards to an intricate rhythm while singing a rather doleful song, this went on for hours. At one stage we, the climbing team, felt we should keep our end up, so while the seemingly non-stop sherpas broke off for more liquid refreshment we obliged with tunes which we felt, matched them for dolefulness - Ilkley Moor, Uncle Tom Cobley and John Brown's body. The Sherpas were delighted.

Next morning, skirting from the mouth of the Khumbu glacier I came across a small clump of flowers. I have never been so moved by the sight of flowers as I was by these. We had been living in a lifeless world of ice, snow and rock for six weeks. these flowers told us that we were leaving that world and entering a vibrant

world where life existed in abundance. I love mountains and always will. I had revelled in the fantastic scenery and beauty of the great mountain area in which I had lived. But I believe contrast is necessary to enhance the appeal of either world. Certainly we all looked forward to the lush country we were now entering.

We spent a few days at Thyangboche to rest and reorganise for the long march back to Kathmandu. While we were there we visited the monastery to pay our respects to the acting abbot. John thanked him for the blessing he had given the expedition. He as usual was gracious and courteous but he clearly did not believe we had climbed Everest. He offered John his congratulations for the expedition having "nearly reached the summit"!

John gave him a good donation to go towards mending the monastery roof. Tea was served and the lamas started ritual dances in the courtyard. These dances, which used to be called "devil dances", are performed in splendid ornate costumes for the dancers who represent good spirits or grotesque ones for the evil spirits. the monastery 'band' long (12 feet) brass horns, conches, drums and cymbals provide the musical accompaniment,

Team in Village. In the front on the left is Noyce, then Stobart, a smiling Wylie and then Westmacott with the rather extravagant headgear and Hunt is behind Noyce to the right, black-bearded Ward, our cheerful doctor. The straw Panama is behind Noyce, next to Band who is sporting the straw panama, and behind him is Bourdillon. (George Lowe Collection)



often, when the evil spirits are 'winning' quite deafening. I found this fascinating, we were privileged indeed to have such a dance laid on for us.

Only too soon it was time to move on. I paid off the Sherpas who were not coming with us to Kathmandu, John adding a bonus payment to those who had done especially well, among them those who had reached the South Col, those who had made a second trip there, and those who had been above the South Col. I was glad expedition funds allowed these bonuses; the Sherpas had contributed outstandingly to the expedition. In fact it would be correct to say we could not have been successful without them.

Final Thoughts

Sheila, who had married Charles after his wife had died, passed away in July this year. She was a most delightful and charming friend, who always had a sponge cake if you went to tea, with the two terriers belting round the garden, but the blind one never colliding with anything.

Gompu on the right, the last climbing Sherpa who died a few years ago in Darjeeling where he had run the Had run the Climbing School.

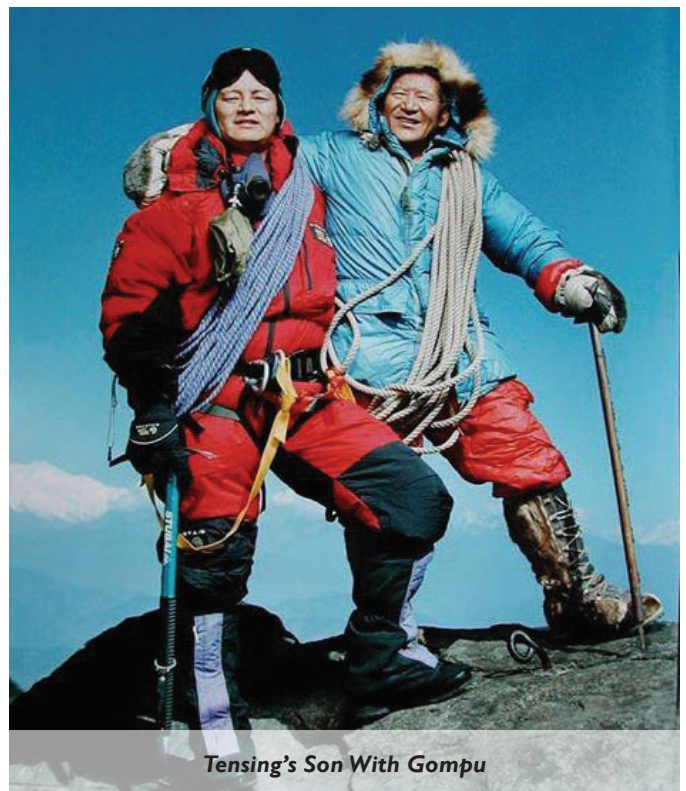
I stayed the night in Stone Place in 1994, sharing a room with Gombu N? (I warned him that I snored and if I did he should pillow me - though I don't think that he did). He was the last Climbing Sherpa and also related to Tensing, and died in Darjeeling where he had been running the Mountaineering School. George Lowe was the last of the climbing team of Nepalese, New Zealanders to die on 22 March 2013.

The next morning a Gazelle arrived from Middle Wallop to take them to the Museum of Army Flying and then on to their Annual Reunion in North Wales. Soon after leaving Wallop, the weather was foul and they went into deep cloud, which led Gombu, on his first helicopter flight, to think it would be his last. The pilot did a radar let down into Shawbury and crept up the valleys towards Snowdonia arriving at the hotel by hover-taxying, where the others greeted them in amazement.

Remainder of George Band's Eulogy

I had never met Charles before being involved with Everest, and knew nothing about his earlier climbing. So I looked up his application for the Alpine Club in 1947, proposed by no less than Geoffrey Winthrop Young, and was astonished to read he had already made four visits to the Alps as a teenager, climbing over 25 respectable peaks. His course for Everest was set at Marlborough College by his housemaster Edwin Kempson who had been to Everest in 1935 and 1936.

Wylie returned to mountaineering post-war in 1947 with an attempt on the much-coveted Nilkanta (21,640ft) in the Garhwal Himalaya. That same year he climbed in the Swiss Alps with Jimmy



Tensing's Son With Gompu

Roberts, a fellow Gurkha officer. With a guide, he also traversed the Matterhorn up the classic Zmutt Ridge and down the Italian side. In a rare article for the Alpine Journal entitled "A Long Day on Piz Palü", Charles described one of their climbs and wondered if their zeal for big traverses that year stemmed from "a sense of seasons wasted in war".

Three years after Everest, Wylie joined Jimmy Roberts' team to attempt Machapuchare, the spectacular "Fish Tail Peak" near Pokhara in Nepal. Wilfrid Noyce and David Cox were halted by columns of blue ice 150ft below the summit. At Roberts' suggestion, no further climbing permits have been issued and it remains a virgin peak.

In 1978, Everest's 25th anniversary, several of us celebrated by trekking with our wives from Darjeeling to the Everest region. Charles' first wife Diana had died in 1974 but with a new wife, Sheila, it was a second honeymoon. We had a day's rest in the village of Godal during the Dewali festival. The schoolmaster invited us to a 'tikka' ceremony. We were each garlanded with marigolds and marked with tikkas. I recall we all consumed rather more 'rakshi' than was good for us!

In his final years Charles was writing his memoirs called Peaks and Troughs which I hope will find a publisher. On Everest's 50th anniversary, we held a Royal Gala Celebration in London, entitled 'Endeavour on Everest', in the presence of the Queen. Answering questions put by Sir David Attenborough, the normally reticent Charles kept us on the edge of our seats as he retold the story of the 'South Col Carry', reliving an endeavour shared with a people, the Sherpas, for whom he had a lifetime's respect and affection.

From George Band's Eulogy (with assistance from Stephen Goodwin) Given at the Thanksgiving Service in the packed Sandhurst Chapel, 26 September 2007

THE GURKHA SOLDIER

Bravest of the brave,
most generous of the generous,
never had country
more faithful friends than you.
Professor Sir Ralph Turner MC

Thank for the seven happy years since you invited me to become a member of your Regimental Association and your Treasurer. It was fun to see again the smiling faces and to receive such courtesy.

Jai 10th!

David Mallam July 2013

George Lowe Collection of Photos

60th anniversary. *The conquest of Everest*. Original photos from the legendary first ascent. George Lowe, Huw Lewis Jones. Thames & Hudson. 2013. ISBN 978-0-500-54423-5

POST WW2

Introduction and Background to Jungle Warfare

by Lt Col J P Cross (IGR & 7 GR)

From Earliest Times

Man has always used the forests as a sanctuary against oppressors, a means of creeping up on enemies and for providing for his larder, so skulking in the bushes and hunting expeditions for food must be older than recorded history. All the wiles and tricks of field craft that a lack of long-range weapons dictated on those whose quarry was man or on a hungry hunting group, would have been second nature and of life-preserving importance to be ignored at its peril in the open; under the canopy of thick trees that provided a shelter and asylum for both hunter and hunted, the lore for survival became even more dependent on innate, automatic and instantaneous reflexes, and superior woodcraft - then and now. The introduction of harvesting crops placed less reliance on everybody having to be apt trackers and ambushers so gradually, over the centuries, such skills became vestigial, if not redundant, until civilization blunted many of man's finer instincts for survival.

One of the earliest allusions to cover from view being provided by thick undergrowth is given in the Book of Genesis, with the description of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, complete with living off the land and a snake. Man's downfall can be put down to no security precautions, poor camouflage, inadequate deception measures, no immediate action drills and no fallback procedures. History has often been repeated since then.

Shakespeare alludes to the tactical advantages of concealed movement and camouflage. In *Macbeth*, Malcolm exhorts; 'Let every soldier hew him down a bough/And bear't before him: thereby shall we shadow/The numbers of our host, and make discovery/Err in report of us...'. With, later, a messenger saying to Macbeth, 'As I did stand my watch upon the hill I look'd towards Birnam, and anon, me thought the wood began to move.'

Forests Influence Fighting Pre-Twentieth Century

When Wolfe found Montcalm in the dense Canadian forests in the 1750s, the British Army redcoats were outfought by Indian redskins who were allies of the French and were naturally adept in the arts of ambush and concealment. 'The best fighters were white half-breed settlers who combined courage and steadfast determination of the white man with the agility and cunning of the redskin... The close scarlet ranks of the English were plainly to be seen through the trees and the smoke; they were moving forward, cheering lustily and shouting "God save the King".' It did not save them from taking heavy casualties. 'Both men and officers were new to this blind and frightful warfare of the savage in his native woods.'

The outcome of one of history's decisive battles, the turning point in the war between the British and Americans, can be put down to General Gate's men taking advantage of forest conditions, so beating General Burgoyne (who was no military slouch) at the battle of Saratoga in 1777.

From 1793 to 1795 there was a series of peasant-royalist insurrections in La Vendée, a heavily wooded area in the west of France, against the revolutionary government. The 1st Republic called for the removal 'from the insurgent territory (of) all inhabitants who had not taken up arms, because some, under the guise of neutrality, favour the rebels, while the others (the smaller groups), although loyal to the Republic, also provide assistance which they cannot refuse in the face of compulsion.' (Orders from Republican Army of the West, 1793.)

Lessons learnt then served as a warning to the British in the Burmese war of 1885-1892 of what to avoid when operating against ardent natives in their heavily wooded terrain. The French were faced with a similar situation in Indo-China in the late 1940s and the early 1950s and started to relocate the widely-scattered peasant population in fortified settlements. It was only spasmodically applied as it proved difficult and costly. The British in Malaya had the same problem and solved it by resettling squatters in 'new villages'.

Forest conditions were taken advantage of in the Cuban and Porto Rican campaign in 1898. Under Lieutenant Colonel Roosevelt, American 'Rough Riders' used fire and movement, and excellent fire discipline, in thickly-wooded country. The Spaniards, who lost, stated they had 4,000 men; The Rough Riders had 543 and lost eight killed and 34 wounded. Such parallels were evident when one side surprised the other by skilful use of similar tactics in post-war Asian guerilla struggles.

In 1943, jungle fighters in the Pacific theatre were told about the raiding tactics that brought victory to the renowned Mexican raider, Emiliano Zapata (?1877-1919) and the orders he gave to his fighters: *We may get scattered, and then every man must use his own judgement, but my general orders are: Never engage the enemy except from cover, ambush him, flank him, draw him on, tease him, lure him into pursuit, exhaust him, cut back on him when he is exhausted, fade away. Do nothing that you're supposed to do; do everything that no one would dream that you'd do. Keep cover, shoot straight, and never let up.*

Hints for a Bush Campaign, produced in 1901 as a result of the fourth and last Ashanti Campaign (1895-6), lays great stress on the comfort of Europeans. 'It is of the greatest importance in such a bad climate that officers and men should be spared as much worry as possible, that their meals should be regular and that columns should arrive at the end of the day's march in

such time as to allow every European to have a bath.' 'Except when actually marching through the enemy's country...it is a good plan to utilise the hammocks of the field hospital to carry Europeans during the heat of the day. Half the Europeans might be carried from 1100 to 1300 and the remaining half from 1300 to 1500. This had its dangers as is should by this incident:

'An officer, while being carried in a hammock, saw the muzzle of a gun peeping out of the bush laid straight at his stomach and not a yard off. He could just see the dim outline of a savage pulling the trigger and was so petrified with astonishment that he simply lay still and watched the man, as he thought, empty the contents of the gun into him. He saw the flash of the priming as the flint struck the pan, and made sure (sic) he was a dead man, but by an extraordinary piece of luck, the gun misfired, but before he could draw his revolver the savage was away off into the bush. All this happened in a flash and it so unnerved him that for the next three days, sleeping or waking, he held a loaded revolver in his hand.'

That resulted in 'there being one golden rule to follow in fighting badly-armed savages in the bush and that is, "Don't give your enemy any leisure to reload his gun, but keep him on the move and press home your attack with the bayonet."' That sentiment is still ever-green.

Even as late as 1930, British officers and non-commissioned officers of the Royal West African Frontier Force were advised to stay on tracks through the jungle and keep out of the jungle itself as it was too severe for Europeans.

Men of those times would have heartily agreed with the sentiment of what Grant Taylor, the American-Irish policeman who eventually ran gangster Al Capone to ground during Prohibition, said about there only being two kinds of gunmen - the quick and the dead. None of the historical fighting in woods, bush or scrub, however, qualifies as jungle warfare as it is known today.

Europe and Asia: Divergence of Viewpoints and Similarity of Sentiment

The roots of the crushing defeats of so many non-Asian armies ('Western' and 'European' are inapposite terms for Americans and Australasians, 'Caucasian' is incorrect, while 'pinko-grey' is outmoded and offensive) by Asians from the mid-20th century onwards, as well as Asians of one philosophy beating Asians of another - the Chinese civil war for instance - are embedded in history and are worth examining.

Long before the prowess of Roman legions became legendary in Europe and Asia minor, a remarkable man in eastern Asia had worked out how best to overcome an enemy: the Chinese military philosopher of about 350 BC, Sun Zi, had laid down principles of war. Some of the better known are; break the will of the enemy to fight and you accomplish the true aim of war; cover with ridicule the enemy's traditions; exploit and aggravate the inherent frictions with the enemy

country; agitate the young with the old; prevail if possible without armed conflict; the supreme excellence is not to win a hundred victories in a hundred battles; the supreme excellence is to defeat the armies of your enemies without ever having to fight them.

(India's similar strategic thinker of around 300 BC, Kautilya or Chanakya, whose motto seems to have been 'Your neighbour is your natural enemy', postulated that winning victories was based on *Dam*, reward or money, *Dand*, punishment and *Bhed*, dissention. This approach does not seem to have left the subcontinent.)

Just over two thousand years later, the great Communist leader, Mao Zedong, aspired to win China from the nationalists. He had many problems, both political and military, with severe handicaps of logistics, support and, in the earlier stages, manpower. Being a firm believer in Sun Zi's philosophy, it is no great surprise to find him adhering to the old maestro's principles and becoming victorious. He quotes them in his famous 'Thoughts' and Chinese Communists related them to their armed struggle in the jungle. During World War II, engrossed though he was with his own problems, he learnt from western weaknesses. He saw their craving for creature comforts as self-inflicted 'sugar-coated bullets', hastening their eventual collapse.

Military eccentricity and conventional methods have often paid dividends, whether the commander be a Roman general in the second century BC or Vietnamese guerilla leader in the 13th AD. In the former case, Fabius Maximus beat Hannibal, leader of the Carthaginians, by avoiding a pitched battle being content to wear the enemy's troops down by harassing them on every possible occasion. In the latter, Tran Hung Dao defeated Kublai Khan, the Mongol emperor, by similar mobile guerilla tactics than included avoiding a 'head-on' battle. In 1287 the Mongols were defeated, 300,000 of them being routed in the Red River area near Hanoi.

For many of those in Europe, war became to be seen as chivalrous and heroic, certainly in the upper echelons of society. By the 12th century AD, the crusaders had pushed the eastern border of Europe - now synonymous with Christendom - into Asia, its limit merely reflecting the fortunes of the religious campaign of the day. Thus it was that Europe became a concept with a fixed eastern limit and Asia, by default, a non-concept, a vast beyond, a geographical vagueness, with very little meaning other than describing the larger, non-European part of that huge landmass. Even the word 'Asia' is found only as a loan word in most Asian languages and understood by only a handful of Asians. Although their meanings were lost before the time of Herodotus, the 'Father of History' who lived in the fifth century BC, the probable derivations of 'Asia' and 'Europe' are from pre-historic Semitic-Babylonian - *asû* 'to rise' and *erebus* 'to set' - so have no other significance than the daily phenomenon of the sun's passage. Darwin thought that Europeans were descended from gorillas and Asians from chimpanzees, a not-unattractive thought in some respects.

All major political ideas have come from Europe, while all religions, especially those of the Book, have come from Asia. (In more modern times, many Asians and Africans in British-held lands came to see Christianity as a cover for colonialism, especially with the Church of England having obligatory prayers for the British monarch.) The present Dalai Lama wrote about a Glass Curtain between Europe and Asia that, 'by causing haze, discoloration and distortion, prevents a clear perception of one another.'

The ensuing arrogance in the belief in the supremacy of ideas, culture and many other matters, including those of a military nature, that emanated from Europe over those of Asian origin, seems to have been a constant since the 12th century (although Chinese arrogance in respect of everything and everyone non-Chinese is much older and more persistent). It brought its own eventual downfall in the mid-20th century, mainly in the jungles of Asia.

In the 18th and 19th centuries this belief in European superiority was constantly reinforced as the colonising European powers established their trading settlements in Asia without any insurmountable difficulty from local troops. The climate was often a greater hazard to the uninvited and unacclimatised visitors - in the early days of British involvement in India, for example, mosquitoes were thought to be good for a person's health as they sucked impurities out of the blood! The intruders came by sea and, apart from any local opposition, any threat to a particular territorial area would likewise come from the sea, the enemy being another European power - except for Russian encroachment on India over the Khyber Pass from central Asia.

Although eastern armies were numerically superior to Europeans, normally they were no match for them: Europeans acted as a team but Asians tended to act as individuals. Organisation and discipline were poor, leadership was by example and there was no proper chain of command for passing on orders. When the King of Bali was killed in action against the Dutch all his soldiers committed suicide rather than continue fighting because die was the last thing the king did and there was no one to give any orders to the contrary. The habit of rigorously and meticulously following the commander's actions under every circumstance showed an inflexibility which is still a characteristic in many, if not all, Asian armies today, especially in Communist ones.

The early Europeans came in a frame of mind to succeed. Before Portuguese explorers set out for the unknown, they attended their own burial mass. Hundreds of years later, soldiers of North Vietnam also attended their own funeral with full rites before moving to the south to fight the Americans. Some had their skin tattooed to read, 'Born in the north to die in the south.'

Trade being the aim of Europeans, their territorial expansion was directed at the minimum required for this to be maintained in a framework of law and order. People generally were not interested in the hinterland unless profit could accrue. The upper reaches of, for instance, Burma were better left untouched if the only result was a China that would react to

hinder trade. Over the years, jungles, the tropical rainforests of Southeast Asia, were seen as an impenetrable barrier, a place to be avoided, not as a battle ground.

Skirmishing in Asia beyond India, sometimes in jungle terrain, took place during colonial expansion. Five times between 1824 and 1886 British troops were involved in Burma along with local upholders of law and order - Eastern Frontier Rifles, Myitkyina Military Police and Naga Hills Battalion (amongst whom were a number of Gurkhas from east Nepal) to name but three. In Malaya, during one of the least known campaigns - the Sungei Ujong war of 1875-6 - a Victoria Cross was won by a Captain Channer, of the Bengal Staff Corps attached to the First Gurkha. The 3rd Regiment of Foot (The Buffs), with detachments of the 10th and 80th Regiments, along with a half battery of gunners from Hong Kong, the First Gurkhas and a company of the Bengal Sappers and Miners were involved. Conditions were 'very trying' and, in this instance, a three-day approach march through thick jungle was undertaken. Some small stockades were captured and the attackers suffered some casualties.

On 20 December 1875 Captain Channer won his award for, in the scathing words of one British historian, 'leaping over a stockade on a Friday (the weekly day of prayer) and driving away a few Malays from their cooking pots.' Another historian described it as 'a courageous action'. Channer 'had gone forward with a few men (and) seeing his opportunity, rushed a stockade which commanded the rest of the position.'

A road bearing his name is in Seremben, not so very far from the scene of the action.

Whites: Saviours Or Savages?

In Indo-China, between 1858 and 1884, the French pushed in from the coast in their quest for expansion, trade and glory. They established a series of forts or strong posts - some in jungle - from which they tried, never all that successfully, to dominate the surrounding countryside. They presumed that their influence would spread like an oil-slick from where they had established themselves, bringing the benefits of colonial rule to places not yet under their control. Indeed, the Americans also used the 'oil-slick' concept when they started their pacification policy in that ravaged country, having found out how sticky was the 'tar baby' of 'Brer Gook' - Uncle Sam versus Uncle Ho.

The overwhelming arrogance of the French towards their colonies has been well documented: the cruel exploitation, the brutal maltreatment and contempt for the Tonkinese, Annamites and others in Indo-China shown during their initial acquisition sowed the seeds of bitterness, frustration and a burning desire to be rid of them. General Vo Nguyen Giap, in September 1945, said that the French had built more jails than schools, more prison camps than hospitals, more barracks for their colonial army than houses for the people: in that month, Ho Chi Minh said that the French had forced the use of opium and alcohol on the Vietnamese to weaken the race. Such bitterness does not accrue

overnight. From personal experience, I know these feelings not to be the product of some left-wing historian's imagination: for instance, in 1945 to shop without rancour in Saigon, I had to speak French well enough to be understood but badly enough not to be taken for a Frenchman. It was bitter irony for many Vietnamese that, when the northern Communists did prevail, communism was as much a failure as it has been everywhere else, with its mismanagement, corruption, privileges, repression, intransigence and cruelty only differing from previous colonial rule by being applied by Asians, not by Europeans.

British colonial characteristics have been described as a blend of 'racism, arrogance, aloofness and greed'. In the idiom of the times, such traits were observed between the social classes in Britain itself, so it is not surprising that they were duplicated abroad. At least the British who worked in the colonies bothered to learn the local language, unlike the French who, certainly in the forces, never spoke anything except French. 'If the native soldiers can't speak French, they go hungry,' was one remark made to me by a French officer who heard me speaking Urdu to an Indian soldier and Nepali to a Gurkha. The British, in the main, liked their Asian colonial subjects, treating them paternally for the most part. Some British officers and colonial civilians came to love their men so much that they wholly identified with them and, on having to leave them, suffered premature death of a broken heart, helped by overdoses of gin. Going on pension from the old Indian Army was known as 'leave, pending death'. Rubber planters in Malaya regarded the Malays as 'making good pets'; in Borneo the British had almost total empathy with the Natives of the hinterland.

World War One Prejudices Influence Colonial Defeats in World War Two

The war of 1914-18 saw, certainly in Europe, a type of protracted, static, linear warfare that permeated the future thinking of many military minds. This, to a calamitous degree, ossified development of tactics and training as much as did the financial constraints that were introduced into Britain after 'the war to end all wars' had been won, even though in the following peace a disinterested observer might have been excused for not realising that war was to be no more.

During that time there had been no military activity in South East Asia of any overriding importance and, anyway, who in Asia posed any threat to the 'White Man and his Burden' (which was written about the Americans in the Philippines, not the British Raj in India) where native troops were only any good with European officers, preferably British, of the officer class? It was regrettable, in the minds of the military, that some British people still sullied their hands in trade by being 'box wallas', but the sun never set on the British Empire - some Indians said that was because not even God trusted the British in the dark - and it was obvious that, apart from Queen Victoria, in 1885, promising the Indians eventual independence when she allowed the Congress Party to be a vehicle for such a movement, elsewhere things were set fair and for the foreseeable future. 'Gad, sir!'

That frame of mind was patently obvious at the outbreak of World War II: through no fault of their own, troops in India were facing across the North-West Frontier in anticipation of Russian involvement; troops in Singapore were facing the sea; and what few troops there were in Burma initially trained for desert, not jungle, warfare. In 1941, the War Office in London said that it was a waste of effort to send troops to Burma and a visiting Ministry of Information official sympathised with young soldiers that they would see no action there. Nowhere was there any urgency displayed in the provision of fully authorised amounts of small arms, support weapons, ammunition, stores or spare parts for infantry battalions. Nowhere was there realistic training. Nowhere, so it seemed, was there a spark of urgency, dedication or preparedness in the direction whence disaster eventually came - from the Japanese in South East Asia - over the seas and in the jungle, not from the Russians over the barren North-West Frontier. This lament of imperfections could be repeated for all other branches of the armed forces in Asia. As for that basic and vital commodity, Military Intelligence, it did not seem to exist with a large or small 'i'.

Japanese: Jungle Giants

It was the Japanese who brought jungle warfare out of its subsidiary role into prominence by their successful exploitation of it to make up for their unequal military strength and weaker industrial base compared with the western democracies. To redress this imbalance, the entire Japanese thrust into South East Asia and the Pacific was planned to take advantage of climate and geography, and their armed forces for such an enterprise were specially designed to compensate for the West's conventional forces' numerical superiority. Even with the superb bravery shown on so many occasions by the Japanese, it is doubtful if they could have been successful in such places as Burma and New Guinea without 'jungle warfare'; nor would they have been defeated on land had the allies not become adept jungle fighters in conjunction with superior military hardware and logistics.

Japanese expansion in South East Asia had been a threat since 1932 but their defeat, at the hands of Soviet and Mongol troops on the border of Outer Mongolia and Manchuria in 1938 was not the least of the factors which decided them to turn south. Their dedication to training in the islands of Taiwan and Hainan developed jungle tactics, in concert with the native population for 'live enemy', rewarded them handsomely even though the troops deployed in Malaya had recently been in Manchuria (prairie-like plain with a temperature range of below 40° Celsius to above 40°) which was the opposite of tropical rainforest. Their solid preparations over the preceding years to find out all they could about others' dispositions and ability generally to withstand such a sweep south from Japan - doctors, dentists, barmen, barbers, masseurs, photographers and tattoo experts in all the main towns of and often in military camps themselves in their target counties - not only paid great dividends but was as meticulous in planning and preparation as were the allies' indifference to and unawareness of the real

and ugly situation that had reached its own point of no return and had acquire its own momentum.

These spectacularly quick successes against an enemy who thought that the Japanese were second-rate soldiers - short-sighted, bad shots, afraid of the dark, so short-legged that they could not easily walk over rough ground and whose almond eyes could not see through bomb sights - had virtually destroyed any faith that the colonial population had had in their masters' ability to defend them or the their families, had put paid to the belief of the white man's superiority and invincibility, and had severely dented the morale of all British, Australians, Dutch, French, Indian, Gurkha and Burmese soldiers serving in the Burma and Pacific theatres. The Japanese were supermen, experts in the jungle in a way never previously imagined, invincible, brave to a degree unsuspected and malignantly cruel in a manner few had ever contemplated modern men could be. They also despised the softness and lack of military endeavour in their enemies. They used the jungle as a conduit of movement; the allies tried to fight the jungle and then enemy and, to start with, were unsuccessful against both.

Allies Attempt Ascendancy

The great problem for the allies in planning counter-offensives was not so much the intrinsic quality of the Japanese, equipment and generalship, but the jungle that was a shield for the Japanese that had to be penetrated before getting to grips with them. It was just as much a mental as it was a physical barrier to the vanquished. This frame of mind had, in fact, never fully permeated those units with high morale. During the retreat through Burma in 1943, for the Gurkha battalions of, for example, 48 Brigade, offensive action against the Japanese was the norm. This was never publicised so the outside world was only to learn that successful action against the Japanese could be taken as a result of the first foray by General Wingate and his Chindits. (In the final analysis, American 'marauders' of General Merrill lacked staying power: the bravery of the American light aeroplane pilots supporting the Chindits was remarkably high throughout the campaign.)

The gain was much more than purely military and that was great enough, with jungle warfare now elevated to its proper place in the strategy and tactics of military thinking as a serious and separate form of combat in its own right. It was also psychological in that the barrier erected by both the Japanese and the jungle had been penetrated effectively.

(In an aside, there is no doubt that Wingate impressed people. Whether they liked him or not they could not ignore him. In 1988 he was still remembered when, as a subaltern, he went riding to hounds in Dorset. He was frantically untidy but very brave on a horse, with a penchant for swimming his steed across rivers that left the other riders nonplussed. But it was his eyes that caught people's notice; with piercing gaze, he gave the impression of being fired by an inner compulsion seldom seen in others.)

The Japanese outran their ability to organise any farther advances, either towards India to the west or to invading Australia, New Caledonia and New Zealand to the south and South East. As for India, the Japanese seem to have been under the impression that the Indians were only waiting for an excuse to rise up and throw the British into the sea. The thought that the Indians would not have welcomed other occupants of their land, even though they were Asians, does not seem to have struck them. Despite their propagandas about the Co-Prosperity Sphere of Greater East Asia, their aims were primarily of self-interest.

The Japanese successes in the Pacific campaign brought with them problems that may not have been fully appreciated in the planning stages of that enterprise, as has been pointed out in *Green Armour* by Osmar White, an Australian war correspondent. Just as the Germans balked at invading Britain in 1940 because of technical difficulties, so the Japanese could not make a positive move immediately after their successes because they were unwilling to commit extempore invasion forces to so technically difficult a project as leapfrogging the Arafua Sea and New Guinea without insurance of cover by land-based aircraft which they lacked. This delay allowed the Australians to rally.

Although initially bemused and nearly beaten by the Japanese, later the Australians definitely got the upper hand in the jungles of New Guinea. So successful and so well geared to prevailing requirements and conditions was their conduct of jungle warfare and training for it that General Slim wanted officers of the British and Indian Armies to be attached to them in significant numbers to reap the benefit.

The Bomb that Brought a Kind of Peace...

Initial victories were won by the Japanese navy and army, on land mostly in the jungle. Although the Japanese lost the opportunity to conquer half the world when the allies won the naval battle of the Coral Sea, in the final analysis, victory for the allies only came when heartland Japan was so bruised that the political will to continue the fight was no more. The turn in the allied fortunes in the jungles of Asia and the Pacific were sufficient only for peripheral victories; the decisive hammer blow had to be made where it hurt most - by definition, as near the heart of the country as possible.

Japan would not have surrendered on 15 August 1945 without the dropping of the atomic bomb twice on its soil earlier in the month. It is quite probable that the war would have dragged on for another two years or so with, who knows, as many if not more casualties to the allies and the enemy as were caused by these new weapons of mass destruction. But dropped the atomic bombs were; the totality of the war embraced force even to that unheard-of extent and at a price many later considered was too high.

Once more, after victory in 1945, was it believed that 'the war to end all wars' had been fought and peace would prevail for ever: the idea of such horrendous weapons

being used again was something that no sane person could contemplate. It was equally true that none of us on the ground in Asia at the end of the war would have believed it had we been told that jungle warfare would be the staple military diet of a significant part of a number of armies, including the British, for many years to come, in my case ten years 'under the canopy'.

The United Nations Organisation (which unkind wits describe as 'a high level platform for low level propaganda') started off as the earnest of mankind's intention to settle quarrels and disputes amicably and without resorting to bloodshed. Alas for such pious ideals! Since 1945 the world has been witness to more wars than at any other period in history, especially the type called 'brush fire', a picturesque but inexact term for a small, anti-government war in the Third World. It was as though those countries that did engage in hostilities saw the suicidal folly of generating fighting to the pitch of sophistication that characterized World War II, although the fighting in Korea in the early 1950s and on the Indian subcontinent in the 1950s and 1960s was ferocious and intense. Those who felt it their mission to get rid of one type of regime (often colonialism) and replace it by another (just as often Communism) could ignore the nuclear dimension of retaliation as they planned their campaigns that, to a large extent, took place in the jungles of Asia. Even then more acquisition of territory was not seen as being sufficient for victory.

...that Soon Shattered

Metropolitan governments found themselves in the unenviable position of being unable to react to this new situation in as crisp and positive a manner as they would have liked. The quest for freedom from colonial rule, for self-determination and for independence in Indo-China clashed with the wishes of France - when the French had no intention of voluntarily handing over its territory to anyone - and the adherents of Ho Chi Minh, who were equally sure that they would evolve their own destiny in which France would play no part. The British government found itself unable to hand over power in Malaya to the Malaysians as long as there was a second contender to rule in their place, the other being the Communists. The Americans found themselves frustrated in Vietnam as they were unable to carry out their own policy of defence against Communism on the mainland of Asia by the installation and protection of a friendly government in Saigon. The request for use of the nuclear option, at times advocated by a few top senior field commanders, was always overruled by the politicians at home. In every case of such hostilities in South East Asia (China and Korea are in East Asia), the jungle played a significant, if not paramount, part in the conduct of operations on both sides. Without control of the jungle, the security forces of the government under threat could not keep those threatening it at bay: with control of the jungle, those against the government of the day were an important stage nearer to controlling their main target as well.

Thoughts on Japanese Tactics in Burma

By Capt W Smyly (2GR)

Editors Note: As one of our last survivors from the Chindit operations, with 3/2 GR in the first show and 3/9 GR in the second, on both occasions with mules, these thoughts from Captain Bill Smyly will be of interest. Bill Smyly joined the 2ND Goorkhas in Dehra Dun when he was 19 and recently turned 90 in 2013. He continues to march (unaided) at the Cenotaph Ceremony every year.

...but I am afraid I rather deserted the 2nd Goorkhas leaving the 3/2nd to spend the rest of the war with mules and horses. I served with the 3/9th (Burma) and 3/6th (Burma, Bangkok and Abbotabad) ending up in Razmak on the North West Frontier as ATO with 5/1 GR. (5/2 GR and my friend Ronnie Green from 3/2 were there at the same time). Am still fit enough to march past the Cenotaph once a year with the Burma Star Association and hope to be there again next November. The Bedford Branch is still functioning (just !) but we laid up our standard last year. I was Standard Bearer. Great occasion. We had some Japanese present which was an honour. I try to attend meetings of the Chindit Old Comrades Association when I hear of them. After the war I was in and out of HK for about 40 years (1956 to 1997) and attended Gurkha dinners for "The Old and Bold" organised by Brigadier Christopher Bullock.

...I was with mules most of the war and in several of the books on the Chindits, most recently *War in the Wilderness*" (Redding) and *Wingate's Lost Brigade*" (Chinnerly).

- 1943 1st Wingate Expedition 3/2GR unit in No 5 Column, commanded by Major Bernard Fergusson who gives an account in "Beyond the Chindwin". I got beriberi (swollen feet) and was on my own for about three months in the Kachin Hills.
- 1944 2nd Wingate I marched in with the Queens but stayed with their mules which they left behind when they reached BROADWAY and we all joined the 3/9 Gurkhas. (BROADWAY was a defended stronghold and the largest landing strip in Central Burma. Troops were flown in and flown out from here). Mentioned in Despatches at the rather disastrous defeat called "BLACKPOOL". (BLACKPOOL was a Chindit stronghold commanded by John Masters [similar to WHITE CITY] on the main railway line in North Burma and we were driven out of it with fairly heavy losses. We were completely routed but unable to understand how so many of us got away).

- 1945 I was appointed Mike Calvert's "Assault Company" Commander in training (he liked to have a small bodyguard he could lead himself when he wanted to get mixed up in any action) but the Chindits were disbanded and we never saw action.
- 1945-46 ATO with the 1/5th GR at Razmak NWFP. There were two Gurkha battalions' here; the other was 5/2GR.
- Demobbed 1947 rank Captain. All dates from memory -- it was quite a while ago.

...A good deal has been written about my time with the Chindits but I don't think I have seen anything on the tactics of the Chinese and Japanese armies in Burma. The Chinese armies under Stilwell had been on active service against the Japanese for 11 years, long before they had heard of Stilwell, and I don't believe that in Burma they had any system for replacing casualties with reinforcements. The idea was to fight a war with no casualties and if necessary with no organised commissariat. In China the Chinese Army was greatly feared by the Chinese on whom they lived. Soldiers are not by tradition greatly respected in China for this reason.

I met up with some of them from Shantung which was the place I came from when I was between 7 and 14 and the language I spoke. These people in China did actually live on the land. In Burma they were more feared by the local villagers (who were on our side) than the Japanese. Their camp was filled with stolen pigs and chickens, and of course they were backed by US supplies as well and depended on US arms and ammunition.

In an army of this kind it was a General's job to ensure that his men were paid. Read some Roman history and you will find the same situation. But it was the officers immediately in command of smaller units, from battalion down, whose job it was to see his men were fed. And when the Chinese under Stilwell engaged with the Japanese their tactics were designed to lose as few men as possible. Preferably none at all.

Guns and ammunition in this case were supplied by the Americans. Without them there was no question of attack. Attack involved surrounding a Japanese unit and pounding them with free ammunition. Keep the ammunition coming and they would go on firing it, but they would leave an escape route so the enemy were encouraged to make use of it and retire into the hills. The Japanese had very poor logistics and found the jungle a very bitter experience in which many committed suicide and many more died of hunger or in their own dressing stations without the loss of any Chinese life.

The important point for us in all this was that that is exactly what the Japanese did to us at BLACKPOOL. No one has ever explained how so many of us were able to get out alive. We just walked out. Some accounts blamed the Japanese

for overlooking our escape route. Some even claimed that we were very clever to find it. I was one of the last out and the Japanese were following us waving little flags on long sticks. One could see the flags, a rising sun, but not the men who held them. The nearest ones were closer than 50 yards. They hounded us out like sheep dogs driving sheep. I saw this and believe they learned the drill from experience, possibly from the Chinese, but have never seen it written up.

...I wonder if you have ever read or seen Nick Neil's account of the Japanese officer he chased through a deep paddy field in the Arakan and gunned down with his Thomson sub-machine gun. They recovered the body together with a diary and a photograph of his wife and two children. Apparently many of the Japanese kept diaries some of them of considerable literary merit and graphic accounts of the war from their side. I attach one of these and hope it will come through clearly. It is doubly interesting, first as an account of the end of the Japanese campaign, but also because their position at the end was so similar to that of British forces in Malaya at the beginning, an army in a jungle situation without adequate logistics. This is their own account of what happened to the Japanese.

One interesting feature of this article is that it contradicts John Master's account of our wholesale slaughter of retreating Japanese which he gives in *The Road Past Mandalay*. General Rees was too busy in his race towards Rangoon to spend time mopping up the Japanese stragglers who were by that time too short of food and equipment to pose any threat. This writer says that the British avoided contact and went around them by another route - an incredible idea until one realises the helplessness of an army without logistics. Much the same position as our forces at the start of the campaign in Malaysia.

I was with Master's brigade at a Chindit Block ("Fortress") called Blackpool and the Japanese did much the same with us. Had they held us there to fight it would have cost them more perhaps than they were willing to pay. Instead they pounded us leaving an escape route and sort of shepherded us out like sheep dogs driving a flock. Their front men carried little rising sun flags on bamboo wands and we could see them popping up around us and coming nearer but could not get sight of the men below and shoot at them. To us it was a wonder that so many got out. Our path from the Block to the Hills was lined with stretchers and the wounded watching us go by. I believe the tactic to have been developed by the Chinese who love fireworks and were ready to shoot off as much American ammunition as they were given but did not like frontal attack. The Chinese troops I met had been fighting for 11 years and were good at working out ways not to get killed. They were also adept at "living off the land" which was not appreciated by the hills tribes who were on our side. When I visited their camp was filled with stolen pigs and chickens.

I think the account by Yasumasa Nishiji gives a very vivid picture of the last days from the Japanese side.

The Ponra Rifles

By Col D F Neill, QBE, MC

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The date, as I write, is 3 July, 1974. My thoughts go back to this date thirty years ago and to the moment when I turned over the body of First-Class Private Okada and that of another of his dead comrades and picked up their two Meiji rifles and long bayonets. These very rifles now hang in Battalion Headquarters of the Second Battalion. Small silver plaques affixed to their butts tell that they were taken from a patrol of 1st Battalion 143 Regiment, of the famous Japanese 55 Division at the village of Ponra on 3 July 1944. There is more to the story of the two rifles than the few words which are engraved on the plaques.

At the beginning of the monsoon of 1944, Third Battalion was holding a defensive position covering the Razabil crossroads on the Maungdaw-Buthidaung road on the coast of Arakan. General Reggie Hutton was commanding at that time and I was his Intelligence Officer. One day, in mid-June, General Reggie showed me a brief written operation order from Brigade Headquarters which detailed the Battalion to send a fighting patrol some ten miles south and behind the enemy lines to show the flag, kill as many Japanese as possible, and to capture an enemy prisoner. He told me that I was to command the patrol, which was to come from B Company, and that the Brigade Intelligence Officer, Val Meadows, would accompany me on the patrol. Val had not yet joined the Regiment at that time and was still serving with the 12th Frontier Force Regiment. The Commandant further told me that I should report to Brigade Headquarters the following day to be briefed on the coming operation by both Val Meadows and Maurice Budd who was in command of all V Force patrols operating as a screen in front of the Brigade defensive line.

I had been working closely with Val Meadows ever since we had come to Arakan in March and we had become very good friends. I was delighted, therefore, at the news that we should be together on this coming operation. Maurice Budd, I did not know so well as we had only met on a few occasions previously. Maurice - who was sadly to be killed before the war ended in a car accident whilst on leave in Shillong - was a real 'pirate' and a very brave man. He had a thick black beard and habitually wore nothing other than a brightly-coloured lungi, into the waist of which was stuffed his .45 Colt automatic. He cut a rare figure in this dress as he wandered about the coastal paddy-fields behind the enemy lines for weeks on end, gathering information, and escorted by only one or two unarmed villagers from his band of V Force patrolmen. The war in Burma bred many characters such as Maurice Budd.

And so it was to Val Meadows and Maurice Budd that I reported for my briefing at Brigade Headquarters. Brigade's written instructions to General Reggie Hutton were repeated to me once more and then we got down to the details of how

our patrol of platoon strength would insert itself behind the Japanese lines in order to carry out its mission. We adopted Maurice's plan, which was, briefly, to board a small coastal steamer at Maungdaw, steam down the Naf River, towing three large country boats behind us, and then, having reached a point opposite the village of Ponra, which was some five miles south of where the Naf entered the sea, we were to disembark from the steamer into the country boats and be rowed inshore to land on the beach. For obvious reasons, the whole of this maritime phase was to be carried out during the hours of darkness. Having landed on the beach, we were to leave a section to hold our beach head, with whom the Brigade heavy radio set, manned by two Madrassi signallers and our sole link with our own forces, would remain, and then advance some 1,000 yards inland to the village of Ponra where we were to set up our advance patrol base and where we could count on maximum cooperation from Maurice Budd's V Force villagers.

On getting back to Battalion Headquarters at Razabil, I told General Reggie Hutton of the plan we had just agreed and asked for his approval. This he gave and told me to get in contact with Jock Stuart-Jones, who was commanding B Company, and then brief, for the coming operation, Number 5 Platoon, which had already been nominated to accompany Val Meadows and me to Ponra. 1505 Havildar Manbir Thapa was the Platoon Commander, and Subadar Manbahadur Gurung, IOM, the Company Second-in-Command, had also been specially detailed to take part in the coming operation by the Commandant. Subadar Manbahadur had distinguished himself the previous year as a platoon commander on the First Wingate Expedition, and General Reggie, very rightly, wished him to accompany the patrol to act as my mother and father. This choice could not have suited me better for Manbahadur was a hero in my eyes.

I have forgotten the exact date on which we moved out on the Ponra operation, but it was some time near to 20 June when, towards last light, Subadar Manbahadur, 5 Platoon, and I left Razabil in transport for Brigade Headquarters at Maungdaw to pick up Val Meadows and Maurice Budd before boarding the river steamer. We were wearing cap comforters, which were preferred by the men to their felt hats, and also canvas rubber-soled hockey boots to aid us in silent movement on the night patrols which we expected we might need to carry out if we found that the enemy were dominating the area to which we were going by day. We took rations in bulk to last the section guarding the beach head for about a fortnight, but few rations for the remainder of the patrol, as we were relying on the V Force villagers to provide us with rice etcetera on payment. We carried only groundsheets and cut-down mosquito nets, but had decided against taking blankets so as to lighten our load as far as possible. Our main load, of course, consisted of ammunition and grenades. Later events were to prove that we had grossly underestimated our requirements of these vital necessities.

We did not stay long at Brigade Headquarters and very shortly after our arrival at Maungdaw we embarked on our little steamer with its country boats in tow. It must have been about

2200 when the steamer sailed and our trip to the unknown had begun. All of us had had experience of deep penetration operations behind the Japanese lines from the 1943 campaign in North Burma under Orde Wingate. 1943 was much in our thoughts as the steamer moved steadily through the night. That had been a bad year for the Battalion and an alarming baptism of fire for many of us. At a very early age a great number of us had been introduced to bad superior commanders conducting ill-conceived plans and we had not enjoyed the treatment. It was with very mixed feelings, therefore, that the soldiers and I started on this next raid behind the lines of an enemy we had got to know, respect and yet fear so well.

It seemed calm enough whilst we were on board the steamer, but at about midnight when we transferred into the much smaller country boats, which were about the size of fairly large rowing boats, the sea had an ominous and sickening swell to it. The country boats were brought alongside the steamer by their crews of two each and I started getting the men into them as quietly as possible - a section into each boat. I climbed into the boat in which I was going to travel first and then started to help the heavily-laden men to take their seats in this little craft which was now beginning to rise and fall up and down the side of the steamer like a yo-yo. I do not know what my face looked like, as I could not see it, but the men's faces in the moonlight were studies which I have remembered to this day. If I were afraid, then how much more must the men have been in fear of their lives, as not one single one of them could swim. In those days of the war there was simply not the time to train the soldiers to swim. Goodness knows how many men's lives might have been saved in the campaigns in Burma had we only insisted more on the vital training in swimming. That country was one of rivers, some of which were very wide by any standards; and for the infantryman, there was always, wherever he went, one more river to cross. And so, after a 500-yard nightmare journey in the little country boats, we all landed safely on the beach where we dug in and spent the rest of the night.

The following morning, Maurice Budd left us and went off to join his V Force patrols and to arrange our reception at Ponra and at all the other coastal villages in which his men were based. Some time later, Val Meadows, Subadar Manbahadur and I made our way to Ponra with two sections, leaving, as planned, one section, the Brigade radio set and the Madrassi signallers to guard our rear and the beach head. On reaching Ponra, we found that Maurice Budd had left a message for us to say that he had gone elsewhere and that he would make contact with us within the next few days or sooner if he had important information to give us. This message was given to us by one of Maurice's most trusted men, a young Arakanese called Habibullah. Habibullah was to accompany us wherever we went. The Arakanese villagers in this particular area of the coast were Muslims and all spoke Urdu. Despite their domination by the Japanese for nearly two years, or perhaps because of it, these excellent people were very pro-British and equally anti-Japanese. They were to prove themselves to be most loyal friends to us, acting as our eyes and ears, throughout the time

of our operation, although they well knew what could happen to them after our departure should the enemy get to know of the help they had given us.

As there was no up to date information about the enemy's patrolling methods in the area, and since the indications were that, since the rains had started some weeks before, the Japanese attention had been directed more towards the foothills to the east rather than to the coastal plain, I decided that we should start our operations by daytime patrols so as to cover the widest area as quickly as possible. With only two sections available to me, and with a very large area to cover, I felt that night work would be too slow. Not only that, but if I were to show the flag as part of my mission, then we should have to patrol through the villages by day when the villagers would be awake and would see us.

For the next few days our patrols were all uneventful. Our first sight of and contact with the enemy came on 1 July. We were patrolling through the village of Lambaguna at the time. This was a large, sprawling village which was divided into two almost equal parts by a strip of open paddy-fields some 100 yards wide and which was situated a few miles to the south-east of our forward base at Ponra. We had visited Lambaguna two or three times before on this operation and were, therefore, already known to the villagers. As we were moving through the northern sector of the village the villagers ran to tell us that a Japanese patrol was already in occupation of the southern sector of Lambaguna. They said they did not know the Japanese strength. We moved forward to the southern edge of our sector of the village, took up positions overlooking the intervening strip of paddy, and I started to search with my binoculars the other edge of Lambaguna on the far side of the rice fields. Suddenly, as I was looking, three Japanese soldiers stood up from behind a small bare mound about three-quarters of the way between us and the far side of the intervening strip of paddy. After a few minutes, perhaps because something had aroused their suspicions, they took up fire positions, lying down behind their mound once more. However, they still remained quite clearly in our sight as we were slightly to their flank. We watched them with fascination for perhaps another minute as they lay almost exposed to us no more than 75 yards away. We had never had the chance in 1943 to study Japanese soldiers at our leisure at such relatively short range. We made the most of this opportunity! Then we killed them. I fired first with my Thompson sub-machine gun at the nearest Japanese soldier. He lay where he was without moving. My Bren gunner killed the other two. There was no apparent reaction from the rest of the enemy reported to have been in occupation of the southern sector of the village. However, I reckoned that we would gain no marks by moving out into the open paddy to search the enemy bodies in full view of any Japanese holding the other Lambaguna. Furthermore, we were few in number and a long way from home. We pulled out very fast and withdrew back to relative safety at Ponra. That evening, Habibullah told us that a friend of his had come in from Lambaguna to tell him that the Japanese had buried their three dead soldiers and had remained in occupation of Lambaguna South.

That night, after discussion with Val Meadows and Subadar Manbahadur, I decided, as a result of Habibullah's information, that it would be profitable to ambush a particular track we had noticed previously running along the edge of the northern sector of Lambaguna village. We were very certain that, provided the Japanese had not done so already, there was every chance that, after the killing of their three soldiers, they would wish to search for our patrol some time during the next day. We further believed that they would undoubtedly search for our tracks in the area of Lambaguna North, from where they must have discovered our fire had come. This supposition being correct, there was little doubt in our minds that one of the routes they would need to use could well be the track we were now considering as a probable ambush killing ground.

Plans for our ambush having been made, we left Ponra for Lambaguna again before first light on 2 July. We reached our chosen site without incident and took up positions covering the selected track by hiding ourselves in some disused Japanese slit-trenches on a scrub-covered mound which overlooked the target area. Although there had been heavy rain the night before, dawn broke to an almost cloudless sky. It was very hot and we lay there sweating into our dirty uniforms whilst waiting for an enemy patrol to appear. Nothing moved in the area - not even groups of friendly villagers. I occupied myself for an hour or so by scratching the numbers 1 to 10 in Japanese script on the earthen lip of the slit-trench in which I was hiding. All Intelligence Officers of the day were encouraged to learn how to read Japanese numerals so as to attempt to interpret a dead enemy's unit number which would invariably be stamped on the individual's identity disc. To while away the time, therefore, I thought that I would do some of my homework! Soon, I tired of this and began to search the surrounding country with my binoculars to look for possible enemy movement in the nearby paddy fields. To my north lay Razabil and Maungdaw, some ten miles away. Further to the north-east I could just still discern the trace of the Maungdaw-Buthidaung road where it entered the hills of the Mayu Range. Beyond my sight were the Tunnels through which the road crossed the Range to reach the big village of Buthidaung, now in Japanese hands, on the eastern side of the Mayu. To my east, running from north to south, was the jungle-clad spine of the Mayu Range itself. The highest peak in the Range was Point 1,440. I could see very clearly Point 1,267, on which I was to live with Battalion Headquarters for some six weeks from the coming September. Also visible were 'Tiger' and Point 1,433 which Third Battalion were to attack with great gallantry on 8 September. To my west, some 1,000 yards away, lay the sea. The coastal plain, in which we were operating, was, in this area, a strip of rice paddy-fields about 4,000 - 5,000 yards wide which separated the Mayu Range from the sea and continued south from where we were ambushing for another 30 miles or so, diminishing in width, until the paddy merged with the jungle at the tip of the Mayu Peninsula at Foul Point just north of Akyab island. The coastal plain was quite well populated and was dotted about with both large and small tree-clad villages, such as Ponra, our patrol base, and Lambaguna, alongside which we were ambushing. Search as I would, I was unable to see any sign of enemy patrols moving along the bunds

dividing the water-logged paddy-fields. Nor did anything move along the village track we had been covering for so many hours now. I felt, on this occasion, we were going to be out of luck and decided we would do best by returning to Ponra to rest before the next day's activities began. On our way back to our base we met Maurice Budd who had heard of our yesterday's success and had come to give his congratulations. He warned us to be on the look out from now on for Japanese patrols which would be seeking to destroy us.

It rained heavily again that evening and throughout most of the night, but the rain had stopped by the morning of 3 July. I cannot remember what had delayed our departure on patrol that morning, but we were still in our base in Ponra, sitting in the houses in which we were living, at about 1030 when Habibullah came running up to the hut which Val and I were occupying with our orderlies and escorts to tell us that a Japanese patrol was approaching our base from the direction of Yawathike, a big village some 1,000 yards to the east. As silently and as quickly as possible we ran to our stand-to positions behind the paddy bunds on the eastern fringe of our village. In our hurry to occupy our positions I had forgotten to give out any specific orders regarding opening fire should the enemy patrol come within range. It was too late now to amend this error as the enemy were continuing to approach and were only some 400 yards away by this time. They would have seen my movements had I attempted to go over to brief Val Meadows and the section with him on this point as they were in position about 40 yards away near a big pipal tree and I should have had to cross some open ground in order to reach them. I vowed to myself that I should never make this same mistake in the future. I then began to watch the Japanese patrol come nearer and nearer. There were nine of them. The first eight men were wearing steel helmets, but the last man had on a peaked cloth cap. They were moving in single file along the paddy bunds, fairly well bunched up and with their rifles carried on their shoulders with the muzzles uppermost. All had their bayonets fixed. They were moving idly and, as they drew nearer, I could hear them talking amongst themselves. I was very surprised. Such laxness was very unusual in the enemy. Could it be that this patrol were quite unaware of our presence in their area? Be that as it may, here they were moving in single file, well bunched up, over open paddy towards a village which might easily be held by us and with some 1,000 yards now of knee-deep waterlogged rice fields between them and cover and safety in Yawathike village. They still continued to approach whilst we waited with mounting excitement and tension, watching them as cats watch mice. But these mice were dangerous. I looked round and grinned at the soldier lying beside me, Lance-Naik Debsing Thapa, a member of my Intelligence Section and a lineboy from Dehra Dun, who had asked to accompany me on this operation and who had been my shadow ever since we had landed on the beach from the country boats, what seemed now to be such ages ago. Debsing smiled back at me. Poor lad, he was to receive such a ghastly shrapnel wound in his neck the following March during B Company's attack on Snowdon East, many miles to our south at Tamandu.

The nine Japanese were now just about 75 yards away from us and heading straight for the junction between my left-hand section with Val Meadows, grouped round the big pipal tree, and the paddy bund which was manned by my right-hand section and me. I was saying to myself that the range was still not quite close enough to warrant opening fire, when a long burst of Bren fire from the base of the pipal tree shattered the silence and started our hearts beating in double quick time. Excitement had obviously got the better of my left section's Bren gunner and, for better or worse, he had opened the action. The Japanese hit the paddy water behind the bund along which they had been moving and took cover like lightning. I doubt very much if any of them had been seriously hit by that first long burst of Bren fire which seemed to me to have gone very high. Then we all started firing, with, I am ashamed to record, absolutely no control from me whatsoever! With all the horrors and shame of the 1943 campaign under Wingate bubbling up wildly in our minds at the sight of a bunch of our enemy pinned down and powerless in front of us, we all went berserk and fired and fired until the barrels of our weapons became red hot in our hands. Most of the time we were raking the paddy bund behind which the Japanese were lying with long bursts or with single shots from the riflemen. Occasionally, a Japanese head, shoulder, or rump would appear momentarily above the bullet-torn paddy bund ahead of us and then we would fire even more wildly at such attractive targets. I had fired nearly three of my five magazines of ammunition with my Tommy gun's change lever at automatic and I had not yet hit a thing other than the paddy bund, as far as I could judge. When my stupidity finally dawned on me I quickly and guiltily changed my lever to single shot and, determined to fire with more care and precision, waited for the next proper target to present itself. A moment or so later, I saw a Japanese trying to crawl away along the far side of the bund which separated us. When he came to where the bund had been badly shot away by our earlier wild firing I could see the upper part of his body quite clearly. I fired at him quickly three times and could see the second and third shots smack into the wet shirt covering his back. He fell back into the water and lay still. Then I saw a wet rump poking up for a moment and fired three more quick shots. The first one missed, but the last two hit the Japanese in the seat with such force that he was flung back into the flooded field beyond the cover of the bund. And there I hit him finally with another shot.

It was at this particular stage, I think, that I remembered that the third part of my mission was to take a prisoner. It seemed as though we had been firing wildly and without control at the enemy for the past hour or so! Such is the state to which one can be brought by excitement when one lacks experience. In reality, I doubt if we had been firing for much over a minute or two. First catch your prisoner! I realised that if I did not act positively now, then the chance of making such a capture would be gone forever as all candidates for the POW cage would soon be dead! I screamed above the din to the left-hand section to give me covering fire and then ordered the section which was with me to cease fire, fix swords, draw kukris and charge. Up from behind our cover and over the paddy bund we leapt and plunged into the knee-deep rice field. The men were yelling

blue murder as we ploughed our way through first one sodden field and then into the next. With the noise we were making I could not hear the sound of our covering fire, but could clearly see the strike of the left section's shots hitting the wet field ahead of us in which lay what remained of the enemy patrol. The water from the flooded ground was splashing up into our faces as we ran. And then suddenly, two enemy broke cover from behind the bund just in front and tried to make a dash for safety. I fired at one of the two. Two shots and then, empty magazine! How many more mistakes? How many more lessons to learn? I knelt and changed magazines in a flash and switched my lever to automatic once more. Even if I had to fire every round I possessed, I was determined to kill the Japanese still continuing to escape ahead of me. Such was my excitement at that moment. As I got up to continue my pursuit, the other fleeing enemy, hearing the men's bullets cracking around his ears, stopped, turned round and flung up his hands in surrender. I yelled to Lance-Nail Debsing, my shadow, to take him prisoner; Debsing did this at once. Then on after the other man. I was not gaining on him and had no intention of following him all the way across the fields to Yawathike. So I stopped once more and started firing again. My chest was heaving, I was breathless, my Tommy gun's muzzle was going up and down and my eyes were full of sweat. Three bursts I fired and could see the heavy bullets striking the man's back and flicking away pieces of shirt and flesh. I had not realised the striking energy of a .45 bullet before. With every hit, the man seemed to shoot forward like a rag doll struck by a sledgehammer. He went down. I turned him over and took his rifle away from him.

I then shouted to the men to check the remaining seven bodies for signs of life and said that I wished to search every one myself to collect paybooks, identification discs and any other documents and diaries which the dead members of the enemy patrol might have been carrying. The Japanese were great ones for keeping and carrying diaries which usually disclosed useful items of information, I started my search with the body of the man I had been chasing. His documents later revealed him to be First-Class Private Okada, a member, as were all others in the patrol, of 1st Battalion 143 Regiment. He was a young man about the same age as myself. We had come a long way from our respective homes, had he and I, to meet under such violent circumstances on this flooded rice field on the remote coast of Arakan. I checked his wallet and found a photo of a young girl and two tiny children - his wife and babies. In the years since then, my thoughts have often gone back to that moment, to Private Okada, to the woman I made a widow and to the children I made fatherless. But then I remember, too, that Okada would have done to me as I did to him had our positions on that paddy-field been reversed.

I walked back to where Debsing was holding our prisoner near to the pile of Japanese dead lying in the reddening rice water. We had shot them to ribbons. I picked up the next man's rifle and bayonet and told Subadar Manbahadur to segregate this one and Okada's for later despatch to the Mess in Dehra Dun. I then went over the other bodies to check them for identifications, had the remaining weapons collected and told

the men to move back to the village. We were exposed and asking for trouble were we to remain for much longer in those rice fields.

We had not been back in Ponra village very long before the Japanese counterattacked us. The first thing we knew of this was the familiar slow tok-tok-tok-tok of Japanese medium machine guns firing at us from the direction of Yawathike, long since thought to be the base for a relatively large enemy force. The machine gun fire was clearly covering fire to shield enemy infantry advancing across the paddy-fields from Yawathike to Ponra. We stood to once more, lining the bunds at the eastern fringe of the village. This time, I took good care to position myself at the base of the earlier-mentioned pipal tree! No sign yet of any Japanese infantry, but the medium machine gun fire was continuing. From time to time, bursts were striking the upper branches and the bole of the pipal tree, scattering bits of bark and some leaves. At no time, did the Japanese covering fire cause us any casualties as it remained much too high from start to finish. I told Subadar Manbahadur to give me an ammunition state, knowing now too well that our previous wild and uncontrolled firing would have left us in a most delicate and dangerous situation. I very nearly had a fit when Manbahadur reported the ammunition state to me a very short while later. All Bren and Tommy gunners were down to one or two magazines each and the riflemen had only an average of some twenty rounds in hand each. I took out my own five magazines from their pouch. Only one and a half full ones remained! And at that moment we saw the first groups of Japanese infantry doubling over the paddy from bund to bund some 800 to 900 yards away. The full enormity of my failure to control our fire earlier on struck me then with a force that has stayed imprinted on my memory to this day. Our present situation was the result of my fault and mine alone. Had we but ammunition, then we should have had the clear option of being able to choose to stay and fight and inflict further casualties on the enemy. With the excellent fields of fire provided by the open rice fields surrounding our village, we could have held on for some considerable time and, in the process, given the Japanese a further bloody nose. But with our dangerously low stock of ammunition, we had few options open; particularly, when I remembered that we might well have to fight to hold our beach head later on whilst we were awaiting our eventual pick-up by the steamer at the time of our final withdrawal from the area. No, we had no alternative but to get out of Ponra as fast as our legs would carry us before the Japanese counter-attack hit us and without expending too many more precious rounds of ammunition in the process. Once we reached the beach head, then I should clearly have to request on the radio for an immediate rescue operation to be mounted.

I gave out quick orders for the evacuation of Ponra. which entailed one of the two sections remaining behind to give us covering fire for about five minutes so as to attempt to slow down the rate of the enemy's advance towards us. That section would then pull out at the double to meet up with the remainder of my force at our rendezvous. Everyone, apparently, reached the rendezvous safely. So far, so good. Then we ran

into more difficulties. We lost our way slightly and found we had missed the route we had originally taken on our outward journey at the start of the operation. Instead of being on a decent track running over dry ground, we now found ourselves in deep tidal mangrove swamps, and the tide was in. There could be no turning back now; however, so on we went, with the swamp getting deeper. Then we came to a small tidal chaung or river, some 25 yards wide. It was deep. None of the men could swim. So I had to swim each man across myself. This was time consuming and exhausting. Altogether, we had to cross four more such tidal chaungs in this fashion before we eventually arrived at the relative safety of the beach head where the reserve section were waiting with anxiety. They had, of course, heard the morning's heavy firing and had feared for our safety.

Brigade Headquarters were at once contacted on the radio and I sent a very brief report telling what had happened since our first contact on 1 July. I then asked for the Divisional Artillery to fire on Yawathike and the paddy between that village and Ponra. This should not only catch the Japanese in the open, I hoped, between the two villages whilst they were evacuating their dead from outside Ponra, but also cause them further casualties in Yawathike itself. In a very short time, our artillery opened fire on the targets given and I was listening with satisfaction to the sound of the shells bursting to our east, when Subadar Manbahadur came up to report the alarming news that Rifleman Bharsal Gurung was missing. Bharsal's section commander, Naik Laljit Gurung, had, in the heat of the moment, failed to check in his section at the rendezvous after we had finally pulled out from the village earlier. Clearly, therefore, Bharsal had been left behind in Ponra, still holding his fire position, when his section had withdrawn after having covered the rest of us out of the village. Had Bharsal now been killed or taken prisoner, or had our artillery fire come down on the paddy-fields soon enough to prevent the Japanese from actually occupying Ponra? I called for Naik Laljit and told him to take his section back to the village at the double with Habibullah - who had fortunately reappeared on the scene - acting as guide to show the fastest and safest route. He was then to approach Ponra very cautiously to see whether or not the enemy were in occupation, and if the village proved to be empty he was to search for and bring back Bharsal, if alive. Lady Luck had smiled on Bharsal, for, in about an hour or so, Laljit came happily back to our base with our lost sheep. Bharsal's story made us all laugh with pride. He said he had never got an order to withdraw and had only realised he was on his own some while after we had all gone. He said he was not sure where we would have gone, but assumed we might have returned to the beach head. However, as he had not been specifically told to withdraw, he had assumed that we had wanted him to stay! And so, he remained on in Ponra on his own, fighting his private battle with the Japanese infantrymen. He told me that, after a while, the Japanese had clearly marked his position and were starting to bring down such accurate fire that he was having difficulty in aiming and firing his rifle at the enemy over the top of the bund behind which he was lying. So, he said, the only thing to do was to cut out a hole in the base of the bund with his bayonet and fire his rifle from behind adequate cover

through the hole! And this is just what he did. Fortunately for Bharsal, our artillery fire came down in the nick of time and drove the enemy back from the fringe of the village before they had time to reach his position. In January of 1971, when I was able to visit Bharsal and Laljit in their Lamjung village of Singdi, I had the chance to recall our escapades at Ponra with my two old friends. Laughing as he retold his story of his lone fight against the Japanese, sitting outside his house overlooking the Wardi Khola, Bharsal lifted up his hansiya, with which he had been cutting thatch, and turned to me and said: "But this is my weapon now, Hajur!"

We remained that night holding a tight perimeter around our narrow beach head, with our backs to the sea and our limited supply of ammunition in our pouches. We did not sleep easily. The following day, Jock Stuart-Jones arrived in the steamer with the rest of B Company to relieve Val Meadows, 5 Platoon and me. I took Jock to Ponra, which the villagers had previously told us was empty of Japanese, and showed him on the ground the details of yesterday's action. We found, however, despite the artillery shelling, the Japanese had managed to carry away the bodies of their eight dead soldiers, I then returned to the beach head and we finally got into the country boats, boarded the steamer and returned to Battalion Headquarters at Razabil.

A few days later, we learned from Divisional Intelligence that our prisoner was a Maugh villager from the Kalapanzin Valley nearby, acting as a JIFC (Japanese-Inspired Fifth Columnist) guide to the enemy patrol and not an actual Japanese soldier. We were very disappointed at this news. However, very shortly after that, V Force patrols reported to us that the Japanese had buried a total of 22 dead in Yawathike as a result of our two contacts at Lambaguna and Ponra and the subsequent artillery bombardment. We were glad of this news, for 5 Platoon could now safely say that at least two of their three missions had been accomplished.

I was not to revisit the village of Ponra again during the rest of our time in the Razabil area. However, in November, 1968, whilst flying from Singapore to Kathmandu and back in a RAF Andover, we flew both up and down the coast of Arakan. When I told the Captain of the aircraft my interest in and connection with the coastline, he flew the Andover as close to the coast as his flight plan would allow and gave me the chance of looking once again, for perhaps the last time, at some of our battlefields of 1944-45. Amongst the many places which I could clearly recognise, as if I had been there only yesterday, were the villages of Lambaguna and Ponra. Memories crowded into my mind as I looked down upon the scene so far below - old friends, old enemies and the two rifles hanging on a barrack wall.

“Those Forsaken by God” The Retreat From Imphal

Written and illustrated by Yasomasa Nishijim Ex Staff Sergeant - The 20th Independent Engineering Regiment Japanese Imperial Army

Translated into English by Masarl Hotta

Introduction

The Imphal Military Operation

At the last stage of the Pacific War, for four months from March 1944, the Japanese went on to the offensive at Imphal, North East India. The counter-attack of the British and Indian allied armies, supported by the Air Force, was powerful. In July 1944, the Japanese Army received the order to retreat.

It was the beginning of one of the worst and most disastrous retreats that humankind had ever witnessed. Numerous soldiers whose Regiments were unknown trudged along the road; those who were wounded in battle and were trying to get to a Field Hospital and those who had fallen ill and were unable to remain at the front. During the retreat these men were joined by many others who were unable to keep up with the main body and were left to look after themselves. Almost all of them, tens of thousands, perished.



We called the road "Human Remains Highway". What happened here was beyond the bounds of acceptable human behaviour; it was a vision of Hell. Those struggling along this road were almost all in their twenties yet they stooped like old men. The sight was one of total misery. Nobody could have believed that these men had once possessed the strength to survive a series of intense battles. Many enemy soldiers were deterred from pursuing us on this road; they did not want to witness such an atrocious scene; they made a detour instead. Hard as I tried, after the War, to recount my experience I failed to bring it home to many people; there was always something missing. I stopped talking about it and tried writing and showing some photographs but this proved no more successful. Then drawing came into my mind and some acquaintances encouraged me to follow this course,

I am uncertain if my drawings are expressive enough for people to understand the position we were all in. However, I am happy if they can even catch a glimpse of how things really were.

While I was drawing these pictures and writing the script, I shed a tear several times. When confronted by the actual

scenes I was not moved to tears, perhaps owing to my youth or the fact that I had an unsentimental view on the War in those days. But I do not have the same unsentimental view now, nor am I young any longer. Now I can freely cry over my friends who died.



I could not imagine that this was a man who had fought successfully in battles in Hong Kong and Singapore.

He looked to be deep in thought; in fact, having been exposed to the monsoon, he had reached the limit of mental exhaustion and he was merely gazing intently at the water trickling down to his feet.

Though I prayed he would make it to the river-crossing point, he passed away at the roadside only a short distance from it.



One of the soldiers carrying a stretcher perished - then the soldier on the stretcher died. No one could help them and they could not help anyone. In the end every one of them perished.

We gradually became acutely aware that there was nothing any of us could do. Taking one's life seemed the only way out. Soldiers who had no chance of recovery were increasingly pressured to take this path.

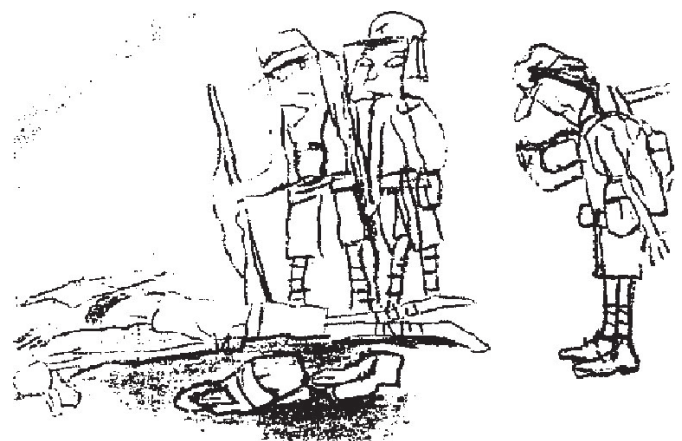
In increasing numbers our soldiers fell, physically emaciated and crippled, yet mentally alert. I had heard the locals saying that they exiled their serious offenders to this region in the knowledge that the environment would surely kill them.

We could not simply abandon our dying comrades in a place like this, in our desperation to help them we often ignored orders.

This soldier gave his money to his mates and, light-heartedly, told them to buy something to eat when they got away from the front.

After a while, he crawled to the foot of a tree, holding a grenade. Without any sign of hesitation, he activated the grenade and terminated himself. Some of his mates who had witnessed the incident cut off a part of his body and left. They probably tried to catch up with the rest of their unit.

(Note: Unlike the Allied forces whose practice it was to create cemeteries near to the battlefields and bury their dead as soon as possible. It has long been the custom for Japanese warriors who fell in battle to be cremated and their remains returned to their native land. However, due to the circumstances of the Second World War, the Japanese Army did not have either the resources or time to do this. To compensate, it became the practice for comrades of the fallen to cut off their dead friends' fingers and return them to their families for burial in Japan).



"I feel much better today, I'll move on now; you can catch me up later". After saying this, the soldier went off alone.

We came across him dead. He had committed suicide in the middle of the road. Since he knew that we would walk past he must have been hoping that we would attend his body. As he

had still been able to walk we all felt dismayed at his decision. However, knowing his nature, he probably did not want to become a burden on his unit.

In tears, some of our young soldiers held on to him.

He was married, with children, and was good-natured and amicable; even more so when he had been physically healthy and strong.

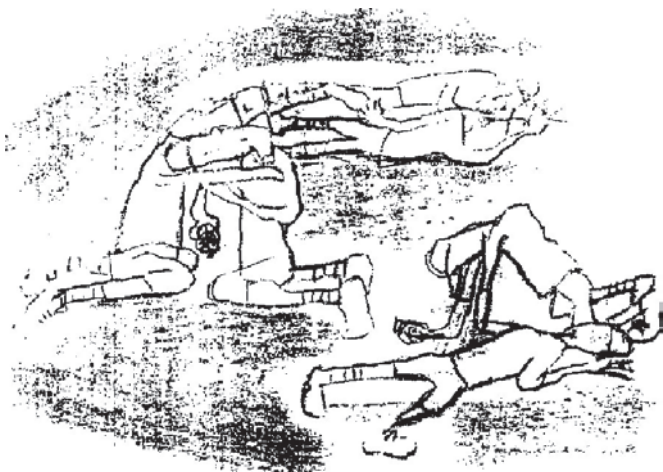
I had the bewildering thought that perhaps married men were more decisive than single men.

Having witnessed what had happened while resting, a sick soldier told us that he saw the man pull the trigger of his rifle with his big toe.

It became a routine that a soldier who was emaciated and crippled, with no hope of recovery, was given a grenade and pressured, without words, to sort himself out.



This soldier was so outraged at being given a grenade that he put on his boots and puttees and crawled after his officer, screaming "You've lorded it over me; what have I got in return? I'll bloody kill you."



It often occurred that soldiers took their own lives in pairs. They embraced placing a grenade between them, We called it double-suicide.

This scene reminded me of the painting of "The White Tigers stabbing each other at Mount Limori The only difference was that The White Tigers¹ used a sword whereas the soldiers used a grenade.

I suspect now that some who cut their lives short in this way could have lived longer but, incapable of severing the strong bonds they had formed with their fellow soldiers, they chose to die together.

At dawn, at our encampment alongside the road, some rifle fire was heard. As it was most unlikely that enemy troops were nearby, I ordered one of the privates to go and check it out.

After half an hour or so, he came back. He reported that there had been a mass suicide. I asked him why he was carrying a pair of boots and he told me that he had taken them off one of the bodies. For quite a while we had not been provided with any clothes or shoes so we had to manage with what we had; there was already a hole in one of my boots.

Although the private who returned with the boots was older than many of his fellow soldiers he had only been in the Army for a short time. I was astonished that this quiet and unassuming man should have removed the boots off a dead comrade and, although I understood that he had done it for me and appreciated his good intention, I certainly could not bring myself to wear them, I do not recall who used them.



The sun managed to shine through a band of cloud.

The wet clothes, soaked with rain, were put in the sun to dry. I noticed that some Military Tokens² were placed neatly and carefully on the rocks where the sun was drying them. I was much disgusted as I felt that this man's will to survive was ruled by greed. However, I gave him the benefit of any doubt. I did not think it necessary to remove my wet clothes as I knew they would dry gradually while I was on the move.

¹ "THEWHITETIGERS". At the end of the Edo Period, battles broke out between those who supported the Shogunate authority and those who wanted to restore Imperial power. The Aizu clan backed the Shogunate authority and many juveniles volunteered to be trained as fighters. As they saw their castle burning down and their defeat became imminent, the surviving members of "The White Tigers" killed each other on Mount Ilmori.
² MILITARY TOKENS. The substitute for Banknotes used by Japanese Forces in occupied territories.

I thought that there must be some good reason for this man to take such care of his possessions; perhaps he was just the sort who found it unbearable to be untidy.

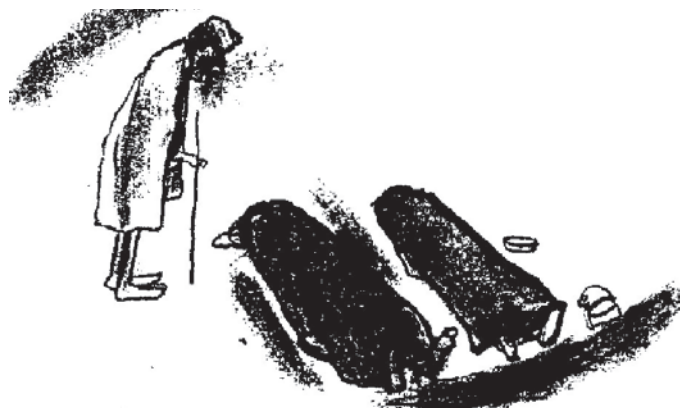
A few days later I passed the same spot again, expecting to see him looking dry and neat. He was clinging to the rock - lifeless. In my surprise, I realised that he had been preparing for his end.

A man met his death on the road; he had exhausted all his energy. The portable tent which now covered his body was his only possession.



It was clear that no one else had covered his body; he had surely done it himself, anticipating his early death. A few days ago there had been only one corpse there, now two - then three..... Each of the dead men had covered his face in this way; perhaps they all wished to avoid others seeing their decomposing faces.

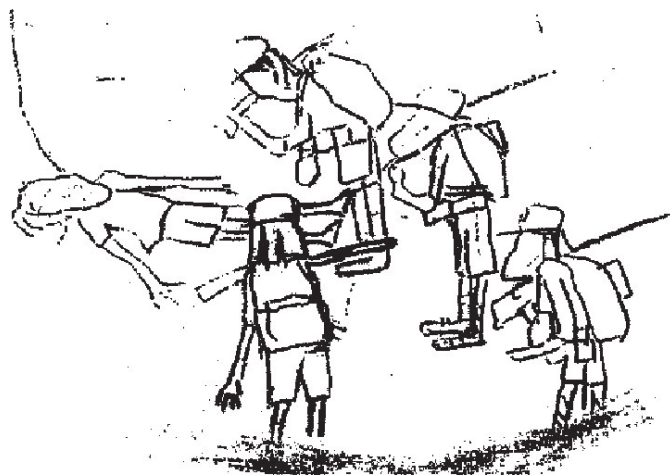
When death is near, one seems to want to come closer to the dead; as if the dead were beckoning or one dreaded the loneliness of existing on the edge of life.



I saw a sick soldier snatch a rucksack. The owner was a dying soldier lying at the roadside; he had been using it as a pillow. I assumed that the snatcher was after a bag of rice in the rucksack. He staggered away awkwardly under the extra weight but he did not look back.

The dying soldier could no longer utter a single word, merely raising his emaciated arm as if asking somebody to catch the thief, I might have been able to catch him and rescue the rucksack but something discouraged me from doing this.

I stood still, astounded by the scene and amazed at the fierce tenacity for life of both the snatcher and the victim.



During the retreat, my unit came across a field hospital in the jungle. Hundreds of sick and wounded soldiers were lying on the ground, under the trees on both sides of the road. Among them, an Army Surgeon was working frantically.

We recognised our sergeant who had an injured arm following a severe battle North of Palel. I had anticipated that, provided he was treated quickly, he would recover completely and return to us. In fact, the skin from the elbow up to his neck was coloured purple and was infested with maggots. It was obvious that he would not survive. Although he looked vacuous, he realised who we were and gave us a faint smile - but he could not speak. I have no knowledge of what happened to him after this.

The condition of the hospital, towards which wounded men were dragging themselves with walking sticks, was absolutely appalling. I could not blame the patients if they felt despondent.



A barefoot Army Nurse came into a section of the Field Hospital, took a syringe from his rucksack and gave injections to those who were on the verge of death. They would at! be dead in around seven seconds.

The Nurse said that he was carrying out orders, clearly trying to convince himself that he was morally right in freeing them from pain. Having completed his task, he turned his back on us and moved on.



“Isn’t he a member of your unit, lying dead over there?” a soldier from another unit asked us. He was; there was no doubt about it. He was lying under a portable tent, the four corners of which were tied to branches of trees.

Suffering from malnutrition and diarrhoea while fighting at the front, he had been sent back behind the lines; one of the luckier ones at that time.

I assumed that, on reaching this point, he had sensed his imminent demise, put up his tent and waited to die beneath it. In his rucksack there was a postcard, a toothbrush, toothpaste and a pipe made of ivory.

Before we buried him next to others of our unit, I managed to cut off one of his fingers to send to his family, it was not at all easy and bloodless pieces of flesh fed off. Just then, the moon appeared in the sky. As it shone down on his face, he seemed to be smiling slightly. Having had to die alone he would be buried by his close friends.

We felt that his smile showed his appreciation.



At the river-crossing point, having tired of queuing for the boat for three days or more, many soldiers ventured to cross the river using a rope strung across it.

Those who managed to reach the middle of the river found that their weight and the looseness of the rope combined to lower them into the river. The strong current prevented them from holding on to the rope; they were swept away and eventually drowned. This scene was repeated again and again.

Although everybody saw exactly what happened, why did so many follow suit? Nobody tried to stop them. Every single one of them was driven to lunacy.



The Java Nightmare

The Editor. *The Internet is a wonderful thing and it is interesting to note some of the enquiries that are made through our Regimental Association website. One such example is an e-mail from Mr Tom van Kan who after 70 years after the event has been able to thank those unknown Gurkhas who liberated his mother with baby son!*

Sirs,

I only recently learned that it was The Gurkhas who were responsible for the liberation of my mother and I (and many others), from a Japanese POW Camp, I was born in Camp Lampersari, near Semarang, Java, on the 23 March 1944. I want to say THANK YOU. PLEASE let this be known in the Regiment, God Bless you. Tom van Kan.

Comment by David Harding. 3/3rd, 3/4th and 3/5th were also in Java at that time, but 3/10th (on its own) was the first allied unit into Semarang, landing there on 19 October 1945. The Lampersari camp was in south-eastern Semarang, and although there is no specific mention of it in the 10 GR Regimental History, I would assume all the internees in Semarang were liberated the same day, as that was the priority task.

The following extract from 10GR Bugle and Kukri, The Story of the 10th Princess Mary's own Gurkha Rifles, by Colonel B R Mullaly, pages 389-391 was sent to Mr van Kan:

The Java Nightmare

(With acknowledgments to David Friend, of whose story with the same title this narrative is an abridged version)

The Netherlands Indies were originally in the zone of United States responsibility in the Pacific, but were transferred to South-East Asia Command at the last moment, so that British-Indian troops had to deal with the serious situation which rapidly developed at the end of the war in Java.

Very soon after starting the task of restoring order in Malaya, the 23rd Indian Division was ordered to move to Java at short notice, and the 3rd Battalion was in the midst of Dasehra when the orders came.

Embarking in HMS Glenroy at Port Dickson, the Battalion arrived in Batavia harbour on the afternoon of the 16 October 1945 with orders to land the following morning. The first flight of landing-craft had actually got halfway across the harbour then they were recalled to the ship, and, after the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel H. G. Edwardes, had returned from a visit to Divisional Headquarters on shore, it was learned that the Battalion was to go on to Semarang to deal with the serious situation which had developed there. Setting sail again on the evening of the 17th the Glenroy anchored off Semarang, approximately midway along the north coast of Java, on the evening of the 18th.

The situation was extremely delicate. The Japanese had now handed over control of Central Java practically completely to the Indonesians, who, at Semarang, Magelang and Ambarawa, were holding as hostages the Allied prisoners of war and internees and the Control Staffs of eight camps containing about 22,000 prisoners and internees. (Note. These people and the organisation which looked after them were known as RAPWI or Repatriation of Allied Prisoners of War and Internees, and were invariably referred to by these initials.)

The task of 23rd Division was to safeguard all R.A.P.W.I. camps in Java and to maintain law and order in all areas occupied by Allied forces, and the immediate orders for the Battalion were to secure Semarang and its airfield and to put guards on all RAPWI camps in Semarang and to secure the release of RAPWI staffs interned by the Indonesians. At the same time it was to send a patrol at once to Ambarawa, which was a women's camp, and to follow this up with a company if the situation there was capable of being stabilised by one company. While public utilities were to be protected as far as possible, RAPWI camps were to be the first priority and the troops were at the same time warned that they were not to take sides in political matters nor to enter into political discussions with local leaders. In fact, this was yet another of those highly explosive situations which demanded the greatest discipline and self-control from the troops involved.

At 0745 on the 19 October the two leading companies, "B" and "D," were lowered away from the ship followed by Battalion Headquarters and "A" and "C" Companies, and headed for the Semarang docks. The landing was completely unopposed, indeed the dock area appeared to be deserted, and the two leading companies, commanded by Majors Dunkley and Gregory, were soon pushing on inland through the town. It was an eerie experience, for nobody knew what to expect. There were sounds of firing in the town ahead and a "local" who had been brought in said that there had been heavy fighting between the Japanese and the Indonesians the day before. The advance proceeded with all precautions and "B" Company moved on to occupy the Government buildings while "D" moved along a parallel road.

As Major Dunkley's company approached the canal on the other side of which lay the Government buildings, it was fired on and two men were killed and six wounded almost at once. Lieutenant Colonel Edwardes decided to go forward to see what was happening and found that an impasse had supervened after the first fierce outburst of firing, with both sides sniping at the slightest movement. The Battalion had been given some Dutch liaison officers and one of these volunteered to go forward but came under a hail of fire the moment he showed himself and desisted. Orders were now given by the Commanding Officer for "C" Company with Major Meikle to make a movement round the right flank and a section of mortars was ordered up.

At midday, however, an Indonesian appeared under a white flag, who said he was the Indonesian Governor. He stated

categorically that the firing from the Government building was from the Japanese and that he had told all Indonesians not to fire. He also stated that the RAPWI representatives were safe. His statements were verified and after contact had been made with the Japanese Commander it was found that it had all been an unfortunate mistake, for which the Japanese apologised profusely, and that their troops had been in the Government building and had mistaken our men for Indonesians with whom they had been fighting during the morning.

The Japanese had regained control of the town and arrangements were at once made for the taking over of the Governor's house, important buildings and big hotels, and for "D" Company to move out by motor transport to the Halmaheira Camp where most of the women and children internees were located. By 1800 all companies had taken up positions for the night and the first part of this unpleasant operation had passed more successfully than had been feared might be the case. Next morning the first task was to take over the airfield and this was done by "A" Company without incident, while "D" Company secured the release of the European prisoners in the Mlaten Jail, the largest in the town. Arrangements for the peaceful carrying out of these and other measures had been made at a lengthy conference the previous evening with the Indonesian representatives led by Wongso Negoro, the self-styled Governor, at which Lieutenant Commander Leeland, who had been British Consul at Semarang before the war, acted as interpreter. No headway would have been possible with a Dutchman as interpreter, so great was the hostility and distrust of the Indonesians for their former rulers, but some kind of a working agreement was at last hammered out with the Indonesians, with both sides wary and suspicious. The Indonesians found it hard to believe that the British troops had come simply to safeguard RAPWI interests and to disarm the Japanese and obviously feared that we were going to interfere in the interests of the Dutch.

After the interview with the Indonesians the Japanese Commanders came to receive orders. From these interviews the fantastic situation became apparent. The Japanese had adopted the policy of handing over their arms to the Indonesians, and the more arms the Indonesians collected the more truculent they became, until they seized control of Semarang and other main centres and embarked on an orgy of terror and barbarism which threatened to result in a wholesale massacre of the internees. This crisis had necessitated the hasty despatch of the British forces. In all this chaos there began to emerge a curious situation in which a Japanese officer, Major Kido, commanding the Kido Butai, played a leading part. His command had been at Ambarawa when the storm burst and he had agreed to do what he could to help the RAPWI staff. Taking the initiative, he had driven post haste in lorries to Semarang with his unit, amounting to some 500 men, many of whom had no arms, and attacked the Indonesians in the town three days before the 3rd Battalion arrived, by which time he had virtually gained control.

There is little doubt that the internees at Semarang owed their lives to Kido and his men, for it was they who prevented the Indonesians from capturing the camps and massacring the inmates before the arrival of British troops. In the meantime the situation at Ambarawa had deteriorated. Wing-Commander Tull, who had been dropped by parachute soon after the Japanese surrender and was organising the RAPWI in Central Java, came in by car from Ambarawa and reported a serious situation there which he thought could only be dealt with by a force of not less than a battalion. This was, of course, out of the question, but Captain Mount went to Ambarawa with Tull and a platoon was sent out next day under a British officer. As the result of conferences with Indonesian leaders at both Semarang and Ambarawa there was an improvement in the situation, with the Indonesians agreeing to hand over the Ambarawa camp area and to the formation of a police force to keep order in both places. The question of the Japanese troops remained the most difficult problem, but it was insisted that they should not be moved from the positions they held around Semarang and other points until the maintenance of law and order by British forces could be guaranteed. The mere presence of a handful of Gurkhas at Ambarawa had had a remarkably steadying effect and in Semarang too the general air was, for the moment, calmer, and civilian problems were tackled with the help of a staff of Dutch officers. All this time the Japanese were actively co-operating under the energetic leadership of Major Kido.

Afternote:

Sirs,

Thank you very much.

My late stepfather, Major FB Boyd, MC, was in the British Indian Army, (PAVO Cavalry initially), and was in Java at that time, having gone there from North Africa. I do remember he spoke highly of the Gurkhas.

I look forward to hearing further.

Again, thank you.

Tom

Sirs,

I have just read the Document you so kindly sent me. The irony that it is to a Japanese Officer of all people, one Major Kido, that we especially owe our lives to, is nothing short of extraordinary!

One of the effects of it has been to 'lay a Ghost' so to speak.

Thank you,

Tom

As Others See Others

By Lt Col J P Cross (1 & 7 GR)

Researching for a rewrite of *Jungle Warfare* (2008), I came across a number of books that had not been published when I wrote the first edition (1989). In sum I learnt that, in the Burma War, the Japanese considered British troops indolent, effete and out-dated, and Indians and Gurkhas cowardly and disloyal.

Most Gurkhas said that African troops were careless and noisy, did not put sentries out during periods of rest or take other precautions. Others saw them as clumsy and cruel. One man, Lance Naik Indrabahadur Rai, 1/7 GR, told me that he had seen African soldiers eating Japanese flesh.

Gurkhas' views on Japanese bravery were rightly circumspect, knowing the Japanese 'mental inoculation' against worrying about death. 'Only when we knew that we had no hope of staying alive and were virtually dead already did we know that we could beat them properly,' was the tenor of remarks made to me. However, on Japanese ethics, Gurkhas' views were wholly negative: a LNK Naik Indrabahadur Rai came across 16 Casualty Station where he saw all the ambulances thrown upside, some in water, and that the British doctors

had been crucified on trees. He and his friends rescued them and Indrabahadur said that they all eventually recovered. From then on, all Japanese were devils. Another Gurkha saw six men hanging crucified from trees. 'The Japanese are trained to be cruel,' he told me.

Another Gurkha, LNK Naik Makansing Gurung, 3/4 GR, was adamant that 'the Japanese lost the war although they were better trained and better equipped and cleverer soldiers than we were. They lost because they were small-minded and greedy. They are very sinful people.'

The only live Japanese soldier I came across in Burma was with B Company, 1/1 Gurkha Rifles. The man was lying by the side of a track on the western side of the Pegu Yomas, unable to walk. I had been issued with a book that showed English questions on the left of the left-hand page, with the Japanese equivalent on the right-hand side, and possible answers, in two similar columns, on the right-hand page. He scared me by asserting that there were many thousands of troops in the direction one of our patrols had gone - I hoped that nothing untoward would overtake the Gurkhas. In the event it transpired that he thought I had asked him for his army number! So engrossed was I that I did not notice that he was drawing his pistol to use against me but a quick-eyed rifleman prevented him from inflicting any damage.

Faith In His British Officer

By Lt Col J P Cross (1 & 7 GR)

I. Failed And Betrayed

I never knew his name but, when I first wrote about him in the fourth volume of my historical quintet, *The Fame of the Name*, I called him Himan Dura, aka Lothé. His nickname means 'imperturbable'. I worked out that he lived between 1921 and 1945. In 1939 he enlisted in 2/1 Gurkha Rifles. He was a prisoner of war of the Japanese. He somehow managed to escape from Singapore but he never volunteered to be part of the turncoat Indian National Army, also known as JIFs, Japanese Inspired Forces (and sometimes even as Japanese Inspired Fifth Columnists). I was in the 1st Gurkha Rifles Regimental Centre in Dharmsala in the first week of January 1945, at the time of his amazing arrival there and managed to pick up his story. The Adjutant, Captain 'Jimmy' Coleman, later became a close friend of mine, as did Lieutenant Colonel Charles Wylie, 2/1 GR and 1/10 GR, mentioned below.

Early January 1945. Dharmsala.

Snow lay thick on the ground, up to the roofs of the bungalows in the cantonment area. By the time Lothé had reached as far as his railway warrant took him, Pathankot, reaction had set in. He had just enough money for a bus to take him to Lower Dharmsala and he had to walk the rest of the way to the camp. Not far but almost too far. By the time

he reached the camp he was on his last legs. He remembered where the office block was. He pushed his way forward, intent as never before, to honour his inner resolve to do what Wylie sahib, the Adjutant of 2/1 GR, had told him to do, all those many moons, nay years, before - "try to get back and tell them what happened."

Men called to him, seeing a stranger, albeit a Gurkha stranger. He took no notice. He walked round the parade ground and staggered up the wooden steps that led on to the verandah where the offices were. The Stick Orderly tried to stop him. Lothé ignored him, his automatic compulsion, his overriding urge, driving him forward. He pushed open the door of the Adjutant's office.

Sitting at his desk the Adjutant acted angrily at this unwarranted interruption and no knocking on the door. "What the...?"

He was interrupted. The Gurkha, giving as smart a salute as he could manage, gave his regimental number, name and rank but in such an indistinctly that the Adjutant did not pick them up.

"2/1 Gurkha Rifles, did you say?" he stuttered in amazement.

Lothé opened his mouth to reply but crashed onto the floor in a dead faint: physical decrepitude but not moral turpitude the cause.

Only a week later did the doctor allow the Adjutant to visit Lothé. "Are you ready for me to talk to you?"

"Sahib, that is why I have come back," answered Lothé, smiling broadly.

"Right. Here I have the battalion long roll. We will go through it together and, as far as possible, you will tell me what has happened to people."

"Sahib, I can only tell you exactly who was dead, who was missing, who was wounded up to the time that Captain Wylie sahib was captured."

"I'm sure that will be of the greatest help."

Name for name, almost without any hesitation, the answer was given.

At the end of the session the Adjutant was amazed at Lothé's knowledge. "That is amazing. How can you remember all that in so much detail?"

"Sahib. I was Wylie sahib's batman. Whenever we had news of casualties, he amended his own nominal roll and, helping him to do so, I knew what had happened to whom."

Captain Coleman shook his head in disbelief. "And at the end, what did Wylie sahib say to you?"

"Sahib, his words were 'Try to get back and tell them what happened.' That is why I have come back."

"But however have you, one man, managed when no one else has?"

"Sahib, excuse me. I am tired. Can we talk tomorrow?"

"Of course. I'll come back at the same time," said Coleman and left.

On the morrow Lothé started telling the Adjutant, accompanied by a short-hand clerk, about the behaviour of the INA, 'jifs', especially Captain, later Major General, Mohan Singh and what he and Captain Wylie had seen at the Siam-Malay border when he met, and went off with, a Japanese officer. Coleman was appalled and muttered under his breath about 'Desi turncoats'. Not only that, Lothé told of the hectoring tone used by Mohan Singh when he tried to get the Gurkhas to enlist in his INA, Azad Hind Fauj, about the man, who had refused to volunteer for the INA and had the full night soil bucket poured over him to make him do so. He passed out and, later was not allowed to wash till he did volunteer.

This he never did (I personally interviewed him in 1999 - see *Gurkhas at War*, page 40) and how three other men were killed in cold blood because they, too, did not volunteer. Coleman probed further and found out who was responsible for exactly what atrocities, where, when and against whom. Lothé also told him about Japanese behaviour as he related his adventures, although he had no knowledge of Japanese names.

"Although the war has yet to finish, so many of the INA have been captured and brought to India that their trials are being planned for later on in the year. Your evidence, especially about Mohan Singh, will be crucial. No doubt about that whatsoever."

"Sahib. I need to go back on leave but I will stay until I have given my evidence."

The Commandant, Colonel N M Macleod, had been sent a sensitive letter which revealed that those who joined the INA were to be graded into three categories, White, Grey, Black. In brief 'whites' were those who stayed loyal to their oath, obeyed, performed, orders given to them by the INA but did not volunteer for service with it. 'Greys' were those who, while entitled to some measure of sympathy and understanding because of the pressure they had undergone, nevertheless showed by their manner that they were suspected of actually joining the INA. Some of those would be allowed to rejoin their units. 'Blacks' were those whose conduct was left no doubt that they had to be tried by court martial.

"Lothé, I have one question for you," said Coleman, at the end as, having read that letter, a tiny, nagging doubt had occurred to him. "Did you at any time tell the Indians you volunteered for work in Siam?"

"Sahib. Never, never, never after that night soil and the wanton killings. I told the Subedar Major sahib and he didn't want me to go but I then told him what Wylie sahib told me and he agreed. He personally told the Japanese in charge of our lot. Indians had nothing at all to do with my going." Lothé was as adamant as any Gurkha Coleman had seen.

"Good. In that case your evidence will be of the greatest importance. You have done more for the battalion and the regiment than was ever expected of you. Wylie sahib, no, we don't yet know if he is dead or alive, would be more than exceptionally proud of you."

Lothé looked as pleased as he felt. Before he left for Delhi he had an interview with the Commandant of the Regimental Centre who also gave Lothé his heartfelt congratulations. As the Gurkha was the only man to have made such a dramatic escape, those others captured in 1942 still either prisoners of war or stranded in the jungle with Chinese guerillas, his evidence in the case of Mohan Singh took on an especially significance.

June 1945. Red Fort, Delhi.

But, sadly, all was to turn to dust. So much political pressure was put on the Viceroy, Field Marshal Lord Wavell, and the Commander-in-Chief, Field Marshal Auchinleck, by Pandit Nehru and other Congress leaders, not to press too severe charges against the ring leaders of the INA movement, let alone any lesser mortals, that even the slightest doubt about anyone's evidence against the ring leaders meant that it was not to be allowed to be used against them.

Unaware of any of that, Lothé waited in one of the temporary huts that had sprung up around New Delhi, ready to give his evidence so justice could be done for what he had suffered. But it was not to be. He was told that he had been categorised 'Grey' so his evidence could not be accepted.

Next morning a body of a Gurkha was found hanging in the washroom. It was recognised as Lothé's. It was taken down and the pockets of the clothes searched.

Inside one was a note, written in pencil with letters not well formed. It was short and to the point - 'The British taught me to keep faith. The British did not keep faith themselves. I have no wish to live any longer as I am not regarded as a man who can be trusted.*'

Had he stayed alive assuredly the gangrene from the night soil bucket would have been little to that which he had experienced at the hands of the people he had so trusted so implicitly for so long: mental and moral turpitude had, sadly, beaten him, literally to death.

**The sentence for Lieutenant Dhillon, one of the ringleaders, was Transportation for life, Cashiering and Forfeiture of pay and allowances while with the Japanese. In the event the sentence was commuted to the last two, Auchinleck, John Connell, Cassell, 1959, pages 807-808. As for Captain Mohan Singh, in December 1942, he ordered that the Indian National Army be disbanded. The Japanese took him into custody and he spent the rest of the war in Sumatra.*

II. Prevailed But Delayed

During the retreat down south to Singapore in 1942, 6582 Naik Nakam Gurung, also of 2/1 GR, was ill from malaria when his company commander, Captain Wylie, had to look for a position to his front. He said he would return the next day but never did. Nakam's platoon commander likewise went forward having told Nakam he would return the next day, but he never did either. From then on Nakam was alone. He had been left some rations.

Days turned into weeks, into months. Only the man himself and the angel that looks after wild animals and soldiers on operations knew how he managed. About six months later he gave up hope. He had probably heard disquieting rumours of defeat during one of his desultory contacts for essentials from some frightened villagers and formed his own conclusions, which he had to pay for with some help on the land.

One day, sitting in a cleft in the branches of a big tree where he had made himself a shelter, for to live on the ground by himself was dangerous and to leave where he had been told to wait would make it even more difficult for whoever came to fetch him, he was in such a mood of black despair that he decided to end his life.

His first attempt was to shoot himself but his rifle misfired. His second attempt was to plait a vine rope to hang himself with, but it broke when he jumped off and he hurt his leg as he fell heavily from a height. *I am ordained to live*, he thought.

He was periodically visited by Chinese guerillas and slowly the years passed. In 1945 the war came to an end but the Chinese guerillas did not tell Nakam. In 1948 the Malayan Emergency began and he just kept on farming the patch of jungle he had cleared. The aircraft he periodically heard flying overhead were Japanese, he was told by the Chinese guerillas.

One day in 1949 a patrol of 1/10 GR came into his patch, saw him working the ground and presumed he was an unarmed guerilla. As Nakam did not run away there was no need for the patrol to open fire. The soldiers approached him and, talking among themselves, noted what a scruffy-looking *daku* - dacoit, the Gurkhas' word for guerilla - the man was.

The lone man suddenly realised with a surge of hope flooding out all other emotions that the men around him were speaking his language so had come to fetch him. "I was told to wait. You must have been sent to find me," he said. This the patrol commander did not believe him, merely saying that he was a spy and should be shot. But first he asked Nakam who had told him to wait.

And now a curious and unbelievable coincidence occurred: the adjutant of the patrol's battalion was the same Wylie who, in a different battalion, in a different army, was now fighting a different war. 'Wylie sahib', came the answer.

"That's our Adjutant sahib," and, slightly grudgingly, they took Nakam back with them, again threatening to shoot him if he was lying.

So, after such a long time and in such unexpected circumstances, Wylie and Nakam, met. "I knew you would not forget to send for me," said Nakam as the two men embraced, both in tears. Nor was Nakam ever to know that the patrol was, in fact, ten degrees off their correct bearing when it met him.

The tailpiece occurred in 1953 when Wylie, returning from the conquest of Everest which he helped with Sherpas and oxygen, visited his old battalion, then in Agra. He met Nakam at the camp entrance, now the Police Havildar.

"Still serving?" Nakam was asked. Yes, he was because although he had got his back pay, time in the jungle had not counted for pension - so why waste all those years waiting to be rescued?

(At the suggestion of the Gurkha Major of BG Pokhara, Major (QGO) Hitman Gurung, 2 GR, in 2001, I have given all new recruits both of the Brigade of Gurkhas and the Gurkha Contingent (Singapore Police Force) a 'Grandfather to Grandsons' talk annually ever since. One of the points I stress is regimental cohesion and the other is that Gurkhas have made their name just as much by 'singing by a mountain river and working in the dark' where they are trusted so to do as they have with bravery awards. This latter story is one that I have always used as an example of trust prevailing. I have not given them the first part of this short story.)

The Return of the British Gurkhas to Burma

By Capt B Burows 2 RGR

The 2RGR Staff Ride to Myanmar 2013

Due to the high tempo of operations within the British Army over the last decade the opportunities to educate soldiers on their history have been few and far between. However, with the draw down in Afghanistan 2RGR took the opportunity last June to visit some of the battlefields in Myanmar where many of our soldier's ancestors fought and died within the 14th Army during the Burma campaign in the Second World War.

A group of eleven senior NCOs and officers boarded a plane from 2RGR's home in Brunei towards Myanmar via Singapore. From the humble beginnings of a young officer's project to organise a battlefield tour, the 2RGR team became the first serving members of the British Army to revisit the Burmese battlefields since the campaign. This said the staff ride was not about 2RGR's pioneering efforts to blow their own proverbial trumpet. It was about the history of the campaign; it was about learning the facts, taking the time to reflect upon the lessons learned in Burma. It was about thinking for ourselves and how these lessons can be applied to the modern day warfare that we will face again in the future.

If the truth is told as a young officer in 2RGR, my intentions for signing up to a battlefield tour in a tropical country where the borders have been closed to tourists for decades and the beer is cheap, were not initially about reflection. I am no historian, and quite frankly I was sceptical about how much I could apply the lessons of the Second World War to the asymmetrical conflicts our Army will face in the future.

The purpose of this article is not only to inform you of 2RGR's staff ride, it is to explain how much an attitude towards military history can change through a simple ten day battlefield tour and how important it is to reflect on the past and think for ourselves, breaking the 'give me bullet points' culture of the modern day busy and operationally fatigued British Army.

Our tour started with a visit to Singapore where we were kindly accommodated, and extremely well hosted by the Gurkha Singapore Police Contingent. An overview lecture of the Singapore campaign was delivered by Professor Daniel Marston, the Professor of Military Studies in the Australian National University. We were incredibly fortunate to have Professor Marston with us, not only because his knowledge of the Burma campaign is second to none in the academic world but also due to the fact his enthusiasm created a lust for learning amongst even in the most un-academic individuals in the group.

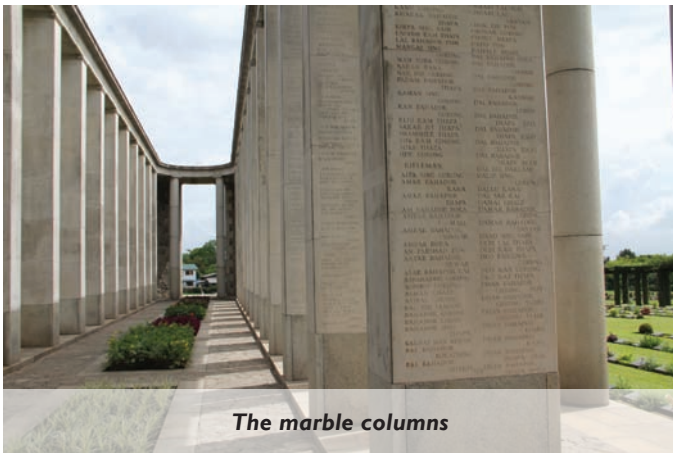
Our tour of Singapore allowed us a visit to the Changi Prison Museum where the British and Indian prisoners of war from Singapore were detained after capture. It was harrowing

to walk through the dark, largely untouched prison cells where soldiers were tortured less than a century ago. We also visited Fort Siloso, an old defensive position which attempted to protect Singapore against the Japanese invasion. It became clear to us just how underprepared the British were for a Japanese attack and emphasised the importance of surprise in winning battles. What was of particular interest to us was how little has changed in terms of the tactics used by the British then compared to the tactics the modern Army would have used in the same situation today. The principles of defence remain the same. With the facts given to us by Professor Marston we were all able to see how a lack of reserves stood no chance against the Japanese.

After our two days in Singapore we continued our journey to Myanmar, where the majority of the staff ride took place. We were guided in our study by Professor Marston where we unpacked the lessons learned by the British in their initial defeat in Burma in 1942. We were made aware of how the lack of foresight to embrace fighting in the jungle saw the British defensive positions outflanked by the Japanese as they moved towards their main objective, Rangoon (now Yangon the capital of Myanmar). This defeat demonstrated the importance of flexibility and preparation. Had the British been more capable of fighting in the jungle the outcome of the initial phases of the Burma campaign could have been different. We analysed the methods the British took to prepare for the later phases of the campaign.

Our first visit in Myanmar was to the Taukkyan War Cemetery, this gave us an opportunity to begin to appreciate the loss of life during the campaign. The cemetery is the final resting place of 6,420 British Commonwealth soldiers who died in The Second World War. The huge white marble columns which dominate the cemetery display the names of all the other soldiers who had fallen during the campaign, including those of the 5,000 Gurkhas who made the ultimate sacrifice. For the sake of all those who suffered and died in Burma we conducted a small memorial service within that foreign field.





The marble columns



Sittang Bridge

Our next major visit was to Sittang. We saw the infamous remains of the Sittang Bridge. During the British withdrawal to Rangoon the bridge crossing the River Sittang was controversially, prematurely destroyed to prevent it falling into the hands of the pursuing Japanese. This premature destruction stranded approximately half of the friendly forces on the enemy side of the river. Huge casualties were sustained, not only by the relentless attacks from the Japanese but also due to hundreds of men drowning in the river as they discarded their kit on the far bank before making a desperate attempt to swim the river. Many of the men could not swim, whilst under fire from the Japanese it is safe to say that many of the men never stood a chance of survival. Every year 2RGR is reminded of this poignant moment in the Burma campaign when, as part of

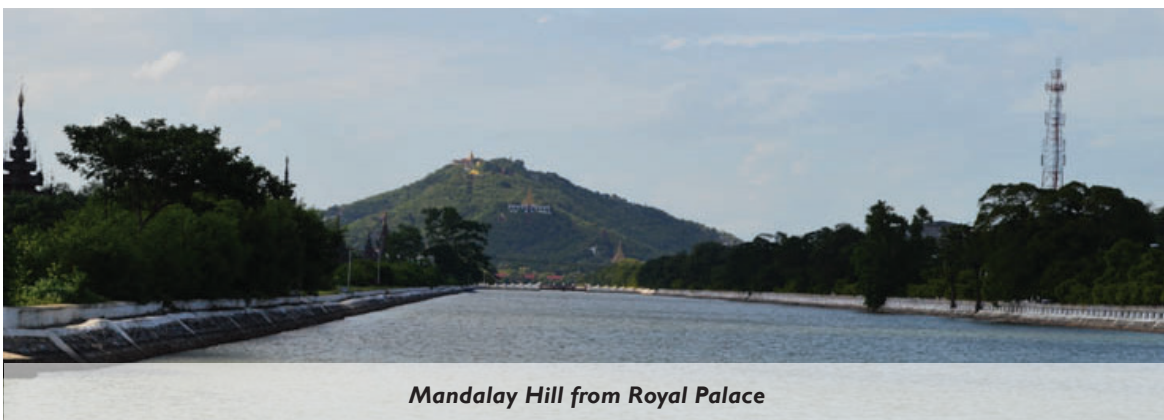
the Champion Company Competition, each company provides a team for the Sittang Race. The race sees the teams in full fighting order swimming a set distance as quickly as possible.

After Sittang we moved north to Mandalay. We visited the Mandalay hill which was the site of a ferocious battle which took place in 1945 whilst Field Marshall Sir William Slim was in command of the 14th Army on the road to victory. The 14th Army fought for four days to capture the hill. The 4th Battalion 4th Gurkha Rifles took the brunt of the attack. Once the hill was secured Mandalay fell in March 1945. On the hill we conducted a tactical exercise without troops to see how we would have attacked such a well-defended position today. Even with the benefit of modern weapon systems it was widely accepted that heavy casualties would have been sustained.

The team in front of the remnants of the original Sittang Bridge



After Mandalay we made the long journey back to Yangon to return to Brunei where the jungle was waiting for us to apply the lessons learned from the tour. The staff ride to Myanmar was undoubtedly a great success. The opinion of the relevance of military history within the group changed dramatically throughout the tour. We came to understand that learning from the past is not as simple as being given a list of bullet points to learn by rote. The staff ride encouraged a deeper understanding of the Burma campaign, an understanding which is only possible to gain through the walking of the ground and by seeing the graves of the people who made those mistakes. It gave us an ability to apply military history to today's conflicts ourselves.



Mandalay Hill from Royal Palace

Burma Battlefield Tour, June 2013

By Lt WA Plumley, 2RGR

In June 2013 a group of 11 Officers and SNCOs from the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles (2 RGR) conducted a Battlefield Tour to Singapore and Myanmar (Burma). It marked the first official British Army Battlefield Tour to Myanmar since 1947. The Tour, organised by Lieutenant W Plumley and Sergeant Suresh, was joined by Professor Daniel Marston, a leading academic on the Burma campaign and formerly a war studies lecturer at Sandhurst. The recent change in the Burmese government created an exciting opportunity for 2 RGR to visit Myanmar before the Battalion returned to the UK from Brunei. The historical legacy of the Burma campaign for RGR is huge; of the 45 serving Gurkha Battalions in World War Two, 27 served in Burma, far more than any other theatre. A total of nine Gurkha VCs were won in Burma. The commander of the 14th Army, Field Marshal Slim, was himself in 6 GR. It is unsurprising therefore that several RGR companies have been named after the Battles of Tamandu, Mogaung, Sittang and Mandalay. Moreover given the ongoing commitment to Brunei, the lessons identified in the jungles of World War Two are still directly applicable to the role the Regiment fulfils today.

The ten day Tour began with a brief visit to Singapore. Historically it made sense to trace the campaign from the initial defeat in the Malay Peninsula. Moreover, it provided an ideal opportunity for RGR to consolidate the ties with the Gurkha Contingent Singapore Police Force (GCSPF). Professor Marston delivered a lecture on the Malaya Campaign and the Fall of Singapore in which 2/1 GR, 2/2 GR and 2/9 GR were heavily involved. After this the party was welcomed in the Officer's Mess. The following day saw visits to Changi Memorial Prison and Fort Sentosa. A wreath was laid in Changi Prison on behalf of Allied POWs and a service of remembrance was led by Captain Prem Gurung (2IC Support Company). The party left Singapore for Yangon, buoyed by the excellent hospitality of GCSPF and understanding the threat which faced Allied forces in 1942.

Given the size of Myanmar and the time constraints, the itinerary was selective. Whilst Gurkha Regiments saw action in all areas of the country, it was impossible for the Tour to encompass everything. The itinerary focused upon the First Battle of Sittang, Taukkyan Cemetery, the crossing of the Irrawaddy, and the Battle of Mandalay. The most obvious absentee was Meiktila, which was made impossible by recent ethnic violence. The Arakan campaign and both Chindit operations were not feasible with only six days in the country. Likewise the parachute Elephant Point is now the site of a military base which made visiting the Drop Zone impossible. The historical aspects of Tour were paired with cultural visits, most notably the temples of Bagan and the Shwedagon Paya Pagoda in Yangon.

Throughout the Tour Professor Marston led a series of seminars which were largely interactive and encouraged debate.

Events which were not covered on the ground were still discussed in detail in the classroom. From the outset the aim was to relate the past to the present. The tactics employed in the 1940s were discussed and compared with those used now. Similar to 'Pamphlet 5' today, 'The Jungle Book' in World War Two was the tactical authority for commanders on the ground. The touring party consisted solely of Officers and SNCO's, thus unsurprisingly discussions focused upon leadership as well as jungle tactics. One did not have to look far to find examples of outstanding leadership: the initial defeat in 1942 was characterised by tenacity in the face of adversity, whilst both Chindit Operations and the successes of 1945 were characterised by innovative thinking. The examples raised throughout left members with suggestions about how they, perhaps, could improve their own leadership style!

On the first full day in Myanmar the party visited Taukkyan War Cemetery. The cemetery has been impeccably maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and is only a short drive from central Yangon. The group paid their respects to the fallen members of the antecedent Gurkha Regiments. In particular the graves of Major FG Blaker VC (9 GR), Captain M. Allmand VC (6 GR) and the plaque for Subedar Netra Bahadur Thapa VC (5 RGR) were visited. A Nepali service of remembrance was again led by Captain Prem Gurung. As the senior RGR officer present, Major C Conroy (OCA Company) laid a wreath on behalf of RGR. The visit also provided members with an opportunity to engage with local media. For several Gurkhas within the party whose grandfathers had fought in Burma, the day was emotional but hugely worthwhile.

Similarly the visit to Sittang Bridge was completed in a day trip from Yangon. Led by Professor Marston the party analysed the retreat taken by Allied forces from the town of Bilin towards the River Sittang in the early weeks of 1942. The discussions ranged from the strategic conflict of interests within Allied High Command, to the tactical problems at platoon level. Standing on Pagoda Hill the view was west out across the river. First-hand accounts were read which highlighted the chaos and disbelief on both sides when the bridge was demolished. The remains of the original bridge are still clearly visible and the scale of the river is a harrowing reminder of the obstacle which the men of 1/3 GR, 1/4 GR and 2/5 GR faced in February 1942. The first-hand accounts from J.P. Cross' *Gurkhas at War* brought the events to life and the group also benefited from recently translated Japanese accounts.

A stop over in Bagan was a must on the cultural itinerary; the plain of ancient pagodas is breathtaking for its scale and architecture. From a historical perspective Bagan was also important as it marked the largest river crossing of World War Two. The crossing of the Irrawaddy surpassed that of the Rhine in terms of the scale of the obstacle that had to be traversed. A seminar was conducted overlooking the stretch

of river where the 14th Army created a bridgehead on the road to Mandalay in January 1945. Securing the bridgehead required heavy fighting in which both 1/6 GR and 4/6 GR saw action. Professor Marston brought the events to life with copies of the original maps. Again lessons were drawn from the past and applied to the present; in this instance that of discipline and effective co-ordination. During the operation an entire Corps was moved in radio silence undetected by the Japanese, enabling it to cross the river at a point least expected, thus gaining the element of surprise.

The climax of the expedition was the visit to Mandalay. The Battle for Mandalay was carried out by the 19th Indian Division in March 1945. Most notably it witnessed 4/4 GR capture Mandalay Hill in a night action. The machine gun positions on the hill were vital in allowing the subsequent clearance of Fort Dufferin and the surrounding suburbs. The memorial at the top of Mandalay Hill within the Pagoda is dedicated to 4/4 GR and is a fitting tribute to the men who gave their lives in the action. Fort Dufferin, whilst heavily bombarded in 1945, has been restored and gives a perfect indication of the scale of the fortifications that faced the Allies. Mandalay is an excellent location to conduct a Battlefield Tour. The relief, still as it was in 1945, gives a very good idea of the terrain and questions raised during the estimate process. Similarly Fort Dufferin stands as it

did then, and although the city has since expanded, the narrow streets give an idea of the FIBUA warfare which the platoons of 1/6 GR faced during the clearance operation. Again detailed contemporary maps provided by Professor Marston brought the events to life.

Throughout the Battlefield Tour, in addition to historical facts, Professor Marston raised several questions which encouraged debate. One such constant theme was that of adaptation. The 14th Army under Slim displayed a remarkable ability to adapt, from the smallest tactical formation right up to Army HQ. A Battalion could re-role in 24 hours from Light, to Mechanised and back to Light if necessary. A platoon commander would find himself following jungle tactics, 'Brecon' style tactics and FIBUA tactics. When one label did not suit a hybrid would be quickly adapted and employed. Throughout the campaign lessons were identified, often at the lowest level and filtered back up the Chain of Command. Such lessons were then quickly passed onto training establishments in India. It was this ability to adapt, coupled with tenacity and sacrifice which forged the successful legacy of the 14th Army in Burma; no longer the 'Forgotten Army'. Gurkhas played a vital role in creating that legacy. It is with great satisfaction therefore that RGR has actively remembered and looked at the role played by our antecedent Regiments.



Lt William Plumley and Sgt Suresh Sambahamphe

TRANSITION

By Maj Gordon Corrigan (6 GR)

The Transition

Our historian takes a confrontational view of how the British Gurkhas survived serial re-structuring in the 20th Century.

Today the Brigade of Gurkhas is seen to be an essential part of the wider British Army. At Sandhurst potential young officers vie for the few commissions available each year. Gurkhas do more than their share in Afghanistan and are in most respects measurably better than the British infantryman, engineer, signaller or driver. It was not always like that.

By the time of VJ Day in August 1945 Gurkhas had served in every British theatre of the Second World War except north west Europe. In every theatre they had done well: in the disgraceful retreat through Malaya to Singapore they had been almost the only troops that had performed professionally and had retained their discipline in the face of abject defeat, and no Gurkhas joined the INA; despite Montgomery's dislike of the Indian army they had been his best infantry in North Africa; Burma could not have been cleared of the Japanese without them. But the post-war world was a different world, and there was real doubt in Whitehall as to whether the British army needed to or wanted to retain Gurkhas in the order of battle. Montgomery thought they could be retained as a Far East fire brigade, but officered entirely by secondees, and even Slim questioned their place in the peace time army.

Fortunately for the Brigade of Gurkhas it was not to be a peace time army, for the tide of nationalism released by the war would sweep over Asia and engulf China, Indo China, Malaya, Borneo and even Hong Kong. Troops were needed to fight the Malayan war and the obvious people to do it were the Gurkhas. Expansion, rather than disbandment, was suddenly in the air. Gurkha military policemen, signallers, engineers and transporters appeared on the scene, as did Gurkha nurses even Gurkha artillery, until common sense asked why we were taking superb infantry soldiers, of which the British had few, and turning them into gunners, of which the British had many. Malaya saved the Brigade and then, when the inevitable questions about the future of the Brigade began to be asked once more, the Borneo campaign came to our rescue.

When Borneo was over, the bean counters and the politicians began to look at the UK's Far Eastern commitments and while Harold Wilson's government ordered a complete pull out, the decision was reversed by Heath who agreed to retain a minimal presence, initially to include Malaya and Singapore, dwindling to Hong Kong and Brunei. In the late sixties and early seventies the Gurkha infantry was cut from eight battalions to five, the depot moved from Sungei Patani in North Malaya to Hong Kong and from 1972 the Brigade deployment had settled down as three battalions and the corps regiments in Hong Kong, one battalion in Brunei and one battalion in the UK.

For twenty-two years that deployment was unchanged, as infantry battalions spent three years in Hong Kong, two in Brunei, three in Hong Kong and two unaccompanied in the UK, before embarking on the ten year cycle all over again. It was not a good time for the Brigade, although perhaps we did not notice it at the time. Effectively we were colonial gendarmerie outside the orbit of the main stream British army, whose focus was on the Cold War and North West Europe. Remnants of empire had a very low priority. The Brigade was bottom of the list when it came to new equipment or even replacing the vehicles and kit that we already possessed. What we did we did well, the trouble was that nobody in Whitehall thought it mattered very much. Visitors appreciated the excellence of our curry lunches, admired the smartness and discipline of our soldiers, agreed that our demonstrations of riot drill were impressive, but did not think that we could be employed anywhere outside the Far East. The oft whispered view was that Gurkhas were very good jungle soldiers, but they couldn't cope with NW Europe. That Gurkhas are good jungle soldiers because they are trained to be, was conveniently ignored, and as they had never been given the opportunity to serve in the mechanised BAOR how did anyone know that they couldn't do it?

The one opportunity the Brigade did have to show that we were every bit as good as the rest of the army was the presence of one battalion in the UK, but even there we were restricted in what we were allowed to do. Second to the Cold War, the British army's major operational commitment was Northern Ireland. Although Gurkhas would have been superb in the rural badlands of South Armagh, they weren't allowed to go there on the grounds that the enemy would claim that the British could not solve their own problems but were using mercenaries to do it for them! In substantive terms Gurkhas were not mercenaries, but in the propaganda war perception counted more than truth. 10 GR did get to Cyprus during the Turkish invasion, 7 GR went to the Falklands and all Gurkha Rifle Battalions went to Belize - but, despite our superb record in P Company and winning Bisley just about every year, the UK battalion was largely an eight hundred man fatigue party and very smart performers of public duties.

In truth we survived those years by meeting a UK need to garrison Hong Kong, providing a reassuring presence in Brunei paid for by the Sultan and through the influence of a few senior officers at Army level, who were convinced - often against the pleading of British Regimental Colonels, that we were worth saving. Professionally it did us little good. The exercise space in Hong Kong was tiny and however hard we tried to find new ways of fighting the battles of Lantau, Area C and the Saikung Peninsula, what we did was boring and repetitive. Operations in Built Up Areas in a housing estate not yet occupied was fun the first time, but after the 'nth time, we could clear it in

our sleep (some did). Manning the border was the ultimate drudge, punctuated by the occasional excitement of catching illegal immigrants, and then realising how desperate most of them were and having to resist the temptation to give them a hundred dollars and send them on their way.

In the 1990s, the hand over of Hong Kong and the end of the Cold War prompted yet another run down of the British armed forces. The ill named 'options for change', known to most of those who suffered from it as 'options for betrayal' would, we were told, produce an army that was 'smaller but better'. 'Small but bitter' would have been nearer the truth. The desperation to save regimental titles meant that each regiment fought for itself, some demanding that not a British soldier should be redundant and no British battalion be cut while the Gurkhas remained on the establishment. Senior officers wrote to the *Times* to protest the amalgamation of their regiments, few protested the far more severe cuts to be imposed on the Brigade. A General, who had told Gurkhas at Sandhurst that they were the most professional soldiers he had ever seen, went live on radio to demand the removal of all Gurkhas before his own regiment.

Coming Across

By Maj LE Pottinger, (6 Gr)

In the middle of December 1947 the British India Steam Navigation Company's vintage steamer Ethiopia sailed from Madras for Rangoon with a draft of British Officers. We came from the 1st, 5th and 9th Gurkhas and we were being posted to 1/6th, 1/7th and 1/10th Gurkhas who were stationed in Southern Burma and due to be incorporated in the British Army on 1st January 1948. Having experienced Indian Independence four months previously we were due to reach Rangoon just in time for Burmese Independence, which fortunately however was celebrated without bloodshed. There must have been between 20 and 30 of us altogether in the draft, which included John Heelis, John Cross, Rory McGurk, John Whitehead, Jimmy Lys, Alan Jenkins and Ian Mayman.

Although we were a pretty cheerful and rowdy crowd of young officers, most of us had embarked with very mixed feelings. We were all glad to have an opportunity to continue our service in Gurkha Regiments, but none of us could forget the painful last days in our old battalions, when we had handed over our men to a completely unknown future. Now, more than 20 years later, I vividly recollect scenes from the nightmare that was the immediate aftermath of the partition of India, and from our reluctant departure from the 1/9th.

1/9th had been deployed for the past few months in the Eastern Punjab with the main task of protecting minorities, and escorting the interminable columns of Muslim refugees to the newly mapped border, where they could be absorbed into Pakistan. There had been all too many occasions when we were unable to have men in the right place at the right time,

Nevertheless we survived. After a period when nobody knew what our final shape would be, we emerged from the smoke in principle as two infantry battalions and three corps squadrons. The Brigade's centre of gravity had shifted to the UK, but it still took the MoD several years to recognize the unique value of Gurkhas in the context of the chaotic '90s. In that sense Afghanistan has been our savior; American officers, sometimes acutely critical of the British, have had nothing but praise for Gurkhas, describing them as 'incredibly fit', 'the only NATO troops able to talk to the locals' and in US speak - 'professional to the eyeballs'.

That long transition period in Hong Kong had been damaging professionally, but we came through it (I question whether many other troops would have). Looking at the Brigade now there can be little doubt that our standards are far higher than they ever were during the Cold War period. Gurkha units are flexible, highly professional and led by the pick of Sandhurst. They are now respected and seen as a vital part of the army. Whether we survive the next round of cuts after withdrawal from Afghanistan remains to be seen.

and a patrol, alerted by a column of black smoke or a vortex of wheeling vultures, would arrive at the smouldering remains of a village or camp strewn with the butchered bodies of old men, women, children and even small babies (but seldom young men). The savage brutality was straight from the Old Testament. People were put to the sword; modern weapons were hardly ever used.

Trains from the East would pass through our area, crowded as only in India can trains be crowded, with refugees huddled perilously on charpoys lashed to the roof, and clinging in clusters to the doorposts and on the footboards, while those who had fought their way into the compartments were packed with their bundles of belongings until they quite literally touched the ceiling. Once there was a ghost train, which was rather less crowded and lacked the roof and footboard travellers. The carriages were still full but there was no movement, and absolute silence prevailed except for the buzzing of clouds of flies. The train had been halted on the way and all its passengers put to the sword. The bodies of those trapped inside the carriages had come on with the train, driven by a terrified Eurasian driver, who had been spared since he was not a Muslim.

In our area, and the area of 2/9th which was further up the railway line and the Grand Trunk Road towards Delhi, the aggressors were mostly Sikhs. Across the border in the Western Punjab the Muslims in Pakistan were putting Sikh women and children to the sword with equal ferocity. As refugees from each side reached sanctuary and spread the tales of their comrades' butchery, so swords were more keenly whetted

and more hapless people were set upon and hacked to death in futile revenge. Only those who were present in Northern India in the second half of 1947 know the real price at which the partition of India and Pakistan was achieved.

The Gurkha Officers and the soldiers of 1/9th, many of them veterans of North Africa and Cassino, had shown the same loyalty and selflessness in the tragedy of the Punjab as they had in battle during the war. In July the Intelligence Officer, David Forrer, had been set upon in Amritsar city and severely wounded by Sikh swordsmen, and in September Bradford Martin, a company commander dearly loved by his men, had been shot dead in an ambush on a country road. 2/9th had not long since been reorganised after more than three years as prisoners of the Japanese in Malaya, where they had steadfastly resisted continual pressure to join the "Indian National Army", which the Japanese formed from renegade Indian Army personnel. As a result of this 2/9th viewed the rest of the Indian Army with deep mistrust, and particularly disliked Sikhs, who had been prominently active in the INA (Indian National Army).

Through no fault of our own we British Officers were now leaving our battalions, and Indian Officers, including of course Sikhs, were being posted in our place. Unlike the rest of the Indian Army the Gurkha Brigade had not hitherto accepted Indian Officers, a policy that that was now to make the changeover far more abrupt and difficult than in other regiments, all of whom had an Indian Officer cadre which in some cases had already completely replaced British Officers. Moreover the men, in the old Gurkha tradition, were inclined to look down on "Desis" and regard them with a suspicion which had been in no way dispelled by current events in the Punjab, or, in the case of 2/9th, by their experiences with the INA.

The worst thing was finding that the GOs and men did not understand, could not understand. They had served us, in our own few years' service during and after the war, with their accustomed loyalty, while their fathers had been serving our fathers for well over a hundred years in the spirit of brotherhood and trust that is peculiar to a Gurkha Regiment. Now their British Officers were walking out and leaving them during conditions of near-chaos, leaving them moreover to be officered by Indians, in whose ability and integrity they had little confidence. They could not at first believe that the all-powerful British Raj, which had only recently beaten the Germans and the Japanese, could be so base as to abandon them. When they realised that it was really happening, they were resentful; and who shall blame them?

Most regiments were able to offer hope of transfer to the British Army for individual volunteers, although not all who applied were able to come across. Due presumably to a misconceived prejudice against Thakurs and Chettris, from whom we exclusively drew our recruits, the 9th were not permitted to submit volunteers. This was an additional blow to both officers and men. We felt that we were a bunch of rats leaving our Regiment, and our own morale was as low as that of the men. A similar state of low morale prevailed to a

greater or less degree in all the Gurkha Regiments which had not been chosen for the British Army, and everywhere there was a feeling of bitterness and frustration.

Looking back, we can sympathise not only with the Gurkhas, but with the Indian Officers who had the formidable task of winning the men's confidence, restoring morale and reshaping those battalions into loyal units of the new Indian Army. They succeeded, and they succeeded moreover in reviving and perpetuating the spirit and traditions of the Regiments. If you meet an officer of an Indian Gurkha Regiment nowadays, you will find that he is as proud to be serving with Gurkha soldiers as we are, and if you are lucky enough to be offered the hospitality of an Indian Gurkha battalion, you will find that the men are as proud of their Regiment and their officers as ever before. The Indian Officers, particularly those arriving in the early days, did a magnificent job in the most discouraging circumstances. It is to be regretted that in many cases there was little effort to make them feel welcome.

But to return to the draft on the *Ethiopia*, we were all wondering how life in our new regiments would compare with the old. The old Gurkha Brigade had nothing like as much cohesion and sense of "family" as we have acquired in the Brigade of Gurkhas during the last 22 years (achieved largely, I am convinced, by the influence of the Training Depot). The 7th and 10th, as Eastern Regiments, were outnumbered four to one by the Western Regiments, who looked on them as quite outlandish, and the officers posted to them from Western Regiments were alarmed at the prospect. We from the 9th, all of whom were destined for 1/6th, felt that Magars and Gurungs were probably next best to Thakurs and Chettris, and that we were lucky. We soon found however that we ourselves were looked upon by everyone else as if we had been serving in a sort of Brahmin Papal Guard, where red tape was replaced by sacred thread, officers wore tikas on their foreheads on Sundays, and everyone took off his boots at the approach of any of the hundreds of Bahuns whom we were alleged to enlist. I'm not sure that this impression has ever been entirely dispelled.

We arrived in Rangoon on Boxing Day and our kit was unloaded and put into a Customs' shed, where, officials said, it would have to remain until after the Independence celebrations, which were about to begin. Unfortunately it didn't remain there, and when we went back to collect it a few days later many boxes had been rifled or had vanished altogether, and some people had lost everything except their cabin baggage. For the couple of weeks that I spent in Rangoon I kept a keen watch for any Burman wearing my rather distinctive and gaudy old school blazer, but without success.

Those of us bound for 1/6th were met by Donald McNaughtan and told that we were just in time for the Officers' Mess Christmas cocktail party. On arrival at the Mess we were seized upon by the CO, Jim Robertson, and after the briefest of introductions, detailed to brush up our Highland Dancing immediately, proficiency in which was apparently of paramount importance at a 6th Gurkha cocktail party. None of us knew

much about it, so within half an hour of joining the Regiment there were about ten officers bobbing and prancing round in the afternoon sun being taught by the CO how to do a Dashing White Sergeant. I loathe Highland Dancing, and that is about the only time that I have been unable to dodge out of the performance. It occurs to me now, 22 years too late, that this may perhaps be one of the reasons that I have not advanced further in the Army.

There were only four British Officers already in the battalion when we arrived, so we were all quickly occupied in planning the closure of the camp at Mingladon and organising the move to Malaya. I found that I was temporarily to be Second-in-Command which involved commanding the advance party, due to leave in about a fortnight's time. Before that however I was detailed for a chore that was to have an embarrassing sequel.

There had been large scale pilfering from a ration depot in Rangoon, and I was appointed President of a Court of Inquiry convened to find out the circumstances and apportion blame. It became very evident that security was poor, guard orders non-existent and that the unit commander, who had already left Burma, had laid himself open to censure. Since the British Government was then in the process of presenting all the stores in Burma, worth many millions of pounds, to the Burmese who were flogging them in all directions, the whole proceedings seemed a bit pointless.

About six months later I had descended one step in rank and several steps in status and become a G III in Central Malaya Sub-District, which was one of the names by which the Headquarters in Seremban has been known over the years. My office was one day invaded by the Lieutenant Colonel CRASC, usually a kind and friendly soul, but on this occasion gibbering with fury and waving a large sheaf of papers stamped "Personal Confidential". He had just received a letter from the War Office inviting him to contribute several hundred pounds to the cost of some deficiencies for which the Secretary of State for War held him to be responsible. Attached to the letter, as proof of his negligence, was a copy of a Court of Inquiry proceedings. My name was prominent as President.

In early January 1948 Jimmy Lys and I embarked with the 1/6th advance party on the Empire Pride at Rangoon, bound for Penang and onward move to Ipoh, where we had been told the battalion would be stationed. The main bodies of 1/7th and 1/10th were also travelling on this ship. On arrival at Penang we were directed to go to Sungei Patani, and people seemed surprised that I should even have considered going to Ipoh. I felt that Colonel Robertson would probably be vexed when he arrived later and found me in the wrong place, but I had no option but to comply with the orders.

Sungei Patani camp in those days was a very different place from the Depot of recent years. There existed only the Mandalay Lines area, and this was situated in thick overgrown rubber, penetrated by narrow laterite tracks leading in some cases to

inhabitable huts and in others to ruins. Dense undergrowth concealed bomb craters, bunkers, abandoned latrines, burnt-out vehicles and every sort of rubbish. The airfield was strewn clean by scavengers. Ammunition, ranging from 500lb bombs to anti-tank mines and SAA, was to be found under almost every bush and was exceedingly hazardous when the lalang on the overgrown airfield periodically caught fire. Standing on the edge of the rubber, with shreds of black disintegrating attap flapping from the skeleton rafters, were the derelict control tower and offices, later to become the Officers' Mess. In a tented camp on the other side of the airfield was a company of The Royal Pioneer Corps (Ceylon), who, when not getting drunk, fighting, or creating other disturbances, were employed on military construction work.

We were due to replace 1st Battalion The Malay Regiment, who occupied the habitable portions of Mandalay Lines and also the Kedah Defence Volunteers' Buildings, which eventually became the home of Boys' Company. Their CO was George Denaro, who later became Colonel of The York and Lancaster Regiment. We were very fortunate indeed in finding them there, as nobody could have been more cooperative and helpful, and if they had not put themselves to considerable inconvenience we should not have been able to cope with the main body of 1/6th when they arrived.

An account of how we just managed to get enough of the camp ready for the Battalion, which was in any case only at about half strength, would fill an article itself. Although everyone was very helpful it appeared that only at the eleventh hour were plans made to receive us, and the advance party spent the first week persuading the Works Services to start things that should have already been completed. There were only two flush lavatories working in the whole camp, and no alternative arrangements had been put in hand to cover the period of several months until a new sewerage system came into action. Electricity was a luxury, obtainable for a few hours each evening if nothing went wrong with the engine.

The main body duly arrived towards the end of January and disembarked at Prai with some difficulty, for all the Tamil dock labourers were observing a day of mourning for Gandhi, who had been murdered in Delhi the previous day. The Battalion came by train to Sungei Patani, where the Malayan Police Band provided an unexpected and cheerful welcome before the men marched to the camp. We were soon settled in, and in a few weeks had transformed Mandalay Lines into some semblance of order. Our numbers increased as small drafts arrived both by sea and by air and we started to become nearer our right strength.

Before coming to Malaya all battalions had had to give the GOs and men the option of remaining in the Indian Army if they so wished, and the numbers who opted for India varied with each battalion, largely in accordance with the distance of the unit from Delhi and the accessibility of the men for propaganda. Promises of rapid promotion and commissioning lured a number away, and counter-propaganda was not permitted. In

any case the status and future of the Brigade (known initially as The Gurkha Regiment) had not been clearly defined and it was difficult to explain to the men how things would develop. 1/6th had not done too badly except that the clerks had opted for India almost to a man, which threatened to bring the administration of the Battalion to a standstill if they all left at once. Accordingly a strange arrangement was implemented whereby we borrowed them from the Indian Army and they remained at their old duties until replacements arrived a couple of months later. By then they had all changed their minds and were eager to stay, but it was too late. They were despatched

to India in accordance with our undertaking amid scenes of some emotion. It was a sad little episode.

The nucleus of the old Regimental Centre plus recruits, families and other details arrived in April together with more officers. Boys' Company was raised under the supervision of 1/6th and tented family lines were occupied: later a recruit training wing was formed. On 16 June 1948 the pattern of life for the next fifteen years was outlined.

The Malayan Emergency had started.

Following The Drum

By Lady Beryl Walker

Venetia Venning, daughter of the late Lady Beryl Walker, writes that her mother had titled it "Following the Drum" and it became the inspiration behind our daughter Annabel's book of the same name about the lives of Army wives and daughters.

On a hot day in August 1947 I was sitting with several other wives in the garden of the United Service Club in Simla where we were all staying, when a noise like the rumbling of thunder came up from the town below. Immediately we all rushed to the edge of the garden wall which overlooked the town and an extraordinary sight met our eyes. The tiny figures below us seemed to have gone mad rushing backwards and forwards, and the rumbling noise became a roar as we watched. It was some time before we realised that the ant-like figures were actually looting the shops and throwing out or destroying the articles which were of no use to them.

So began the rioting, looting and unnecessary loss of life that accompanied the beginning of India's Independence. The local shopkeepers were mostly Mohammedan and it was the Sikhs and Hindus who were wrecking the shops. In other parts of the country, which had become Pakistan overnight, the reverse was happening and Mohammedans were trying to oust the Hindus and Sikhs.

Most of the Club servants were Mohammedan and particularly our own personal bearers, some of whom had been with us for many years; so within a matter of hours they were all rounded up within the Club premises, where they became willing prisoners for their own safety.

My first thought was for my three children, who were staying in the Club Annexe eight miles out of Simla. They had gone there with their English nanny, as I had a job in Simla and had been in the habit of bicycling out to see them for weekends. The road was narrow and only the local Maharajah was allowed a car; everyone else travelling by hand-pulled rickshaw. Even the food was carried on the head of a coolie, who jog-trotted out there once a day from the Club. The rickshaw coolies and the food bearers were all Mohammedans so, after several of

them had been murdered, the rest fled and the children were virtually stranded. I realised that my only means of getting them into Simla was to enlist the help of the Maharajah; after many telephone calls I was most grateful when he sent in the family with a jeep escort of his own State Forces to protect them.

Everyone's aim was to get out of Simla as soon as possible; being a hill station, most of us were up there for summer months only but first of all we had to get the Mohammedan servants away. Terrifying stories of murders on the roads and trains came up from Delhi so the servants were taken to the railhead by Europeans at dead of night. There they were bidden farewell, sometimes very sadly as very often they, and perhaps their fathers before them, had served the same European family for two or three generations. There were several instances of their masters travelling with them to ensure their safety.

By then there was such a shortage of staff in the Club that the family and I moved to a hotel. Most husbands, whether civilian or Forces, had then come up to Simla and collected their families, but my husband was in Malaya where at that time family accommodation was non-existent. Living in the hotel became a very hard mouth existence and our room became a ready refuge for any Mohammedan bearer waiting to get away. They hid under the beds during the day while Nanny, a formidable figure, stood guard against intruders until they were whisked off to their refugee train that night.

Our only food was a rather unpalatable cauldron of curry and rice, which was dumped in the dining room twice a day and left for us to help ourselves. My daughter was then only a few months old and getting her fresh soup and vegetables meant walking through the riot-torn bazaar oneself to find it. The police were worried when they saw a British woman on her own and begged one not to go, but, provided we did not get in the way of a fight or try to intervene, we were left alone.

General Headquarters in Delhi had by this time laid on a tremendous evacuation scheme for all the families. A fleet of little red buses, which normally plied between Old and New

Delhi, were sent up the hill to Simla with a British Regiment to accompany us. The scheme was that we should drive to Ambala, spend the night at the British Military Hospital and then drive on to Delhi the next day.

About 250 of us wives and children climbed into the buses: each bus with the comfortingly solid back of an armed British soldier in each corner.

We arrived in Ambala after a tiring but uneventful journey, passing on our way the enormous refugee camp, which was spread all over the open part of the town.

As we climbed out of the buses our thoughts were on hot baths and getting the children settled down for the night, but our hopes were to be rudely dashed to the ground.

The hospital was completely deserted and empty of all furniture, including the very necessary bathroom pieces, as modern sanitation had not yet been installed. Somewhere the planning had gone wrong and no-one had remembered that the BMH had been completely evacuated a week earlier.

However, nothing daunted, we all collected our sleeping bags, without which one never travelled in India, and dosed down on the verandah floor as it was cooler outside. Nanny, in some miraculous way, had found an old iron bedstead and, like a tigress at bay, managed to hold it for herself and the baby against all comers! We shared our British escorts' mess tins the next morning, and baked beans and soya links were manna indeed after the inevitable curry. The babies were the only ones who were really hungry as the water had been cut off at source when the hospital had been evacuated: though mine was given enough gripe water to quench her thirst and settle her indigestion for life.

After travelling all day we arrived in New Delhi that evening and were taken straight off by friends to an Army hostel. There we spent another three weeks on a curry-laden diet and were lucky enough to get on a ship to Malaya.

When my husband met us Nanny was busy in the cabin filling up all the thermos flasks because, as she remarked with her usual sniff, "they say you can drink water from the taps in this country but I just don't believe it".

'Here Today, Gone Tomorrow'

From Sir John Nott 1953 - 56, from his memoirs Here Today, Gone Tomorrow

My call-up papers arrived in June 1950 and with some enthusiasm, I reported early for my medical.

Alas, I failed to give a urine sample and after the medical officer had turned on all the taps in his basin to assist me, he ordered me to the back of the queue. My army career did not start well. I had asked to join my Grandfather's regiment, The Royal Hampshire Regiment, but the medical officer correctly diagnosed that my physique better fitted me to drive a lorry than flog around hopelessly in the infantry. I was therefore conscripted into the RASC and sent to Buller Barracks, Aldershot. There I dealt a double surprise; I could actually read and write but I was incapable of re-assembling a tap, an electric plug and other DIY kit laid out on a table to assess my intelligence. When I stated that I wished to take a NS Commission it caused huge derision in the platoon, especially among my fellow recruits.

Eventually I became a 2nd Lieutenant and to my horror was posted back to Buller Barracks in charge of the new recruits who arrived to do their first two weeks of National Service. I met them at Aldershot Station in their civvies when they arrived in steam trains from all corners of the UK. The RASC must have taken over half the intake of new recruits.

A fair proportion was illiterate and there were Brummies, Mancunians, Cockneys, Geordies and Borstal boys. Unlike their platoon commander they could all re-assemble a tap - a mark of high practical intelligence. Within two weeks the Platoon Sergeant had knocked them into shape with lashings of Blanco, spit and polish, singed creases, white paint everywhere and three hours daily on the barrack square. I stood around with a cane under my arm. The next fortnight another contingent arrived and we started all over again. I can honestly say that it was the most interesting, educational and satisfying period of my entire army career. I got to know, and admire, my fellow countrymen.

My Great Aunt announced, to my astonishment, that her great friend General Sir John Crocker, the Adjutant General, wanted to see me and I was summoned to the MoD, to the surprise and embarrassment of my Battalion Commander, who did not like it at all. "Can I help you?" the General asked. "Yes" I said, I want to join the Gurkhas". "That is impossible" said his MA, "The Gurkhas do not take National Servicemen". "In that case" I said "I would like to take a Regular Commission". God knows how I passed; anyhow I was sent to do a year's probation with the Royal Scots in Germany, arriving in Singapore to join 1/2 GR in 1953.

Recollections Of National Service

By Field Marshal Sir John Chapple (2GR) (1954 - 94)

Towards the end of my last term at school, I received an invitation from King George VI suggesting that I might like to join his army. Actually it was more of a summons than an invitation. In those days, everyone was required to do two full-time years' National Service, followed by three and a half years in the Territorial Army. Thus we were all setting out on two gap years after leaving school. I had asked to join the King's Royal Rifle Corps and reported for duty as a Rifleman at Bushfield Barracks, Winchester on 19 October 1949. Our training at Bushfield Barracks at Winchester in the King's Royal Rifle Corps (The 60th Rifles) was largely supervised by Corporals and Sergeants. Somewhere in the background there was a Major called 'Dwin Bramall, who was in charge of the whole training wing. He later became Lord Bramall of Bushfield. We lived in the wartime single storey wooden barrack blocks called 'Spiders' in Bushfield Barracks. There were many others in our squad. At least half of them came from the traditional Green Jacket recruiting area near where we lived in Islington. They were real Londoners, very much more streetwise than we who had been to boarding school. We, on the other hand, were much more inured to living the barrack room life. We had spent ten years or so at boarding school and had been brought up on school food during the time of wartime rationing. None of these other young recruits who had come from London had ever had a day away from home. They were all used to Mum's cooking. Although they took a while to get used to the idea of living away from home, they were much quicker and slicker than we were in the other areas of life. It made quite a good combination.

When we had finished our basic training, most went off in different directions. Some of us, who were called ORI - Other Rank 1, which meant we were potential officers - went to Officer Cadet Training Unit (called OCTU) and got National Service commissions about six months after we joined the Army. We spent the last 18 months of our two years' service as 2nd Lieutenants. The basic training as a recruit, which everyone had to go through, lasted about twelve weeks. During the last half of that time, we were selected as possible potential officers and went to a War Officers' Selection Board, WOSB. This was held at Barton Stacey Camp, not all that far from Winchester. We passed that and after our basic training was concluded, we went home on leave for a short while. Then we came back to the depot at Winchester, awaiting our call forward to the Officer Cadet School. In the depot in Peninsula Barracks at Winchester our barrack room was on the third floor of the block where The Gurkha Museum is now located. My bed space was in the McDonald Gallery. I was sent to the Mons Officer Cadet School which was in Aldershot, where I reported in about January 1950 and served the time allotted which was just under six months before being commissioned on 3 June 1950

into the Royal Artillery. The Royal Artillery was not my choice, but they needed a very large number of officers in the Royal Artillery in those days and anybody who had got suitable school qualifications, which meant a School Certificate in Mathematics, tended to be sent there. The training was reasonably rigorous but not unduly difficult. National Service in those days entailed two years' service in the Regular Army followed by three and a half years in the Territorial Army, all of which was compulsory. When I had finished my full-time service which I was allowed to leave a couple of months early in order to go up to Cambridge, I was posted to a local regiment in London who were the old Finsbury Rifles, the local regiment in Islington which had started life as one of the Middlesex Rifle Volunteer Corps. Later it had become a Rifle Regiment in the Territorial Army, part of the King's Royal Rifle Corps in the First World War.

I didn't serve with them very often or for very long because I volunteered to be attached to the Cambridge Officer Training Corps, so that I could clock up the hours necessary (there were so many days of service that you had to fulfil) during term time leaving the university vacations free to go off and do other things. So although I was officially part of this local regiment of the Finsbury Rifles, I hardly ever served with them and did most of my time with the Cambridge University OTC. The Finsbury Rifles had two Field Marshals in their records because Field Marshal Lord Harding had started his service with them. It was while I was at Cambridge that I applied for and joined the 2nd King Edward VII's Own Goorkha Rifles, (The Sirmoor Rifles). I was accepted back into the Regular Army with some backdated seniority which made me the same seniority as someone who had left school the same time that I did, gone to Sandhurst, spent two years there and then been commissioned. I finished my degree in 1954, but my seniority in the Regular Army was backdated to 1951; the same seniority date as John Lamond and Ian Christie. Before I went out to join the regiment in the Far East, I had to do certain obligatory Platoon Commander Courses. One was at Hythe, the Army Small Arms School. This was an 8 week course, followed by the Platoon Commanders' Tactical Course at the School of Infantry at Warminster for another eight weeks. Almost everyone else on those four months of course had come straight from commissioning at Sandhurst as new 2nd Lieutenants. There were two new officers who had joined the regiment in that intake. They were John Carruthers and Digby Willoughby. When I told my family that I'd joined the Regiment with "Willoughby and Carruthers", they said "Gosh, you had better change your name to Carstairs". From about August 1954 through to the end of that year, I was attached to the Rifles Depot at Winchester, and we lived in the Officers' Mess at the other end of the Barrack Square from the Gurkha Museum.

One Years Service, A Lifetime of Support

By Capt Miles Elliot (2GR)

The years slide by ever more quickly and much of what happened in one's life becomes blurred. Not so National Service, which many of us entered reluctantly - at the age of 19 two years seemed a very long time indeed to be involved in an activity which was an interruption to other non-military plans and ambitions. The first few weeks of September 1957 in the KRRC at Winchester confirmed one's fears, but the outlook brightened after WOSB and the prospect of Eaton Hall. There, RSM Lynch and Sgt Pickles set the tone and our platoon commander Geoffrey Howlett (Para and later General) supported three of us in our efforts to join the Gurkhas - Robin Garran went to 7GR and David Hill to 6GR.

The Far East was in those days a remote, distant and exciting destination. Arriving nervously at Changi, a friendly officer met me and we drove to Slim Barracks. There followed a hectic week being outfitted for the tropics and despatched to Kulai. Reporting to my company commander (Norrie Wylie Carrick (1940 - 76) and saluting smartly as he sat on his wooden horse, polo stick in hand, I certainly was a very long way from home! The names of the officers based in Kulai were Kemmis-Betty, Wylie-Carrick, Erskine-Tulloch and Carruthers! Elliott seemed quite inadequate.

The advice I had been given was to smile a lot and not say much in the first few weeks - good advice indeed and not difficult to follow when in the jungle on patrol with only Gurkhas and with very limited Nepali at that stage. A month's language course in Sungei Patani helped and passing the language exam resulted in 4 shillings a day language pay. Then back to Kulai where Peter Kemmis Betty (1937 - 71), the Commandant, entrusted me with the job of Intelligence Officer as the real IO had gone on long leave. Daily radio contact with the jungle patrols, liaison with the Malayan police accompanying them to surrenders, dropping rum into the jungle from an Auster and being involved in the final days of the CTs in Johore was a terrific experience

Towards the end of 1958 the battalion moved back to Slim Barracks and there was time for tennis, sailing, horse racing, football and volleyball as well as military activities. Sailing has remained a strong interest and the current family sailing dinghy (a Norfolk built Stiffkey Cockle) is named "Shabash." The military activities included Internal Security for the Singapore Elections when Lee Kuan Yew first came to power - one did not realise then how Singapore would be transformed under his leadership.

The most abiding memory of the time spent in Malaya and Singapore with the Regiment is the friendliness and tolerance shown to, and the acceptance of, a young, temporary soldier by both the Gurkhas and the British Officers alike. They could not have been kinder. I owe a special debt of thanks to Peter and Gemma Kemmis Betty.

On returning to Europe I lived and worked in France and Germany and then travelled extensively in Europe (East and West), North Africa and the Middle East involved in the construction and pipeline industry. Later I worked for the Inspection and Testing division of Inchcape, travelling throughout Latin America, Africa and the Far East negotiating Foreign Trade Supervision contracts with the governments of Third World and developing countries.

My wife Susan and I married in 1963 and had three sons, Mark, Sean and James. The youngest sadly died aged 19 of a brain tumour. The elder two with their wives, and three children each, live in and near Cambridge so we are lucky to see a lot of them. My son Sean served with 1/2 GR from 1989 to 1994 in Hong Kong, Nepal and Brecon, spending a year in Pokhara overseeing the distribution of GWT funds, and we were able to visit him and Paula in both Hong Kong and Pokhara. The Gurkha connection has been maintained through serving for several years on the GWT Committee for East Anglia. More recently I ran a GWT charity day at my golf club, Royal Worlington, and my church's collection on Remembrance Sunday has been for the GWT. I have also played in several Sirmoor Club and Brigade golf days. At a recent such event, despite wearing my regimental blazer and tie, I decided that I had finally lost my own identity when the Gurkhas present labelled me simply as "Elliott Sahebko Babu."



From L to R: Dale Hudson, Miles Elliot, G/Lt Chitrabandur, Len Lauderdale, Mrs Henry, Daniel Subar, Mike Joy, G/Lt Tejbanadur, Geoffrey Ashley 20th Oct 1958

THE MALAYAN EMERGENCY

Jungle Warfare School

By Lt Col J P Cross (1GR & 7 GR)

The British Army's Jungle Warfare School (JWS) was located 16 miles up the coast road from Johore Bahru near the village of Kota Tinggi. There were two camps on two hills, with a superb range complex hard by and jungle, rubber plantations, mangrove swamps and rivers within easy striking distance. In one camp was the school itself. The other was empty until a battalion, out from England for jungle training, occupied it.

I had a week to take over from the out-going Chief Instructor, Lieutenant Colonel Derek Organ (5 RGR [FF] and 6 GR), who said how lucky it was that he had a name like that when he was in charge of a one-man band. A brilliant instructor, an ebullient man who never 'flapped' and always kept a bubbling sense of humour, he was a difficult man to follow. Only a year later was I Commandant.

The school had a history going back to when it was a Battle School and Reinforcement Unit in Burma during the Second World War. From 1948 it adapted its teaching to cope with Communist Revolutionary Warfare in the jungle (particularly the second phase of Maoist revolutionary strategy), with lessons from Vietnam and Borneo included where relevant. Its first Commandant was Lieutenant Colonel Walter Walker. It taught individuals how to become instructors in basic techniques in their own units and, apart from British troops, seventeen other countries had also sent students, chiefly from South Vietnam and Thailand. All five continents had been represented at one time or another.

In brief, soldiers were taught the basic techniques of living, moving and fighting in jungle against an enemy at the Active Phase of Counter Revolutionary Warfare, in terrain and a climate that affected almost every aspect of normal operations. Apart from the conventional phases of war which were modified for the jungle, much emphasis was placed on navigation, tracking, patrolling, ambushes, survival, whether one was being hunted or merely lost, flotation and watermanship, morale, health and hazards.

The school was divided into 'wings', the main ones being two for jungle warfare, one of which was reserved entirely for the Vietnamese and Thais (known as STAP - Services Training Assistance Programme), and tracking, with or without dogs. US Army patrol dog handlers had double the normal price on their heads in Vietnam. None was lost.

Courses for the Vietnamese were an open secret in that the United Kingdom's official policy towards South Vietnam was one of non-intervention. This fiction had to be maintained even when politicians and senior officers visited us. Other wings were for small arms, trails and development, and signals. There was also a separate War Dog Training School in our grounds, which we later took on as a Dog Wing, and a helicopter troop. The whole place operated on the proverbial 'shoe string' and we were inundated by visitors from many countries and of many persuasions. I had

to look after an average of 8 every 5 working days throughout the 3 years 3 months I was at JWS.

Strange though it may seem, Gurkhas were never students at JWS. Major Maniparsad Rai 7 GR was an instructor in STAP Wing and a Sergeant from 10 GR (the son of Major Purne Rai SB, DSO, MBE, IOM, MC, OBI 10 GR), fluent in English, was an instructor for British troops when it became mandatory for all sergeants to pass a course in General Tactics. There not being enough vacancies in UK military schools, JWS took on this added commitment for several courses.

Facilities for Gurkha training were made available when rifle companies came to train at JWS for a month to six weeks. The School only provided administrative facilities although I was asked to lecture in certain subjects and watch training.

My initial impressions were unhappy: the whole place had an unprofessional atmosphere. I tried not to make comparisons with the unit I had so recently left (Gurkha Independent Parachute Company) and to make allowances for the staff being so mixed. The instructors were from Britain, Australia and New Zealand and it was interesting to see that over half of the sergeants had Chinese wives, two of whom were sisters. Senior military administrative staff were British; storemen, drivers and the like were, in the main, Malays, with a sprinkling of Chinese and southern Indian soldiers, with civilians of all three races. A company of Gurkhas acted both as demonstration troops and 'exercise enemy'. It is safe to say that, without these men, the School would not have functioned. It was not easy always having to lose in a tactical battle, especially when no troops of any army I saw were as good as our men were. (In fact the late Captain Alby Kiwi of the New Zealand Regiment was up to Gurkha standard.)

One of the difficulties the students found was the difficult accents of the British instructors, a problem 1/7 GR had in the Falklands with the Scots and Welsh Guards. On my arrival, I felt the place needed shaking up but I would be foolish to do anything for at least six months by which time I would have a thorough knowledge of all the personalities involved, instruction, syllabuses, exercises, demonstrations and training aids. Changing an army school was slow work.

This uphill task was exacerbated by the problems of trying to hand the place over to the Malaysian Government, who were so picky that its representatives threw out our crockery that had 'old age' marks on them. Malay officers who came down from Kuala Lumpur to meet us were not allowed to eat with us in the Mess, not even a cup of tea at the end of a day's work, even though I told them I would ensure 'Muslim' cooking. No, the Brits were not to be trusted: pre-war planters having treated all Malays as pets, revenge was sweet, but terribly time consuming.

Eventually the organisation 'morphed' into the Commonwealth Jungle Warfare Centre then further split into two separate units.

The day after the Jungle Warfare School, Far East Land Forces (FARELF), ceased to be operational I had a Special Order of the Day published.

Ambushed

By Henry Burrows (10GR)

In 1952 when commanding D company of 1/10 GR we were based at Amber Estate, a rubber estate in the southern part of Johore State. While returning by road to our base, after an uneventful sweep of a nearby area we were ambushed by a group of Communist Terrorists (CTs) on the main road running from Johre Bahru to Kuala Lumpur.

The CTs had chosen an ideal ambush position on top of a steep bank overlooking a bend on the West side of the road. My party consisted of about twelve Gurkhas (literarily the cooks and bottlewashers, as the whole company was deployed on patrolling operations elsewhere on the estate). We were travelling southwards in two open Dodge 15 CWT trucks. My company Sergeant Major (CSM) Gauriman Limbu IDSM was in charge of the second truck some one hundred yards behind me.

As we started negotiating the bend there was a large burst of automatic and sporadic rifle fire from the CTs position. I ordered my driver to steer across to the other (West) side of the road where we jumped out at the bottom of the slope. One of my Gurkhas, sadly, fell out of the truck and knocked himself unconscious in the middle of the road. We spread out and attacked the CTs at the top of the bank. My CSM and his group had, correctly (according to our battle drill) stopped some 90 yards behind us and were quickly moving to cut off positions behind the CTs.

I was armed with a lightweight American carbine and, on reaching the top of the bank took aim and fired some five well aimed shots at a CT, dressed in khaki and wearing a dirty brown hat, from a distance of some 20 yards who was firing at me. As my fire seemed ineffective I switched to automatic and gave him three to four bursts of fire. To my amazement,



Picture extracted from 100 years.

Rfn Harkanath Rai, Cpl Dhanbahadur Rai, LCpl Bombahadur Rai, Cpl Dilliram Limbu and Rfn Ganjabahadur Rai of D Coy 1st Battalion just returned from patrol having killed 4 armed terrorists and wounded 3, a total bag of 7, out of 9 met in June 1952.

instead of dropping he fired more shots at me before turning and running off into the jungle. We followed up the attack with speed to a distance of about 400 yards but found no wounded CTs nor blood trails.

As a qualified marksman on rifle, light machine gun and carbine I was furious with myself for having missed such a good target. On return to our base I summoned my orderly and asked him when he last cleaned my carbine and whether he had altered the sights while so doing. He sheepishly confessed that he had cleaned the carbine that morning and had moved the sights. While re-zeroing my carbine that evening I found that a well-aimed group of shots fell some 12 inches to the side of an aiming mark. What a lucky chap that CT was!

Memories of Old

By Christopher Martin (10RGR)

Christopher Martin was a young National Service Officer with 10GR from 1957 to 1959 during the Malay Emergency Campaign. He was also involved with Maj Nick Cooke GM and General Sir Garry Johnson at some point with a Nepali Charity. On leaving 10GR he went on to complete his post-graduation at St Andrews. He has since taught in the USA and been the Headmaster of several renowned private schools in the UK. He is well known for his publications, namely Millfield, A school for all seasons and Head Over Heels. In keeping in tune with his passion for writing he has written various aspects of his short military career for his grandchildren in the unlikely event they might at some stage be interested in reading them. He has kindly agreed to share some incidents that form part of those narratives.

An arrival at Majedee in 1957

My experience as a brand new National Service subaltern with 2/10GR got off to an unusual start. Finding myself in the tropics for the first time after a six day flight from the UK, and being somewhat befuddled by a combination of sweltering heat, humidity and the vastness of the transit mess in Singapore, all of which struck me initially as almost overwhelming, I was beginning to feel mildly disorientated, I guess. So when eventually a Gurkha and his jeep arrived to collect me, I almost fell on his neck with relief.

During our journey to Majedee, I remember getting used to being called Sahib remarkably quickly, though my lethargic mental state prevented me from trying out the rudimentary Gurkhali I had been trying to mug up on the flight. The driver deposited me and my bag outside the officers' mess, saluted smartly and drove off. Silence. Nobody seemed to be around. I was beginning to wonder if I'd come to the right place when I noticed an elderly Brit in civilian clothes who was poking about with a walking stick in the flower bed. Naturally, I assumed he was the gardener and engaged the fellow in friendly chat. We talked a little about tropical plants for several minutes, and I was struck by his obvious knowledge and the clarity with which he expressed himself. The conversation turned to the quality of the food in the mess, and he was just telling me how he thought it was pretty good, when another jeep drew up, bristling with officers with red tabs on their collars. I knew, of course, that these were all at least full colonels and stood dutifully to attention. To my astonishment, once disembarked from the jeep, they all also sprang to attention and saluted. Caught off guard, but assuming that they were welcoming me to my regiment as part of some arcane regimental tradition, reversing the customary roles of subalterns and senior officers, I waved my arm airily back at them. It was only then that it dawned on me that it was not I who was the centre of their attention but the gardener. As he was ushered into the jeep, he called out to me in high spirits, "Good luck, young man. You'll be fine here, I'm sure," and was driven away in a cloud of dust. That was the nearest I got to Field Marshal Sir Francis Festing,

Chief of the Imperial General Staff, who had been visiting the battalion and had been waiting for his lift to the airport.

Peacetime soldiering

With the end of the Emergency came an entirely new way of life - peacetime soldiering, an essential component of which appeared to be Sword Drill. One morning all British Officers were ordered to report on the parade ground at 0700 for sword drill. Since our shorts were always starched to within an inch of their lives, along with our shirts and even our underwear if the orderlies became too enthusiastic, we had to carry our shorts in our hands, to prevent them from getting creased in the wrong places as we clambered onto the five ton truck sent to collect us for this particular mission. 16 men in their underpants and hats, wearing Sam Browne belts, carrying swords in one hand and shorts in the other - this was the stuff of which the Empire had been made. Anyway, we changed behind the Guard Room and paraded in our uncreased shorts as ordered. The Adjutant, Mike Knott, who had been practising his sword drill in his room, much to our earlier amusement, kept a straight face and started to put us through our paces. Getting the swords out of the scabbards was a piece of cake. It was the getting them back again which proved a problem. Mike, looking straight ahead, barked out, "On the command Swords, feel for the top of the scabbard with the tip of your sword and drive it home, thus." At which he thrust the sword firmly downwards, sadly forgetting to remove his thumb from the scabbard before doing so. His hand was pinned to the blessed thing, blood spurting everywhere. He was carried off to the hospital, and we never bothered with swords again. Dangerous things.

During this period I even had to be Orderly Officer for a stretch, another thing which, during operations, we'd never had to bother about. The OO had to fall in and inspect the guard every morning. This required the issuing of a whole string of commands, preferably in the correct order. "Guard. Guard atten...shun. Slope arms. Present arms. Order arms. Fix Bayonets, Fix-Bayonets. Ground arms. For inspection, present kukris. Present." So far so good. I duly inspected the kukris. But then, flushed with my success in getting this far, something came over me. I forgot the reverse order of the orders, and said lamely, "Present arms."

What happened next was a sort of military ballet. Eight Gurkhas, clearly in shock and thinking very hard in a situation where brain power had never been required of them before, went through what I later worked out was 14 moves in unison in silence as if all the orders for each move had actually been given. I was overwhelmed with gratitude and admiration and could have kissed them all, but fortunately refrained from doing so. A small bunch of onlookers even broke into spontaneous applause when the whole thing had come to an end. I was not allowed to forget this for the remainder of my time with the

battalion. But Robert Graves would have been impressed. "The test of drill came," I said, "when the officer gave an incorrect word of command. If the company could carry out the order intended, or if the order given happened to be impossible, could stand absolutely still without confusion in the ranks, that was good drill."

During this period, there was one occasion when I escaped, and there might have been two when I volunteered for a parachute course, but was told in no uncertain terms by the CO to get back to my regimental duties. On this occasion, I was sent up to Kuala Lumpur to visit and I suppose inspect the Gurkha leper colony. This was a sobering experience. Men, women and children condemned to live out their lives cut off from the world. Many looked outwardly unaffected physically by the ravages of this awful disease, but others were clearly mere shadows of their former selves. There was a general atmosphere of hopelessness, of a dreadful lethargy born of the knowledge that they could never escape that miserable place. I was moved especially by the women whose faces were affected and who held scarves round their heads to retain some tattered shreds of pride in their appearance. Afterwards, it was - but should not have been - a relief to regain the vitality of the vast officers' mess in the centre of the city. The Adjutant told me to sign the visitors' book as I was about to leave, so I opened the first empty page and put down my name, rank and unit in the normal way. Then I leafed back through the pages immediately before mine to see if any of my pals had been there recently. The first page contained the name of just one person, the King of Nepal. The next similarly just one, the Duke of Edinburgh

and before him my old friend Sir Francis Festing, the gardener at Majedee. Then and for the first time, I spotted the other visitors' book, which was intended, I realised slowly and too late, for mere Generals and below. I made a very quick exit!

Eventually, like all good things, life at Eaton Hall came to an end. We were allowed to express a choice for three regiments in which to be commissioned. I chose the Gurkhas, the Kenyan African Rifles and the Camel Corps, because whichever one I got, I'd get to travel outside Europe for the first time in my life for free. Having wound up as a Junior Under Officer - very swanky - I not only got my first choice, but also found myself the only cadet from a Scottish regiment leading my crew in the passing out parade dressed in full highland kit, and my proud parents took some startling photos of the event to prove it.

The 2nd battalion of the 10th Princess Mary's Own Gurkha Rifles.

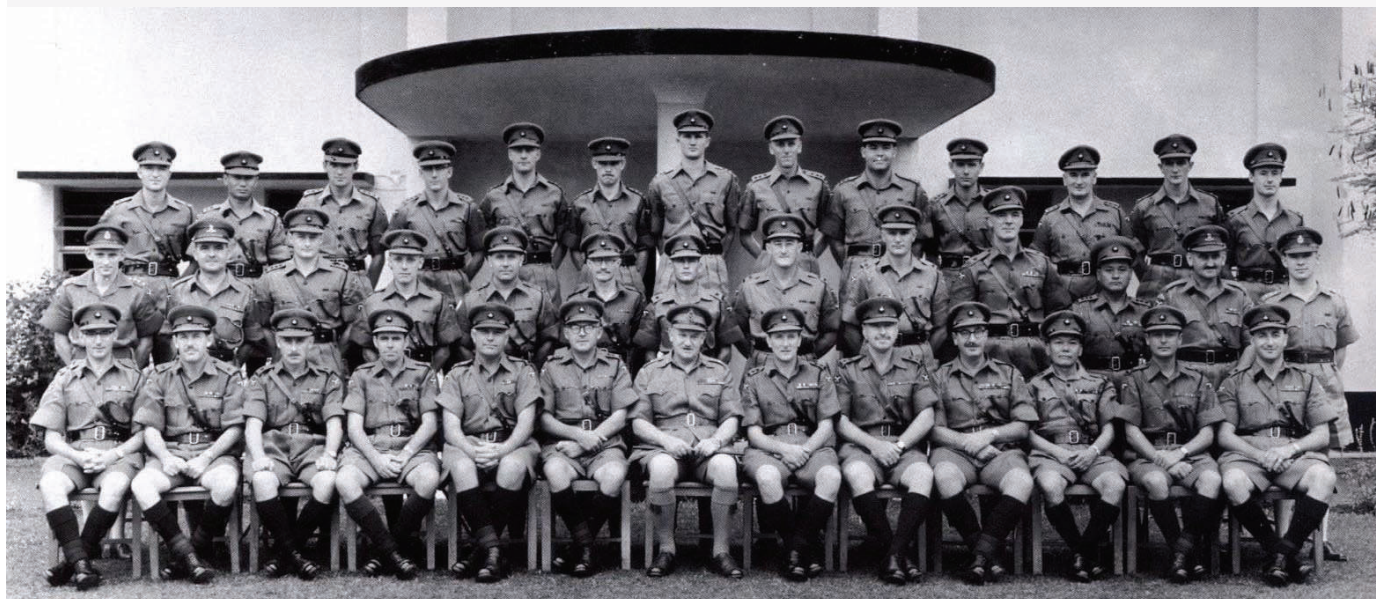
This was to be my new unit and they were stationed in Johore Bahru at the southern tip of Malaya, just over the causeway from Singapore. I was a 19 year old 2nd Lieutenant and in an attempt to look the part I had to buy a hat, a cane, a cummerbund, a small white mess jacket and a pair of George boots for the princely sum of £5, which I still own and which still fit fifty years down the line.

We flew out on a propeller driven aircraft with 90 members of the Welsh Regiment, and they made me, as the rookie who could not complain, officer in charge of the flight. This meant

Officers of both Battalions at Majedee, Johore, in 1959 with the Colonel of the Regiment, Maj Gen R Anderson CB CBE DSO.

Front row L to R: McAlister (2/10), Evans (1/10), Fergusson (2/10), Roberts (2/10), Tee (1/10), Webb (1/10), Anderson, Taggart (2/10), Gregory (1/10), Burnett (2/10), Chhatraman (2/10), Burrows (1/10) and Martin (2/10).

Centre row L to R: Allen (1/10), Skelcher (1/10), Knot (2/10), Maddison (1/10), JS Roberts (2/10), Kerry (2/10), Phillips (1/10), May (1/10), N Roberts (2/10), Williams (2/10), Jagat (2/10), Howat (2/10), Tait (2/10). **Back row L to R:** Edwardes (1/10), Chandra (1/10), Redfern (1/10), Pike (1/10), Wibmer (2/10), Skoulding (1/10), Neate (2/10), Jonson (2/10), Sanders (1/10), Haddow (1/10), Miller (1/10), Corden-Lloyd (1/10) and Taylor (2/10).



I had to circumnavigate their terrifying Regimental Sergeant Major and five senior officers for what turned out to be a five day trip, while ensuring that one chap, sitting under close arrest between two military policemen, did not escape during any of our numerous stop-overs. I figured I could relax on that score while we were in mid-air. We stopped at Brindisi, and then Ankara, after which I was allowed to fly the plane over Turkey - one of the perks of my new responsibilities. Baghdad was next, where I was convinced that they had centrally heated the runway, such was the crushing heat, and then on to Karachi. There our progress was halted by an impressive sand storm which lasted a good day while we fretted close to the tarmac, hoping for imminent escape. The sand finally relented enough for us to head over to Calcutta for another night, before flying down to Bangkok. I remember a terrific storm during breakfast when we must have hit a substantial air pocket, for trays of food came flying down the cabin, pursued by their hungry owners. Nothing like that has ever happened to me since. I wonder why not?

Eventually, we started flying down the length of Malaya. Looking out, all I could see as far as the eye could reach was this magnificent canopy of green jungle, smothering all signs of what life may have existed beneath it. It was a stunning sight, but also a slightly awe-inspiring one for this was the terrain in which I had come to fight for Queen and country. The Emergency had been running pretty much since the war, when the Brits had thoughtfully equipped and trained the Chinese communist guerrillas to help fight the Japanese. Subsequently, these same communists had turned on their colonial masters and taken to the jungle, whence they waged initially a very successful war against us. Now, in 1957, they were down but by no means out. They had become brilliant jungle fighters and trackers, capable we learnt, of smelling toothpaste at 100 yards, for instance and wood smoke at 200. These were the people whom 2/10 GR were deployed to find in Johore, an operation in which I was to be involved for the next 18 months.

I can remember what happened in Malaya with more clarity than almost anything that has happened since. Perhaps that is the way of all memory, but it was no doubt also in part because everything was so entirely new. Off the scale new.

The weather, the heat, the tropical downpours, the food - bhat and dahl twice a day in the jungle - the Gurkhas, their language, the professionalism of the other officers, of whom I think 16 were British and 30 were Gurkha officers, the cycle of operations (I made the mistake of referring to them as "exercises". This went down very badly with experienced officers and I only made that mistake once), up to two weeks in the jungle and then a week or so rest back in camp, air drops, cutting landing zones for helicopters, oil palm, rubber plantations, the difference between primary and secondary jungle, (you can more or less walk through the first but have to struggle through the second), night and day ambushes, being either drenched with sweat or with rain all the time, swamps, leeches, occasional animals; all this and being paid

nearly a pound a day for the privilege. What more could a young man want?

The first morning I had to report to the adjutant, Mike Knott. While waiting outside his office, I noticed a Gurkha who had clearly been told to mow the two grass areas outside the Guard room opposite. These were separated by a concrete path, and as I watched him at work, he methodically mowed up and down this path in the same straight lines he had reserved for the grass. Apparently he had been told to mow the area and that was precisely what he was doing. I soon learnt that orders had to be crystal clear if they were to work properly.

Cultural differences between British officers and Gurkha soldiers asserted themselves regularly. These were usually occasioned by western foibles or kit with which the Gurkhas were understandably unfamiliar. Thus a friend, who had bought a very fine pair of suede shoes in Singapore, handed them to his orderly with instructions to look after them carefully, while he took off for the jungle. On his return, he was dismayed to find his orderly had spent the last ten days working methodically at the suede, which he assumed was some sort of mould, and that with the application of copious amounts of spit and polish had managed at last to get the glimmerings of a shine to radiate from the toecaps.

I was assigned to A Company, initially under Lieutenant Chengba Tamang, MC. He was going to show me the ropes and I noticed in his notebook of things to do before we set off for the jungle an entry reading "New BO". This unflattering reference was to me - new British Officer. For this, my first foray into the jungle, we set off before dawn in trucks which left us at the edge of a large oil palm plantation. We started early in the hope that no one locally would be able to alert the CTs that we were operating in this area. For an hour we plodded on in silence and in the dark in a long line, crawling over and under fallen trees, trying to avoid huge spikey tendrils, wrestling as I thought with nature in the raw. I thought, "This is it; the jungle at last. Tough stuff." Eventually we stopped for a quick rest, still in silence. Then, in the growing light filtering through to us, I was able to see on either side of us what looked like two absolutely impenetrable walls of greenery, and to my shock realised that all this time we had actually been on an overgrown track. The jungle proper was still to come.

Suddenly the leading Gurkha swung left and vanished, somehow, into this wall and the rest of us followed. It was like Alice through the looking glass. It grew rapidly lighter - all weather seemed to happen fast in Malaya - and then I realised that this was the real jungle, a physical environment of which I became extremely fond. The smells of rotting vegetation and the calls of monkeys swinging high above us in the canopy, the little circle of visibility limited to some 20 yards perhaps or even less, constrained by a million vertical trees all striving up towards the light - this was an alien world in which nevertheless I was to feel very much at home in time. Indeed 30 years later when revisiting the jungle in Kedah for a day, the sounds and smells came back as vividly to me then as they were that first day.

“A” Company was based up-country at Rengam. Our base was a group of temporary huts surrounded by plenty of barbed wire. Our Company Commander was Major John Newbery, the only other British officer on the base. I assumed he was in his 50s but he was in fact only 35. Everything took on larger than life dimensions there. The moonlight was brighter than I’d ever experienced it. The snake wriggling on top of my mosquito net early one morning looked 40 feet long but was probably only a few inches. Once at night visiting the outside privy, I reached out for the paper and put my hand on something cold and squirming. I don’t know what it was but the next morning we killed three cobras just outside this makeshift loo.

Lt Chengba was my guide and mentor, and a shrewd and tactful one he was too. He assigned to me as my orderly a very young chap called Jaisha Rai. Jaisha was unusually talkative for a Gurkha so many evenings were spent with him polishing kit and chatting to me in Gurkhali as if I, as an officer, understood all that he said. It was thanks to him that I started to pick up the language as fast as I did. I made numerous mistakes of course, such as copying the fact that Jaisha ended every sentence with “Huzoor”. I assumed this was a mere colloquialism and startled other members of my platoon by using it frequently, to their obvious delight, until Chengba pointed out diplomatically that it was perhaps best translated as “Your Excellency”.

Our various jungle operations melt into one at this distance, coloured by various incidents which stand out from the often tedious business of slogging through resistant nature carrying loads slung around one’s waist. Packs were worn low- slung so that creepers stood less chance of getting involved between you and them. This process was exacerbated by the fact that the average Gurkha was a good foot shorter than me, so I spent much of my time bent double trying to fit through the holes in the undergrowth that the others in front of me had made. In retrospect, life was characterised by adrenalin or laughter, sometimes both at once. For instance; sitting in an ambush at the edge of a rubber plantation, when a Tamil tapper approached for a pee which he took copiously over me. And the question which still occurs to me is, was it just bad luck or did he know I was there all the time and was just getting his own back on us for constantly disrupting his daily routine?

Ambushing at night when two small bears started dancing slowly together in a patch of moonlight ahead of us, pawing gently at each other in a way that was much more affection than aggression. And the time when a tiger got interested in four of us in another night ambush and started circling us with, I imagine, supper in mind. We were not supposed to fire on animals, however large they might be or purposeful they might become, for that would give our position away, but while I would certainly have done so in this instance had push come to shove, I was impressed to see that my three Gurkha companions had drawn their kukris, just in case, and would have risked a tricky fight rather than disobey orders.

On one occasion we had completed an operation and settled down in the oil palm at the head of a track for transport to pick us up. I’d posted three sentries as usual, assuming that they would withdraw when they heard the trucks coming and come back to base with us. This was the usual routine. But this time I had omitted to make this clear. So we got in the trucks, got home, paraded, handed in spare rations, ammunitions, inspected the men’s feet, and did a roll call, to find three missing. This meant a three hour round trip to pick up our three sentries, who although aware that they were guarding nobody, and doubtless dismayed to be left behind by us, had not been specifically instructed to leave their posts and so stayed put.



Preparing Breakfast in a deep jungle environment during the Malaya Emergency Campaign circa 1959

In a storm one night, a tree fell down and clonked one chap on the head. Another had terrible dysentery. I radioed for a helicopter. The reply from base was pragmatic. “One, Roger. Suggest you take tree out of first fellow’s head and shove it up second fellow’s arse, over.”

One morning we came to a fast running river and decided to cook breakfast while some of us felled a tree and constructed a bridge, complete with handrails made of creepers. I gave the compass to a member of the lead section who had never had this responsibility before, and told him the bearing, assuming that he would know that this was to start from the other side of the river. In due course we set off across the bridge. Half way over, the compass man realised that the bearing was wrong, turned sharp left and with his nose glued to the compass fell straight in. He was washed up several yards downstream, and had we not called him back, would have set off into the jungle without a backward glance.

My own map reading nadir was when, in an attempt to set an ambush, I took three men out from our camp, and instead of going in a straight line managed to go round in a complete circle. God knows how. Smelling wood smoke ahead, I thought this is it; contact with enemy at last, and indicated to my companions that we should spread out and advance in line abreast in order to attack. I was only prevented from making the worst mistake of my life when the sentry, whom I had set, stepped from behind a tree and said politely, “Ram ram Sahib.” Whether they knew what I had nearly done I don’t know, and did not ask.

On the other hand the apogee of my map reading was the time when we covered ten map squares, about ten kilometres, in a day in primary jungle and walked straight into the camp we were heading for. It was not visible until the last few yards. A small error either side and we'd have missed it altogether.

By this time Jaisha had gone on leave and my new orderly was Dambabahardur Gurung, a strong, tough, immensely loyal guy who later won a Military Medal in Indonesia. He was chosen to perform the ceremony of Mar at Dashera in front of the whole battalion. This meant he had to go into a sort of retreat for a week to get prepared as a Hindu for the business of slicing through the neck of an ox with one blow of the ceremonial kukri. I was very proud of him, and he carried this difficult feat off without apparently batting an eyelid, though the poor ox certainly did.

On one occasion we went in with two Dyak trackers from Borneo. We entered a mangrove swamp in the Pengiran peninsula at night in a landing craft, cheered at one point when a flight of flying fish landed among us as we sprawled in the bottom of the boat. That night we tried to snatch some sleep on the roots of these blessed trees just above the water line and endured a bad week, stumbling over submerged obstacles, waist deep in the stagnant waters. On the way back, again in a landing craft one sunny evening, we were shaken to see a black monster surging up from the deep about 100 yards away, and a submarine with no markings shot past us in a flurry of white water. The trackers were superb of course. I was particularly impressed by the chap who walked at the back of our platoon, laboriously standing the lalang up behind us where we'd trampled it down to disguise the fact that we'd been there at all.

Another swampy mission bore more fruit however. Hidden on a little island, unmarked on our maps, we found the remains of a major terrorist base, vacated just a day or two earlier. You could see their fire places, though attempts had been made to conceal these, sleeping places and even wooden benches in rows, presumably to sit on while being harangued by their leaders. This was quite a find and resulted in my being helicoptered out to report to the Brigadier in person. I arrived at Brigade HQ, drenched and muddied from the jungle, still wearing my equipment and armed with my sten gun, and without the time to change or even wash, was ushered by a waiting adjutant past a line of smart limos and their bored drivers up the steps of the officers' mess, to find the brigadier entertaining a number of impeccably dressed guests in dinner jackets - and have never felt so underdressed since. These dignitaries, clutching glasses of Brandy Ginger Ale, backed away as I was led through the throng, reminding me in retrospect of various film sequences one has seen, though at the time no such thought occurred to me, for the thought of actually confronting Brigadier Walker, a ferocious figure if ever there was one, frankly terrified me. However, I made my report of which he appeared to approve, was given a drink and flown back to the jungle where I confess I felt a lot more at home.

We used to call up air drops to re-supply us for a second or third week. We'd hack a hole in the jungle and put out a marker or a smoke grenade when we heard the plane coming. Then down would come a series of parachutes with rice, vegetables, tea, and most welcome of all, rum. At least one parachute would carry a live goat, whose pitiful bleating sounded particularly bizarre in mid-air. It never bleated for long however, being quickly beheaded with a kukri. On one occasion the rum parachute got caught high up in the canopy, so Captain Ganjajit Rai MC, a fierce elderly warrior commanding A Company at that point, sent someone shinning up the tree to cut it down. He and I were talking somewhat injudiciously under the tree in question when, with a roar of snapping branches, the rum barrel, released from its parachute, thudded into the ground right beside us. Ganjajit was livid and threatened the soldier aloft with untold harm should he ever dare to descend. The exigencies of the operation took over in time, however, and no lives were lost.

When we were ambushing, there were long periods of inactivity in our camps, during which the older men used often to squat down surrounded by the younger men and tell them stories about Nepal. I could only follow bits of these stories but I'll never forget the wide-eyed fascination of the youngsters hearing tales of their homeland in another continent with so little in common with Malaya. Some of them were even younger than I. Jaisha, for instance, had lied about his age to the Gullawalla, the recruiting sergeant, and can only have been 16 or 17 when he enlisted. At one time I built a couple of stilts and these kept people amused all day, especially when anyone fell over. Laughter at others' misfortune seemed cynical at first but I came to see that it was harmless enough really. There was nothing vindictive in their *Schadenfreude*. Trapping a wild cat one day, they teased it mercilessly before eventually putting it out of its misery. And they'd catch a scorpion, tie a string round its tail, attach this tightly to a stick and tease it from the front so that it would strike and, in doing so, lift its entire body off the ground, such was the strength in its tail.

One glorious dawn, sitting in an ambush with my back to a large tree, I heard a noise just above me and looking up, saw a monkey nipping down the tree, presumably for a walk on the jungle floor. He did not notice me, landed a couple of feet away and gave a huge, entirely human stretch and yawned loudly. Then, catching sight of me, he threw his arms up with hands wide open in a gesture of surprise so like one of us that, if ever I'd doubted the link between us before, I certainly did so no longer. Then he nipped back up his tree again.

One evening in pouring rain, we stopped to make camp. This meant cutting four saplings, to which one tied the corners of one's waterproof poncho, two more to support the ridge pole, and then the ridge pole itself. Then you could make the sleeping platform to go under this roof. Once covered with greenery, you had a pretty comfortable bed. But in the rain the bark was slippery, and one chap's kukri slipped and went straight into his knee. We tried field bandages, to no avail, and I even resorted to a tourniquet, but each time the pressure was

released, the blood flowed out again. Then the Gurkha medic suggested burning a bandage, mashing the ashes into a fine dust, making a heap of these ashes over the wound, opening it just enough for blood to fill the pile, and then closing it again. After a few moments, when the ashes had dried they acted like stitches and after a careful night we were able to get him lifted out the next day.

Finally, one evening as we were setting sentries and about to settle down for the night, I was called to the radio and told that the last known terrorists in Johore had just surrendered some seven miles away. It was all over. So we thought we should have a party, and polish off the remains of the rum ration before setting out for the jungle edge the next day. But try as we could to let our hair down and make merry, we just could not manage it. We were all so used to near silence, so familiar with making no unnecessary noise, that it seemed sacrilege to cavort about. So we gave up, and the next day despite there being no need for this, made our way out of the jungle in exactly the same formation as if we had still been on operations. And that was the end of my jungle time.

I had a month to go before I was due to return home. In this time, I managed to contract amoebic dysentery, necessitating a week in the hospital in Singapore being tended by a ravishing Irish nurse, Carmel Curly, whom I had the effrontery subsequently to ask out for a date, so it was not a bad sickness to get, as it turned out. The date turned out to be quite an event. Nick Cooke and I drove into town in his ancient Riley, picked up Carmel and then turned off to Government House where Nick's date was waiting. She was the niece of the Governor, and he and his wife wanted to give us the all clear before releasing their girl into our tender charge. It was the first day I had been on my feet after my hospital experience and having been pretty well scoured out by

the dysentery, was none too steady on my feet after a glass of her Ladyship's sherry. I remember, to my embarrassment, remarking on the immense length of their drawing room and insisting on getting up, glass in hand, and measuring foot by unsteady foot the entire length of the room. Nevertheless, Nick managed to explain my bizarre behaviour somehow, and we were allowed to sally forth for an evening's jollifications.

The first thing that went wrong was that the highway by the sea leading to Raffles was flooded. It's now a good mile from the shoreline, such is the building on new land that the Singaporeans have achieved. There was no warning of this flood and we ploughed into it until the water was ankle deep in the car. The girls and I had to get out in our finery and push for some way. Very bonding and funny in fact, but it did not improve the lifespan of their dresses. We then took off for the red light district, out of bounds to all military personnel. I don't know whose idea this was but it turned out to be a bad one, for that very night the Military Police had planned a comprehensive raid. There we were, the four of us, outside on the pavement enjoying a convivial drink, and the next moment we were surrounded by British MPs demanding papers and keen to arrest two jejune British Officers who had erred and strayed into the wrong place at the wrong time. Perhaps it was the sheer hopelessness of our excuses which touched some paternal instinct in the sergeant in charge, or perhaps the realisation that one of the party lived in Government House, but we were released with a caution and in fact heard nothing more about it.

It was at this stage that I heard from St Andrews that they would admit me for the academic year starting in September. This news was welcome, but it also saved me from signing on for a regular commission in the regiment, which - had they rejected me - I planned to do. So this was quite a turning point for me.

Aimed or Unaimed

Lt Col J P Cross (1 RGR & 7 RGR)

*If you would hit the mark, you must aim a little above it
'Elegiac Verse' (1880) Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.*

62 years later I can still see it happening: nor have I finally made up my mind whether the woman acted deliberately or not - she never looked behind her before, during or after her short squat...and yet...? But first things first.

My A Company, 1/7 GR, was stationed in Rompin, in the Bahau District of Negri Sembilan, Malaya. Our camp was contiguous with the larger part of a Mr Smith's main estate. He will have been gathered by now, nor will it be unfair to say that was decidedly 'twitchy' after being kept for several years in solitary confinement by the Japanese in the recent war. Several miles away to the north, close to the jungle, was a small off-shoot of the main estate, run by the sub-manager, a Geoffrey Fermin, who, as I write this, may yet to be gathered.

In those days, early 1952, guerilla re-supply was often managed by rubber tappers taking food with them to the remoter tasking areas near the jungle edge where it was handed over to them. Fermin told me of a three day period when and where this was likely to happen. I said I'd be there, with my men, from soon after dawn on the morrow.

It is here I must break the thread of my story: since 2001 I have lectured all new recruits, Brigade of Gurkhas and Gurkha Contingent, Singapore Police. One point I stress is that the small, seldom-if-ever-recorded incidents, properly carried out and normally taken for granted, are the hallmark of Gurkhas being superior to most, if not all, other troops and which have helped give us such a high name. In fact, the continuous dedication to such matters is the obverse of the coin of collecting bravery awards and without which the coin would be valueless.

We moved out of the camp on foot, lay up till dawn and made an approach march through the jungle and, half an hour after dawn, deployed on the edge of the rubber estate on a small mound overlooking a laterite road, a stream and a latex-collecting shed. We men camouflaged ourselves as best we could and lay prone in the cover crop, at best not more than nine inches high.

For an hour nothing happened.

Inexplicably, because Fermin had told me he would not come our way, I then heard voices and saw Smith, with a shotgun and a large black Alsatian dog, and Fermin, walking down the road towards us. Behind them by several yards was their Malay Special Constable armed escort. They stopped just short of the stream.

'John Cross and his Gurkhas are in ambush positions just in front of us,' the garrulous Fermin said.

Smith was outraged. 'What? Without asking my permission. How dare he?' He raised his shotgun to his shoulder and pointed it in our direction. 'If I see him I'll fire at him and kill him. If I don't our escort will.'

He turned to his dog and, gesticulating in our direction, sent him searching for us. The dog ran down the small slope, jumped over the stream and started sniffing its way up towards us.

I 'froze' more stiffly than before; in the unhappy realization I could do nothing else.

At the same time, a Chinese tapper woman had been coming our way, flitting from tree to tree and deftly cutting the bark so letting the latex drip into the little bowls that had been hung lower down the trunk.

She had to be aware of the Europeans and their escort. I saw her tuck her cutting implement under her belt and start walking backwards towards the nearest soldier. As she went she lifted her upper garment, undid the cord of her trousers and, squatting almost on top of the soldier, pulled her knickers down and pissed.

I saw that we could come to grief even before the dog had reached us.

I shuddered and inwardly squirmed at this totally unexpected addition to our possible discovery - two pairs of European eyes, many more of the escort, a searching dog and now...

Finished, she stood up, arranged her clothing and moved off to the next tree to continue her task. Simultaneously, the dog, only yards away from us, turned and went back to his master.

'You're wrong, Fermin,' I heard Smith say, sneeringly. 'My dog would have found anyone there.'

I did not catch Fermin's reply.

By then it was obvious that no guerillas would be coming that day. After the two men, the escort and the dog were well out of sight, I lifted the ambush.

'How did you manage not to let her know you were there?' I asked the soldier.

He had watched her come towards him and, as she squatted, was amazed to see something never viewed from that perspective before. 'I'd have been wetted if I hadn't moved my head, just in time.'

Had her stream hit the solder more than a penny's worth, in panic, pot-shots and a possible post-mortem, would have been spent.

Back in camp I rang Fermin, who had told me that Smith's visit up to his sector of the estate had been a surprise, and relayed his conversation back to him.

"Will you tell Mr Smith?"

'It hadn't occurred to me but I will.'

So I did. 'Geoff Fermin told me you and he went to the edge of your northern estate this morning.'

'Yes. He told me you were there. Had you been I'd have shot and killed you.'

'But I was...' and I started quoting him and his deputy word for word, of course including the 'kill him' bit. I heard him breathing heavily into the mouthpiece, even more heavily when I came to the tapper woman bit.

Initially, he was stutteringly speechless at what I told him. Then, 'If you hadn't relayed my conversation back to me I would not have believed you,' he eventually stammered. 'I can't think of any other soldiers who could have hidden as you did.'

'Neither can I.'

Nor can the twelve intakes of Gurkha recruits' QGOs, WOs and NCOs who have also listened in.

The Building Of Fort Kemar 1953

By Dennis Wombell (Ex Malayan Police Field Force)

Introduction

Browsing one day recently on my computer, I happened to look up Fort Kemar and found a site which describes it as it now looks. I was incensed to see that the site includes a photograph of a monument (taken by Mohd Asri bin Rosdi) in the form of a wall, commemorating the building of the Fort. It is inscribed:

**KUBU KEMAR
DI-ISTIHAR PEMBUKAAN
OLEH SAS REG
PADA TH 1952
PADA MEREKA YANG
TELAH BERBAKTI**

Translated thus

**FORT KEMAR
DECLARED OPEN
BY THE SAS REG
IN 1952
TO THOSE WHO SERVED**

The Fort was neither built nor opened by the SAS, nor did it exist in 1952 and the following is an account of the building of the fort in 1953 by the Malays of the Malayan Police 18 Federal Jungle Company.



Fort Kemar Memorial

In the early 1950's when the Malayan Emergency was at its height, the terrorists of the Malayan Communist Party were on the run in both the urban and rural areas of the country. Their supplies, especially of food, had been severely disrupted by the establishment of the defended new villages, where food for the inhabitants was strictly controlled. Life had also been made more tenuous for them by the increase in informers through the build up of the government intelligence services. As a result, many of their groups had retreated deep into the jungle of the

central mountain chain, areas somewhat neglected up to this time by the security forces. In their deep jungle camps the terrorists sought and found the security they desperately needed to grow their own food, to re-group and to train new recruits. They were largely assisted in this by befriending or intimidating the aborigine tribes who roamed the interior.

The aborigines, the Orang Asli as they are now known, were a shy, timid and simple people who lived in the stone age. They were nomadic and lived as family groups in longhouses raised upon stilts in small jungle clearings in which they grew their staple food crops of tapioca, maize and, in some areas, dry rice. After only two or three seasons, or after a death in the family, they would burn their house and move on to new pastures. They fished and hunted using blowpipes with poison darts and they were skilled in making traps of bamboo and rattan. Their jungle craft was unequalled and their tracking skills made it impossible to move anywhere in their tribal areas without their knowledge.

It requires no stretch of the imagination therefore to understand how valuable these people were to the Communist terrorists and how essential it was for the guerillas to cultivate them; and this they did. The Asli knew nothing of the outside world, of government or politics and they were happy to accept at face value, these, apparently, friendly Chinese strangers who convinced them that they were their friends. It also helped that there had been some contact between Communists guerillas and the Asli during the war when the same men had been seen in association with British officers in the fight against the Japanese. This enabled the terrorists to live and cultivate their own crops, largely undisturbed and to receive from the Asli information of security forces movements in the area.

It was obvious that a government presence was required in these areas and it was decided to establish a chain of jungle forts deep in the interior manned by units of the Malayan Police. These were not to be true forts *a la Beau Geste*, but well-defended jungle camps, the buildings constructed, as are Malay kampong houses, largely from timber cut from the surrounding jungle. Other requirements required for the construction were to be supplied by airdrop.

The role of the forts was to dominate the area in which they were to be situated by providing a permanent police/military base from which to seek out and destroy communist terrorists and their camps and to compromise their courier routes. An equally important role was to bring government to the Orang Asli by providing them in the areas of the forts with medicine, schools and shops and also, eventually, to provide a base for the Department for the Protection of Aborigines. It was hoped furthermore to persuade the Asli to abandon their nomadic way of life and settle around the area of the fort where land would be made available for the more effective farming of their food crops.

The forts were to be manned by the Malayan Police Jungle Companies - independent police para-military units,



each identical to an army infantry company in its function and structure and led by both British and Malayan officers. At this time I was a Police Lieutenant and platoon commander in 18 Police Federal Jungle Company, based in a camp on the bank of the Sungei Perak near Grik, a small remote town 15 miles south of the Malaya Thai border and it was we who were given the task of establishing the country's most northern fort, deep in the jungle in the area of the Sungei Temengor close to the Perak-Kelantan border; and I was selected, with my platoon, to carry it out.

My platoon consisted of 30 Malay constables, all conscripts, except for my sergeant and corporals who were members of the regular police force. We had been together for two years and by this time they were jungle-hardened warriors in whom I had total trust. My sergeant, Mohamed Yusoff, was a sterling character - a first class leader, likeable and highly respected by the men. I had absolute confidence in them all.

We were also to be accompanied by D Squadron of 21 SAS from the British army. This squadron with its four troops was to be deployed over a large area surrounding the fort, to supply a security screen during construction. An equally important role was to seek out and make contact with the scattered and isolated Aborigine groups in an effort to persuade them to visit the fort site where they would be acquainted with our intentions and asked to help with the fort construction for which they would be paid.

In order to avoid confusion every military operation is given its own individual designation and the operation to locate a site for, and to build, our fort was to be 'Operation Hardcastle'. The name of the Fort was to be decided at a later date. In mid February 1953 our party, consisting of myself with my platoon and accompanied by our Company Commander Gary Lockington, left our camp on the bank of the Sungei Perak and, following the river, marched for the Sungei Temengor, a tributary of the Sungei Perak, deep in the interior of the

jungle-covered hills which run, like a spine, down the centre of the country. We also had with us a small advance party of the SAS, the main body of which was to march in three or four days after us.

This was just before the introduction of troop-carrying helicopters and the march in, carrying a full scale of weapons and packs weighing between 40 and 60lbs was arduous and exhausting. Two words can best describe life in the jungle in these circumstances - wet and stinking. Wet from rain or sweat or both, and stinking because one wears the same clothes day after day for the duration of an operation, changing into a dry set, kept in ones pack, only at night. One of my most abiding memories of life in the jungle, even after half a century, is of changing, upon getting up in the morning, from the warm dry clothes in which I had slept, into my cold, wet and stinking jungle-green uniform, which had hung, overnight, from a dripping bush outside my basha. But God help the man who was tempted to keep his spare dry clothes on!

To march following rivers in the jungle, in hilly country, is especially difficult, and even more so in a country where there is so much rain. The track, if there is one, is invariably narrow and, more often than not, on a steep hillside, often with a precipitous drop down to the river and, for the men in the rear, deep in the mud churned up by those in front. There are massive fallen trees to climb over - not easy when carrying a full pack and a sidearm - and every 200 or 300 yards, a stream to wade through, often waist deep. On tracks used by the Asli one would sometimes find a short cut across a long loop in the winding river, but this meant climbing the hill which had caused the river to loop in the first place.

The tracks are also infested with mosquitoes and leeches, the leeches hanging from the leaves of the undergrowth to drop off onto passing man or animal. One became accustomed to the leeches and unconcerned - we learnt not to pull them off, which often resulted in a nasty difficult-to-heal ulcer. Touched with salt or ash from the previous night's fire and carried in an ammunition pouch, they would drop off harmlessly. In this way it was possible to remove the more obvious leeches on arms, necks and faces on the march, but not those in inaccessible places - they easily penetrated the lace holes of boots for instance - and these were left to gorge themselves until one stripped off at the end of the day and removed them from bleeding legs, back and stomach, and consigned them to the fire. Mosquitoes, on the other hand, gave one sleepless nights and, if one didn't take one's Paludrine religiously - almost certainly, Malaria.

My little Malays took all this in their stride. Not only were the majority of them kampong Malays who were at home in the jungle, but they had also operated in these conditions for over two years and consequently were hardened to it. Not so the SAS troopers and it was by no means the Regiment's finest hour. It is well documented that the SAS, after its revival for service in the Malayan Emergency, had gone through hard times and many of its troopers were well below the standard which

would eventually be required of a man with an aspiration to join the Regiment and which would serve in future years to make them one of the finest Special Forces in the world. A majority of them were unfit, they were unaccustomed at this time to operating for long periods in deep jungle and their discipline left much to be desired. Many of them were what was known in those days, as 'Canteen Cowboys'. On the march, several of them collapsed and as my Malays casually stepped over one Irish trooper who lay across the track with his equipment strewn about him, he called out to me "Holy Mary mutter o' God sorr, I'm f...ing-well doyin"!

It took nearly four days to march to the area in which we were to locate the fort and upon arrival we set up camp beside the Sungei Temengor about 12 miles south of Kampong Temengor, an isolated abandoned Malay kampong surrounded by jungle. Our camp site, had, at some time in the not-too-distant past, been an Orang Asli ladang and required little clearing to enable us to receive the much needed airdrop of food on the following morning. We wasted no time and on the morning after the airdrop, leaving the main body to clear a larger airdrop zone (DZ) and a helicopter landing pad (LZ), Gary Lockington and I took a small party and commenced our search for a suitable site for the fort. In fact, the area we had already marked on our maps during the planning of the operation proved to be ideal. It was a flat area on a narrow strip of land between the Temengor and one of its tributaries - the Sungei Kemar - which ran parallel to it for about three miles. At one point the two rivers curved towards each other making a bottle neck just wide enough for the fort, but then widening again to provide a large flat area eminently suitable for an air drop zone and a helicopter landing pad. The land was 30 or 40 feet above the two rivers and not overlooked from any side. It was, therefore, easily defended and provided an excellent supply of clean water.

In our absence, the working party at the camp had completed the clearing of the DZ and LZ and we were able to receive a second airdrop of food, supplies and tools required for the fort construction on 25 February. It also enabled Lt Col Sloane, commanding officer of 22 SAS, to come in by helicopter on 26 February to visit his squadron HQ in the vicinity of my camp, the main body of the Squadron having been deployed in the surrounding areas. He returned on the same day taking with him Gary Lockington who, after he had briefed me and after we had agreed on the location of the fort, returned to our camp in Grik.

During the initial stages of the operation, the SAS, commanded by a Captain Dare Newell, experienced considerable difficulties with their wireless sets. Initially, their powerful transmitter, operating from our camp in Grik had overridden our police radio signals and they had had to move it. A few days later, every one of the 62 sets carried by their four troops operating independently in the jungle and the 68 set at their squadron HQ in our camp was defective. Not only could the patrols not communicate with their squadron HQ but squadron HQ could not communicate with their Regimental

HQ and they were reduced to having to use our police sets and network. This proved to be very difficult since all sets were in constant use during daylight hours, largely due to the weakness of our signals from the area in which our signallers worked and it required enormous patience and persistence on their part to transmit and receive long messages, usually by morse code, which, although time consuming, was more clearly received than verbal communication, which for most of the time was impossible. New sets were quickly acquired by airdrop to the SAS and the situation settled down. Even so, given the primitive sets of those days communications from deep jungle were always tenuous.

Now that we had the essential tools, work on the fort began in earnest and I decided that we would remain in our original camp until the fort site had been sufficiently cleared to allow us to move there. Each day, leaving one section to guard the camp and to continue to make it more comfortable, the fort working party, consisting of my other two sections, marched there after an early breakfast and returned in the evening before dark. It was a demanding regime but it did mean that every man would be given one day of light duties in three.

Our first task was to completely clear the fort area of jungle - a formidable task given the number and size of some of the vast trees and that it was to be done by hand. My Malay boys were completely at home in this environment. Clearing and felling trees, constructing houses of timber and roofing them with attap was second nature to them, but without the large workforce provided by the Orang Asli it would have taken months - but we need not have worried. Within the first few days of our arrival small groups trickled in and the trickle turned into a flood - some led in by the SAS and others, who had heard of it on the jungle grapevine had come out of curiosity - men, women and children, all hugely enthusiastic and keen to enlist in one form or another. They are a very friendly, happy and simple people and it took no time to establish a rapport with them. When we explained that we had to come to build a camp, for which they would be paid to help us, and to provide them with a school, a medical centre and a shop, their enthusiasm knew no bounds. We enlisted those we needed and welcomed their many camp followers.

The day after receiving our first airdrop of food, supplies and building equipment, work started in earnest. My Malays, working alongside the Asli, started to cut, clear and burn the smaller trees and undergrowth with axes and parangs whilst, at the same time, those Asli skilled in the use of the beliong, started on the huge jungle trees - some of them 200 feet high and many with large projecting buttresses spreading to a circumference 30 to 40 feet and resembling, at the base, the fins of a rocket. The beliong is a light axe with a small razor-sharp blade, rather like the blade one sees on a stone-age axe, tied with rattan to the end of a curved two or three foot long flexible stem, cut from a sapling and carved at the end to form a cylindrical grip. In the hands of an expert it is unbelievably effective and two skilled men cutting with absolute precision and each using his beliong like a whip were able to cut down the very largest jungle tress

in a remarkably short time. Their technique was to cut the trunk by encircling the tree with a bamboo platform just below the buttresses and for the two men to work on opposite sides of the tree. The problem with this method was that by cutting above the buttresses, a very large stump remained which had to be removed by another method - explosives.

Our expert in the use of explosives was Captain Gordon Smith - a Royal Engineer officer serving with the SAS and he and I blew up anything which needed to be blown up. It was great fun, and although it was not my function, I wasn't going to miss it. We used Composition C-3, a plastic explosive which looks like sticks of marzipan wrapped in greaseproof paper. It has the consistency of plasticine, is easily moulded into any shape or packed into any hole and it was ideal for blowing large tree stumps out of the ground. It was activated using a bobbin-shaped guncotton primer with a detonator pressed into it and then a length of burning fuse, long enough to keep us out of harm's way when fired. We also used Cordtex - an explosive in the form of a white plastic cable. Using this we were able to make a 'daisy chain', or ringmain, of C-3, rather like an electric circuit, and blow up a number of connected charges simultaneously. The vast explosion caused by blowing up a whole series of large trees or stumps instantaneously, caused huge merriment and awe amongst the Orang Asli who would dance about and scream with laughter like children, as they watched from the protection of trees and trenches. It was also possible to cut small trees by wrapping a length of Cordtex around them and detonating it.

An interlude in my own work at the fort presented itself on 02 March when two Orang Asli came running into the camp from their longhouse down the river to tell me that one of their men had been attacked and badly injured by a bear and they needed our help. It was an incident that was to end in a Buster Keaton farce! The brown bear of the Malayan jungle is not huge - fully grown, it is about the size of a man; it is seldom seen and poses little danger - but unfortunately for him, the injured man had stumbled across a female with cubs, and in this situation the Malayan bear - in common with the females of all species - is very dangerous. I immediately took a small patrol with food for a couple days and we arrived at the Asli ladang by late afternoon and found that the injured man had been almost scalped by the bear's claws. Whilst my medical orderly attended to his injuries and I radioed for a helicopter casualty evacuation for the following day, the men prepared to make camp on a flat sandy area beside the river and below the longhouse, which was a little way up the hill. The wild ginger, which was the only thing growing on the site, was easily cleared and we started to unpack our kit, light fires to prepare our evening meal and settle down for the night. Then, all hell broke loose. Two men tore into our camp shouting "Gajah! Gajah! Chapat, mari ka sahaya punya rumah, lari lari chapat" Elephant, elephant, come to my house, run, run, hurry up! We wasted no time in unceremoniously stuffing anything we could lay our hands on into our packs, and, with the rest in our arms, fled, like a pack of tinkers, to the longhouse. The men were given an area at one end of the longhouse to sort out their kit and put down their blankets, but I was given a very small room which projected from the rear of the house.

Thus far, no elephant. Then, just after I had fallen asleep, I was awakened by screaming and shouting and felt the floor under me trembling as the earth shook beneath the building. It took no stretch of the imagination to know that the elephant had not only arrived, but had arrived at the rear of the building and was very close to my projecting room. Then the entire population of the longhouse, after making flaming torches out of split bamboos which they had plunged into the fire which burned in the middle of the floor on an earth hearth, hurtled out of the building, waving their torches, banging tin cans and shouting abuse at the elephant who, upon finding there was no female elephant to be found after all, retreated back into the jungle. Having joined in the general mayhem, my men and I returned to our blankets for a good night's sleep. Or so we thought! For, about an hour later the same thing happened again - my floor shook, the earth trembled and there was great deal of thudding and trumpeting outside, seemingly uncomfortably close to my room and with the same result. This time however, the Orang Asli appeared rather less interested, even rather bored. Fewer turned out, the flaming torches had become burning stumps and the initial 'general mayhem' might be better described as a 'shooing away'. Anyway, it did the trick and Jumbo retired. Or, sort of. He continued to snuffle, grunt and thud around for the rest of the night, seemingly much too close to where I lay, but no one could be bothered to get up any more, and, whilst everyone else slept the sleep of the dead, I lay awake for the rest of the night listening to the thud and rumbling of this very large elephant convinced that at any moment he would be joining me in my very small sticking-out-room. I was glad and relieved to see the light of the dawn and, after breakfast, I was called by the Asli headman to go down to see what was to have been our campsite, to find everything, including any tins we had left behind, totally flattened. The casevac helicopter arrived mid-morning and our casualty was safely removed to Ipoh hospital. There were times during the night when I thought I might be joining him!

By the end of the first week we had cleared enough jungle at the fort area to enable us to move there and to set up a more permanent and more comfortable camp and we received our first airdrop at the fort itself on 05 March. By 10 March we had cleared and levelled the helicopter landing pad and were ready to receive visitors. Life became a great deal easier; it was no longer necessary to split up my platoon in order to leave a section at the camp, nor did we have to endure the daily trudge to and from the fort and we established a comfortable working routine.

As on all prolonged jungle operations we received an airdrop every four days and these initial drops were substantial. In addition to our normal requirements of food and supplies for my platoon, we needed a constant supply of construction tools and equipment for the building of the fort. We also needed a significant amount of rice, dried fish, salt and tobacco, used as currency to pay our large Orang Asli workforce, to whom, at that stage, cash was of little use. It was an endless list, all to be dropped by parachute from Valetta aircraft. Although, for most of the time, we lived on tinned operational rations, known as 'compo' rations, we also received a supplement of fresh meat and vegetables with every drop. These were very popular given

the conditions in which we lived. I was also able to order personal items for myself and my men through the civilian Rations Supply Contractor in Kuala Lumpur, who, it appeared, was able to procure almost anything, and I tested him to the full. He obviously saw this as a challenge, and far from showing irritation or impatience, he supplied me with, amongst other things, Dunhill's curved briar pipes, their 'My Mixture' pipe tobacco, and various obscure Turkish cigarettes! The men also were able to order their cigarettes and tobacco and other supplements to enhance their basic rations. An account was kept of all these personal purchases which had to be paid for by the individual at the end of the operation.

There was great excitement and anticipation on airdrop days. The drops usually took place at about 1100 and, after breakfast, a bonfire was prepared at the edge of the DZ, ready to provide smoke to enable the pilot to locate his target from a distance, since, in deep jungle, a clearing can be seen only from directly overhead. The smoke also indicates the speed and direction of the wind. Large translucent yellow cloth recognition panels were also pegged out in the centre of the clearing - in my case in the form of an 'F' - to enable the pilot and his despatch crew to identify us. No one, who has lived for any length of time in isolation and cut off from the outside world, will ever forget the drone of an approaching aircraft, or the clopper-clopper of a helicopter, bringing news, food, cigarettes, and, above all, the mail, with letters from friends and family. Initially, the pilot would fly over in a 'dry run', and then, having checked the recognition panel and the wind, would turn in a wide circle and return to commence his drop, one load at a time and circling until the drop was completed. He would then fly over once more, dipping his wings and, with a salute from the despatcher standing at the open door, disappear over the jungle covered hills.

On the ground, the excitement would then begin, as the men, helped by hordes of screaming, laughing, Orang Asli children would run down to the DZ, cut the straps binding the boxes which made up the loads and carry them back to a central point in the camp where Sergeant Yusoff and I would supervise the distribution, finishing with the men's personal items - their longed-for mail, their even more-longed-for cigarettes and the various spices which helped enhance their 'compo' rations and fresh food allowance. The evening after an airdrop was one of great contentment, when, after the day's work was finished, the fresh food was cooked, the mail read and the men whose cigarettes had been exhausted, were able to relax in their smoke-filled bashas.

By this time we had established an excellent relationship with the Orang Asli for whom I had both respect and admiration. They were the most primitive people I had ever met and they had the innocence of children. Very few of them had ever seen a vehicle, an aeroplane, a helicopter, a gun, an explosive or a white man, and witnessing their sheer awe at seeing these things for the first time was a joy. They had nothing which they did not make themselves from materials found in the jungle in which they lived, nor did they have any food which they themselves did not grow, catch or hunt and, because they had nothing, there was nothing to steal and because they were not violent there was no crime. They were, in short, a very happy unmaterialistic people. On the

other hand they were the masters of the jungle. Their hunting, trapping, fishing and tracking skills were unrivalled and they were marksmen with their blowpipes armed with poison darts. They were expert house builders and could navigate their bamboo rafts down the fiercest of rapids. The men wore only a small loin cloth and the women were bare breasted, but there was never even the slightest hint of immodesty. Happily, their presence was taken for granted by my men who behaved at all times with absolute propriety. It was sad that, eventually, the Aborigine Department in Kuala Lumpur could not accept this situation, and, having decided that our Orang Asli ladies should have their breasts covered, sent in, in one of our airdrops, a consignment of bras. Worn without a blouse, these made our pretty, innocent Orang Asli girls look like cheap cabaret girls and I ordered the bras to be collected and burnt! Those girls who wished to cover themselves above the waist and had no blouse, were perfectly able to do so in the manner to which they were accustomed, by folding their sarongs above their breasts.

Pretty well all living things were food to the Asli and the ladies were especially adept at catching rats. Their technique was to make a squeaking sound by sucking between a finger and thumb over an area of rat holes and to listen for the young rats' squeaking reply. Upon hearing from where the sound came, they would plunge a pointed stick into the ground and catch the rats in their hands as they ran out of the holes. They cooked them as they did all their meat, by throwing them onto a large fire, and, after scraping the burnt fur off the skin, would pick off and eat the meat. I occasionally took large groups of the men down-river for a fishing trip, using, I am now ashamed to say, explosives. These were either in the form of a couple of sticks of our C-3 plastic explosive with a lighted fuse or a hand grenade. Either of these, thrown into a large deep pool would result in the eruption of hundreds of dead fish floating on the surface to be collected by the hordes of cheering, screaming Asli men and children leaping into the river to scoop up baskets of fish. I had a slight problem with the hand grenades which had two types of fuse, one which detonated the grenade five seconds after throwing it, and the other a seven second fuse which enabled the grenade to be fired from a rifle attachment and required the extra two seconds before exploding. Unfortunately, when we ran out of five second fuses, I found that the seven second fuse frightened the fish away before exploding. My technique in this case was to pull out the pin of the grenade, and, holding it fizzing in my hand, count up to three before throwing it. This technique was successful, but decidedly unpopular with those in my immediate vicinity who were inclined to disappear behind trees until they heard that the grenade had exploded in the river and not in my hand! These fishing days, seen as rest days, were days for great celebration and not a great deal of work was done by either my men or the Asli, all of whom gorged themselves on the most delicious fresh fish - manna from heaven for the Asli!

The most rewarding aspect of the whole fort-building operation was, to me personally, the medical help we were able to bring to the Asli, who, up to that time had only their own, largely ineffective, native herbal treatments. Initially we had only our own platoon medical orderly, but even he was able to make a huge

difference to the Asli by treating the simpler ailments, the usual wounds, fevers and septic sores. He was able to clean up the very large wounds but lacked the courage to stitch them up. I took on this role myself with an ordinary sewing needle and boiled strong thread, the patient being held down by two of the beefier members of the platoon.



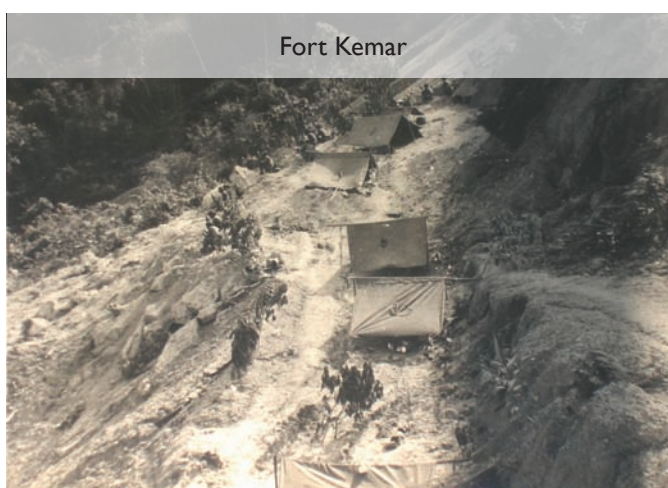
Fort Brooke

But the greatest scourge among the Asli at that time was Yaws - a flesh eating disease closely related to Syphilis but not sexually transmitted. It resembles leprosy, in that large areas of flesh are eaten away, causing disfigurement and eventually death. Some sufferers had large septic craters in their faces and I remember one little boy brought in to the fort with most of his backside eaten away. And yet, this dreadful disease was easily cured by the M & B tablets which we carried on operations at all times and were seen as a cure-all. They were produced by May and Baker in 1936 and were the first effective sulphanomides in the treatment of infection prior to the discovery of penicillin and to soldiers in the field they were a lifesaver. Once we had spread the word we soon had a daily queue of yaws sufferers at our medical hut and within a very short time theirs sores were seen to be healing. Within months of the completion of the fort, yaws had almost disappeared from the Asli community in the area. After finding that one Asli lady had made a paste of her tablets and rubbed it into her sores, I attended the daily yaws parade myself and ensured that the tablets were swallowed on the spot by all!!

Meanwhile, we were making good progress and on 11 March I was able to report on my radio that "Work on Fort going well. Everybody happy. Men morale high and no complaints" The clearing of the trees on the site, however, was painstaking work and it was not until 20 March that it was completed and we were able to start erecting the buildings. Once we had started, and given the skill of my own men, coupled with that of the Orang

Asli, these went up in quick succession and I was able to report on 4 April 'All buildings completed. Only clearing and wiring one side of perimeter remains.' In three weeks we had built an Admin Block; a Main Dining Hall/Cookhouse; an Officers' and Orderlies' Quarters and Kitchen; three large Barrack Blocks; a Canteen for the men; a Shop and School for the Orang Asli; a Medical Room; an Orderly Room/Office; and, in the centre of the fort, a strongly defended Command Post for use in the event of attack. The buildings were constructed in the Malay style and raised upon stilts. Small trees were used for the main frames which were covered with attap roofs laid upon split bamboo laths. Split bamboo was also used for the walls and for the raised sleeping platforms which ran the whole length of one side of the barrack blocks where the men slept and kept their kit. We had also constructed the defences, consisting of slit trenches with sandbag ramparts on all sides and at the corners of the fort and within the barbed wire perimeter which had the added protection of a wide barbed-wire 'carpet'.

On 07 April all work on the Fort was complete; we were able to clear our temporary camp and move in, and, at the same time, the SAS, who were no longer needed, were taken out by helicopter. A few days earlier I had received a signal to inform me that the Deputy High Commissioner, Sir Donald MacGillivray, was to visit the fort on 10 April and was to stay the night. The officer who was to replace me was also to come in with his platoon by helicopter on the same day and I would leave on 12 April. This meant tidying the place up and attempting to ensure that my men, who had been in the jungle for two months, looked reasonably presentable. I had also to prepare for our departure. A couple of weeks earlier the Asli headmen had put it to me, that they were able to take us the entire way back to our camp in Grik by raft - an offer too good to be refused! The journey was to be in two stages - the first down the Sungei Temengor on small two-three man rafts and then down the much bigger Sungei Perak on six-eight man rafts. After negotiating a



Fort Kemar

price it was agreed that the rafts were to be built and made ready for our departure on 12 April.

10 April then, was a busy day. My replacement, John Abercrombie (later to be killed on an operation in South Thailand) arrived early and I was able to show him round and then leave him to conduct the arrival of his men and settle them

in. Sir Donald arrived in the afternoon with his entourage and after inspecting the guard, was shown around the fort and introduced to our Asli population who had arranged an entertainment for the evening. This consisted of our sitting around a bonfire in the centre of a large circle of our entire Asli population and watching a group of the men dance on a low split-bamboo platform. They were accompanied by the girls who sat in line on one side of the platform, singing and beating out the rhythm with short tube-like sections of bamboo, each of a different length, which they pounded on a long length of thick bamboo which lined one side of the platform. The dancers wore only their loin cloths and crowns of mengkuang, whilst the girls, who had beautifully painted faces, wore sarongs and covered their breasts with strings of interlaced mengkuang necklaces. As it went on, the dancing became increasingly frenetic, the tempo increased and the dancers worked themselves into a trance, believing themselves to be possessed of spirits of the dead. As the exhausted dancers fell out one by one, the evening gradually drew to a close and we all retired to bed. It was a Grande Finale and I felt, as I retired wearily to my quarter, that our job was done and our Fort Kemar was now well and truly established!

The following day, after bidding farewell to Sir Donald, I handed the Fort over to Abercrombie and on the morning of 12 April we loaded up the bamboo rafts which lay waiting for us on the river beneath the Fort and set off for home - our camp on the bank of the Sungei Perak. The Temengor is quite a small river and so the rafts for the first stage of the journey could be no more than about four feet wide and could take only two men who sat on a raised bamboo platform bound to the centre of the deck with their kit tied on beside them. Each man had his personal weapon tied to his waist with a long piece of rope, enabling him to use his weapon if required but ensuring that it could not be lost in the event of the raft capsizing. Each raft was navigated by two Orang Asli who stood, one at the bow and the other at the stern and steered with long

bamboo pole. We pushed off in convoy and embarked on a never-to-be-forgotten journey. The Temengor descends steeply downhill from its headwaters in the hills through a myriad of narrow gorges of cascading, foaming, white water, and I shall never know how we managed to stay on our rafts - as did the Asli 'drivers' - but stay on we did, and not a single man nor a piece of kit went overboard. The Asli 'drivers' were remarkable. As they navigated the rafts down the rapids, they screamed at each other and to the spirits of the river in a state of great excitement stabbing their poles against the rocks to either side and, as we plunged into the water at the foot of each gorge, we were submerged up to the waist until the raft shot up again to the surface like a cork. By late afternoon we emerged onto the calm waters of the Sungei Perak and disembarked onto a large sandbank, where we found waiting for us another group of Asli with the five larger rafts we had ordered. These rafts were able to take six men and, again, had a crew of two, but this time the man at the stern had a bamboo rudder with which to steer the raft. After camping for the night and drying off, we embarked again on the following morning for the final stretch home - something of an anticlimax after the wildness of the Sungei Temengor as we floated gently along on the Perak River. By late afternoon we were home and our adventure was at an end.

Footnote:

I have to pay tribute to my undervalued Malay conscript boys, most of them unworldly young men taken from their kampongs to engage in an experience they would never have dreamt of and which they handled, as they did in all operations we undertook, with tenacity, courage and loyalty. I pay tribute also to my NCOs of the Regular FMP - especially my Sergeant Mohamed Yusoff - who guided and led these young boys with sympathy and understanding and behaved like older brother to them. I trusted them all totally and am proud to have led them.

OPERATION KNOT I (August 1953)

By Dennis Wombell (Ex Malayan Police Field Force)

In 1953 I was a Platoon Commander with 18 Federal Jungle Company (FJC) of the Malayan Police, operating in the deep jungles of North Perak, which included the Thai border area. We were not permitted to cross into Thailand, even in hot pursuit, and it was frustrating to hear rumours of large Communist camps within easy striking distance of the border. In 1953 agreement was reached with the Thai government to allow Malayan Police units to cross the border in hot pursuit and to carry out specific operations up to a depth of 40 miles into Thailand.

Discreet aerial surveillance had pinpointed some large camps in the Betong Salient - that projection of Thai territory surrounded on three sides by the Malayan border, in which the Malayan Communist Party had established a safe haven - and it was decided to take advantage of the element of surprise by destroying these first. The covert aerial reces were sketchy and it was unclear if some of the camps were occupied, but one large one certainly was. It consisted of many substantial atap huts and

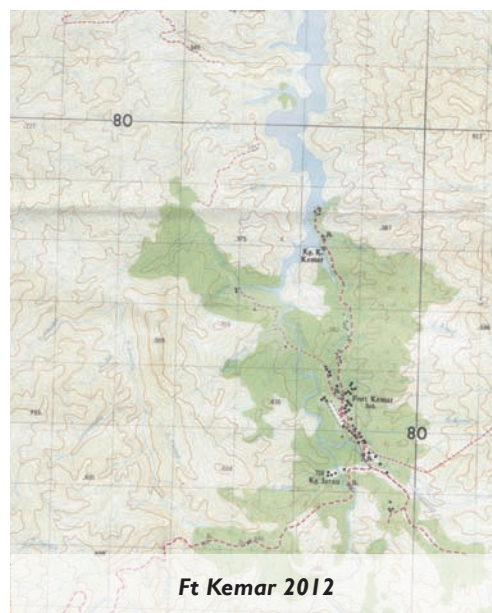
a parade ground with a red flag flying above it, a mouth-watering prospect for those of us who spent our lives hunting for needles in haystacks south of the border!

18 and 20 (Gurkha) FJC were tasked with operations to last several months, the first being 'Operation Knot I.' Our group, consisting of the Gurkha Company and two Malay Platoons from 18 FJC, was to be commanded by Johnnie West, with Ben Gard of 20 Company as Second-in-Command. I commanded one of the Malay platoons and Police Lieutenant John Abercrombie the other.

To avoid alerting the terrorist community in the Betong Salient, we entered the jungle from the Grik-Kroh road, well south of the Thai border. This would be an arduous trek, against the 'grain,' with innumerable hills to climb and rivers to cross. We calculated that it would take us eight days to reach the target, and this proved to be accurate. The whole operation depended upon our locating a specific point in a vast area of largely unknown jungle, using maps which, on the Thai side, were very rudimentary. Much of the area was obscured by cloud cover and the position of many of the rivers only approximate. I acted as lead scout, steered by Johnnie West and Ben Gard who were then free to concentrate on their maps.



Fort Kemar 1953 Op Map



Ft Kemar 2012

We duly arrived at a river which we calculated to be two or three hours march from the ridge above the terrorist camp. We spent that night and the following day by the river, to allow men to rest before climbing the ridge at night to attack the camp at first light the following morning. Silence had to be observed and no fires were allowed.

In the late afternoon we made our way quietly to the top of the ridge below which, assuming our navigation had been accurate, was a large Communist camp. It was a tense time as we sat in the growing darkness, listening for any telltale sounds. Suddenly there arose, from down below us, the sound of men singing. I shall never ever forget the eerie thrill of it. The comrades were singing their marching songs before lights-out and we were in the exact, right place. We had, between us, performed a navigational miracle.

There was much discussion as to our method of attack. Our Gurkha Platoon Commanders wanted to creep down and behead the sentries in the night - but then they always did. In retrospect, perhaps we should have let them. I would have preferred a frontal assault with all guns blazing, but Johnnie decided upon a properly planned attack, putting stops to the left, right and rear before carrying out a frontal attack with the Gurkhas, thereby preventing escape. Accordingly, John Abercrombie was to go left with his platoon and take up position on the riverside track from the camp, whilst I was to go right, leave a platoon at that side, and then climb the hill behind the camp to prevent retreat at the rear.

At first light the move began. Abercrombie descended the hill to the left and I to the right, leaving Johnnie and Ben with the Gurkhas in line on the ridge. They would give us time to put out our stops before creeping down the hill and then charging headlong into the camp.

As my group neared the river, we came across a large, well-built atap hut immediately in our path. We approached carefully, assuming it was occupied. In fact it was a large store, full of food,

uniforms and equipment. We were elated. These were terrorists on a grand scale compared with the shabby, deprived, little groups we had been used to. Just as we continued on our way, heavy firing broke out from the other side of the camp and I assumed that the attack had gone in before we had had time to put our stops out. We hurtled down the hill to the riverside track and, as we reached it, much heavier fire broke out from the direction of the camp. I left a platoon on the track to block it and then started to climb the hill on the other side of the river to block off the rear of the camp. Unfortunately we were too late. The escaping terrorists were already above us on the hill and we came under heavy fire. Eventually all firing ceased and, leaving the platoon to cover the hill, I made my way to the camp which was now in turmoil, with two dead terrorists in the middle of the parade ground, and Gurkhas running around in all directions, looking for somebody to kill! Then Abercrombie's platoon appeared from the track they had been blocking, carrying his body and that of his Sergeant, Abu Bakar.

It transpired that upon reaching the riverside track that he was to block, and having put his men in position, Abercrombie, with his Sergeant, walked down the track to investigate, probably to look for any sign of the camp. As he turned a corner on the track, he suddenly found himself in a small clearing. It was a perfectly constructed sentry position with, at the far end, a large fallen tree, behind which sat a sentry on a bench with a Tommy gun pointing down the track. He opened fire, hitting Abercrombie between the eyes and Sergeant Abu Bakar in the heart. Both were killed instantly.

This was the signal for the Communists to put into action their well-rehearsed escape drill. At the same time, Johnnie West and Ben Gard had no alternative but to lead the Gurkhas at full tilt down the hill and into the camp, knowing that the stops could not yet be in place. The main body of the terrorists, leaving two men to fight a very courageous rearguard action, and carrying only their weapons and ammunition, fled up the hill behind the camp, from where they fired down on my platoon as they ran.



Sgt Yusoff handing out mail, cigs etc after airdrop. Me with my 'boys'. After airdrop. Platoon building, constructing defences etc





**1. Sir D.G. Inspecting the guard 2. The evening celebration by bonfire - Sir D and his staff and heli pilots.
3. The D.O trying out a 'belong' - not very successfully! 4. Sir D staff and heli pilots trying out the musical instruments**

The two men left behind were quickly killed by the Gurkhas and the camp overrun. An attempt was made to pursue the fleeing terrorists but they had the advantage of the precipitous slope and upon reaching the summit they melted into the jungle. Thus ended the action.

After putting out sentries, our men were dispersed about the camp for four days before continuing with the operation. Radio contact was established with Headquarters in Ipoh, and arrangements made to evacuate the dead. We were then able to inspect the camp. It was substantial, with well built huts set around a parade ground over which flew the red flag of the Malayan Communist Party. There were barrack rooms, lecture hall, armoury, cookhouse and well-stocked stores. The defences were well planned, consisting of trenches, strong-points and well sited sentry positions. It was very disappointing that such a complex operation, so well planned and executed, had been

largely aborted by the carelessness of one Officer, who, sadly, paid for his mistake with his life.

Success is not solely measured in the number of kills. The information gathered in captured documents and photographs was incalculable. The operation also signalled to the Malayan Communist Party that their safe haven days in south Thailand were over.

I shall always remember an experience on the day following the attack. During the operation I contacted amoebic dysentery quite badly. It was also pouring with rain, and, as I squatted over the Communist-made open-air bamboo loo, feeling unutterably miserable and soaking wet, my eyes alighted on a piece of paper left behind by the terrorists. A large advertisement read: 'You can be in Belfast Tonight for £10!' "My God," I thought, "if only!"

The Baling Peace Talks

28-29 December 1955

By Dennis Wombell (Ex Malayan Police Field Force)

In 1955, the MCP realised that their military campaign had failed and Chin Peng made approaches to the government asking for peace talks.

Following an initial exchange of letters between the government and The Central Committee of The Malayan Communist Party, and two preliminary meetings between the representatives of both, the first at Klian Intan, a village close to the Thai border and the next in a tent on Kroh airfield, it was agreed that talks would be held between leaders on both sides in an attempt to negotiate a peace settlement and bring to an end the Communist insurrection throughout the country. As a result of these meetings it was agreed that the peace talks would commence on 28 December and would be held at a local school in the nearby small town of Baling. The Communists announced their intention of emerging from the jungle on the morning of 28 at a hilltop tin mine, Gunong Paku, near Klian Intan, approximately 20 miles from Baling.

This being our area of operations, it fell to 2nd Field Force to put in hand the necessary security procedures for the duration of the talks. These were, essentially, to secure the Gunong Paku site where the Communists were to emerge from the jungle, and, secondly to conduct Chin Peng and his party safely to Baling and to return them to the jungle upon the termination of the talks. This latter task was given me with my platoon.

In the preliminary negotiations at Kroh, it was agreed that Chin Peng and his party would be accompanied to the jungle edge by a large force of about a hundred terrorists who would establish a camp in the jungle edge close to place where Chin Peng was to emerge, and remain there for the duration of the talks. The government agreed to give this force an amnesty for this period and for a ten day period following the cessation of the talks should they fail. A guarantee was given that the terrorists would not be pursued until this period had elapsed, and the

government also agreed to supply the entire terrorist contingent with army rations plus an additional daily ration of rice for the period of the talks and for the ten days during which they were to be allowed to clear the area.

There was a great deal of eager anticipation amongst the officers who were to secure the Gunong Paku area. It was envisaged that a line of communication would be opened up between the two camps - the communist camp in the jungle and the Field Force camp on the tin mine hilltop, with a field telephone line between the two and a good deal of coming and going with rations and supplies. This was a fascinating prospect for those of us who had spent the last several years in the jungle, hunting down this elusive enemy, of whom we had caught only momentary glimpses in the short sharp fire fights which were typical of the type of warfare in which we were engaged. Alas, this was not to be. When Chin Peng emerged from the jungle, he insisted that the promised food and supplies for the entire period of the talks and the following amnesty period be carried a short way into the jungle and stacked there for his force to collect unseen.

On 28 December, the day before the talks were to commence, I moved with my my Company from our detachment in Kroh to Gunong Paku, a high hill which had been mined for tin and was cut into wide step-like terraces. It was a hot, dry and inhospitable moon-like landscape consisting of stony red volcanic laterite, rock and shale, without as much as a blade of grass growing on it and it was bordered at the foot on one side by the primary jungle from which Chin Peng was to emerge.

The main body of the Company established a position of all-round defence on the uppermost terrace circling the summit of the hill, erected their jungle 'bashas' and prepared themselves



Chin Peng at Baling peace talks



to remain there until the end of the talks. I stood by with my platoon in preparation for Chin Peng's arrival. Although there ostensibly for escort duty, for which we wore jungle green and carried only side arms and Bren guns, we had, tucked away in our armoured vehicles and out of sight, our full scale of equipment - weapons, extra ammunition, grenades, maps of the surrounding area and the Thai border and four days rations, in readiness for an immediate and prolonged jungle operation, should we be attacked at any point during or after the talks. I assembled my platoon, with our vehicles, on a flat area on the summit of the hill and joined the group of officers awaiting Chin Peng's arrival - Assistant Commissioner TB Voice, the Ops. Officer with overall administrative responsibility for the talks; Geoffrey Turner, the Officer in charge of the local Police District; John Penley, the Field Force Company Commander; and a Police Lieutenant Ollerearnshaw, responsible for the platoon on the hill. Lastly, but the most important man there, was John Davis, specifically asked for by Chin Peng and known as the Conducting Officer. At this time John Davis was the District Officer, Butterworth, but during the war he had served with Force 136 and had been parachuted into the jungle to assist the Malayan Peoples' Anti Japanese Army, in their guerilla war against the occupying Japanese army. He was much respected and totally trusted by Chin Peng, who asked that John Davis

accompany him at all times, from his emergence from the jungle and until his return, to guarantee his safety.

At the appointed time we all stood in relative silence and with considerable apprehension, wondering whether Chin Peng really would turn up when, suddenly, two lone figures appeared at the jungle edge and picked their way up the steep side of the hill, watched in silence by the armed multitude looking down on them from the summit. It must have been a daunting experience for them and required a great deal of courage. Leading the two was a very slight young Chinese male, dressed, not as we expected in MCP khaki drill uniform with green cloth pointed cap, knee-length puttees and rubber-soled canvas boots, but in clean, plain white long-sleeved shirt and long khaki trousers. He spoke good English, introduced himself as Chen Tien, Chin Peng's second-in-command, and informed us that Chin Peng and the rest of the party were following and would arrive within the next ten minutes or so. The Chinese male with him was similarly dressed and was guide, companion and orderly. Shortly afterwards a line of figures emerged from the jungle and slowly climbed the hill towards us. We all knew Chin Peng by sight and recognised him immediately as he greeted his old friend, John Davis, with great warmth. The atmosphere was friendly and relaxed, although, in retrospect, it must have been

a tense moment for Chin Peng, knowing as he would have done, the price on his head! He then introduced his group - Chen Tien; Rashid Mydin, the Malay representative; Tan Kwee Cheng, Lee Chin Hee and Sanip. The last three being guides, aides and orderlies.

Due to the difficulty of the terrain, our transport from the top of the hill consisted of two Ferrett Scout cars with armoured turrets and two GMC's. These latter vehicles, which were universally used as personnel carriers by the Malayan Police during the Emergency years, were completely armoured, except for the back which was open and where the armour was only waist high. Being open, they were extremely hot, and, having no seating, they were very uncomfortable; they were, however, with their powerful engines and large wheels, capable of negotiating the roughest tracks and these were the vehicles used to transport the Communist group the one and a half miles to the main Baling road. There, we were met by two open-sided Bedford vans with bench seats, into which we transferred John Davis, Chin Peng and the remainder of his entourage, for the rather more comfortable 20 mile journey along the tortuous jungle road to Baling. The two Bedford vans travelled between the two GMC's carrying the escort party and I travelled in the turret on the leading scout car, the other scout car, armed with a Bren gun, following at the tail of the convoy.

I shall never forget the sight which met us as we approached the gates of the school in Baling in which the talks were to be held. There was a crowd of 200 or 300 people, Malays, Chinese and Indians, with, in front of them, an army of reporters and photographers. In those days, in a country fighting a war and in which such assemblies were, strictly speaking, highly illegal, I had never seen anything like it. Nor in those days did we have any truck with journalists or photographers. I had actually threatened to shoot a pushy reporter who had attempted to invade the airfield during the talks at Kroh! The authorities, however, turned a blind eye to this illegal assembly on this occasion and the people in the crowd were quiet, well behaved and in a festive mood, as they waited, almost in awe, to catch a glimpse of their national leaders and the legendary Chin Peng. After stopping my escort party at the gates of the school and waiving the two Bedford vans in, my part in the proceedings was over for the time being and I took my platoon to another local school where we made ourselves comfortable to await the termination of the talks.

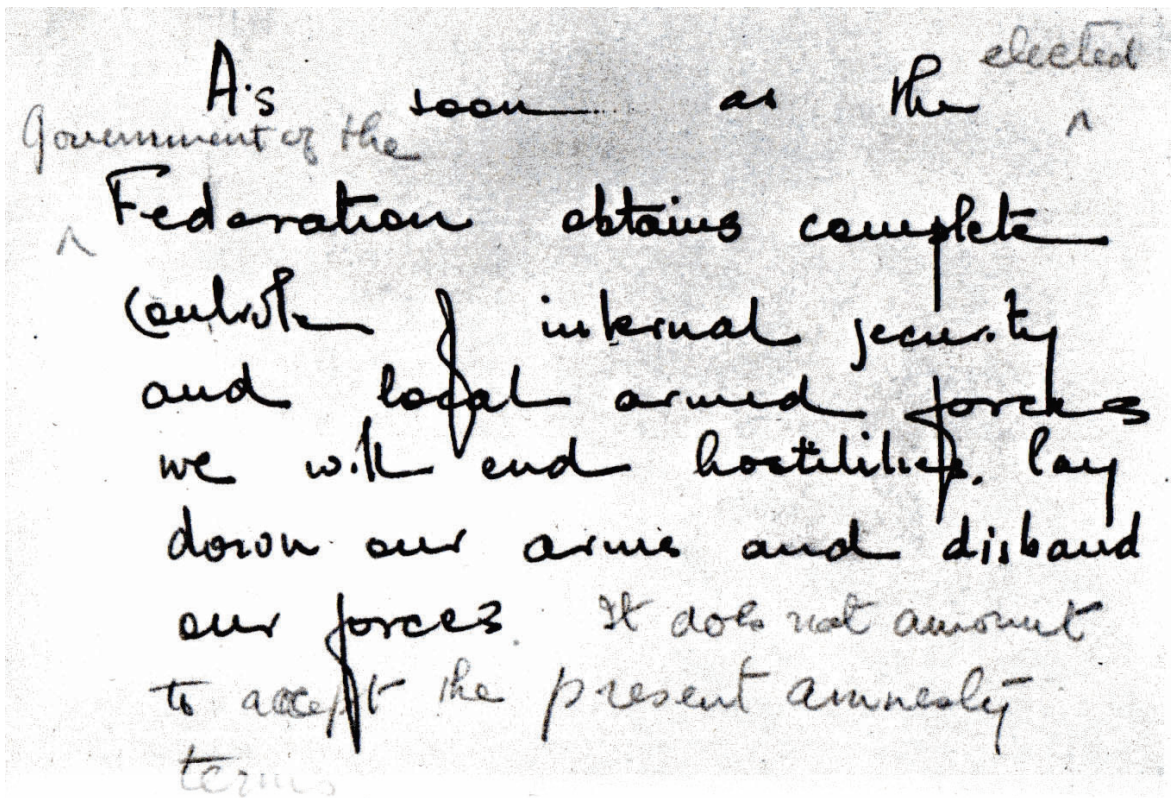
The talks, in which the government was represented by Tengku Abdul Rahman, the Chief Minister of the new Federation Of Malaya; Dato Marshall, the Chief Minister of Singapore; Dato Sir Cheng Lock Tan, the President of the Malayan Chinese Association and Too Joon Hing, the Assistant Minister of Education, ended in failure at noon on the following day and the cessation was announced in a statement, hand written on behalf of the Communist delegation by David Marshall. After being amended by Chin Tien (his amendments are in brackets) it read: "As soon as the (elected government of the) Federation obtains complete control of internal security and local armed forces, we will end hostilities, lay down our arms and disband

our forces. (It does not amount to accept the present amnesty terms.)"

I received orders to return immediately to the school in which the talks had been held and to escort the Communist delegation back to Gunong Paku. The return journey was completed without incident, except that Chin Peng, who already looked somewhat despondent at the outcome of the talks, was somewhat irritated when I took photographs of him and his party on the return journey and when we changed vehicles upon arrival at the track leading to the hilltop at Gunong Paku. He complained that he had not agreed to photographs being taken other than the official photographs taken by the press at Baling. Knowing what the immediate future held for him however, I was not too concerned and it was interesting, years later, to see that he had used one of my photographs in his autobiography!

We arrived back at Gunong Paku in the late afternoon and to our surprise, Chin Peng, after holding a discussion with the other members of his party, announced that it was too late to return to his jungle base before nightfall. He asked if we would allow Chen Tien and the remainder of the group to return to the jungle that night and for him to return the following morning. He also asked for Chen Tien to be given a torchlight to help him find his way back in the dark. By this time, we had established a fairly friendly rapport with the Communist leader and saw no reason to deny his request; a basha was quickly erected for him, a blanket provided and a Land Rover despatched to the local village where the driver was able to purchase a torch. Chen Tien and the others then departed and Chin Peng remained, in the company of John Davis, to spend the night in what must have been, for him, the lion's den. After my evening meal and whilst wandering about on the summit of the hill watching the sun go down he joined me for a little while and we engaged in small talk. We studiously avoided discussing our mutual professions, and the only thing I remember of our conversation is that he asked me how long I had been in Malaya and whether I found it hot! I never knew whether to take this literally or whether it was an allusion to my activities in the preceding years!

The following day, waking just before dawn and after stand-to, my men and I had an early breakfast and quickly packed our kit in preparation for our return to our camp in Kroh. I was due to go to Hong Kong for a week's leave and I wanted to get away as quickly as possible, consequently we wandered about the hilltop waiting impatiently for Chin Peng to depart and for our transport to arrive. By this time of course, each of my men had, beside him, his full complement of weapons and kit which we had carried covertly in the event of having to mount an immediate offensive jungle operation. In passing the time, I stood with Ollerearnshaw on the edge of the hill, open map case in hand, pointing towards the distant jungle hills and discussing with him the operations I had carried out or been involved over the previous couple of years. The sight of me in jungle kit, holding my carbine and carrying, on various parts of my anatomy, a 9mm pistol... a compass, a belt of ammunition, 2 hand grenades and a parang (a Malay machete), and pointing to the jungle in the direction in which he was about to depart, produced an instantaneous effect on Chin Peng who showed



A's Government of the Federation obtains complete control of internal security and legal armed forces we will end hostilities, lay down our arms and disband our forces. It does not amount to accept the present amnesty terms.

Chin Peng statement

distinct signs of agitation. He was very obviously convinced that we were preparing to follow him immediately and that we would have little difficulty in killing him once we were out of sight and in the jungle. It took some time for John Davis to convince him that our intentions were honourable, and, as proof of this, offered to accompany him alone into the jungle and to stay with him for some considerable distance. Eventually, Chin Peng was satisfied of our good intentions and he and Davis disappeared down the track from which Chin Peng and his party had emerged on the previous day. We waited for about an hour until Davis reappeared and then went our separate ways. The peace talks were over and I was able to leave for Hong Kong on my week's leave, but upon my return I still had a job to do!

Two days after my return from leave, the amnesty period for Chin Peng and his Communist guerillas was over and I received orders to search the Gunong Paku area in an attempt to follow their tracks from the point at which they had originally emerged from the jungle. I was also to investigate the area in which his large armed group had camped and the dump of food which had been supplied by our own forces and stacked 30 or 40 yards beyond the jungle edge.

It came as no surprise to me that there was no communist camp and that no large armed group had existed. Chin Peng was no fool and knew as well as we did that a large body of men is as easy to track in the jungle as a double decker bus, and it was obvious that Chin Peng and his party had been alone. Consequently, the large food dump was almost untouched. A few boxes of rations had been opened and some of the contents removed and a quantity of rice had also been taken. I concluded

that this had been the reason for Chen Tien leaving separately on the day before Chin Peng, since it gave them the opportunity to examine the dump at their leisure and to help themselves to as much as they could carry. They would not have returned after that in the expectation that we would ambush them.

We then followed the track along which the Communists had travelled after leaving Gunong Paku. Like all jungle paths in the vicinity of a village it was well worn by the local people for the first 300 or 400 yards and easy to follow. It then petered out to become more typical of an animal track or the usual track made by terrorists in primary jungle - ill defined and marked only by the very occasional sapling cut by a parang. Nevertheless, it was relatively easy to follow until it climbed steeply up to the high ridge marking the Thai/Malaya border, where, at just over 1,000 feet the jungle is sparse and the ground stony and bare. Tracking in these conditions is impossible without dogs, and, given that our task was completed we returned to Gunong Paku to be picked up and returned to our camp in Kroh.

This marked the end of what had been an interesting and fascinating experience, especially in meeting the man who had become a legend in Malaya, albeit a misguided one. Knowing full well from my own experience the hardships he must have endured during 12 years of life in the jungle as a hunted man, without our advantages of regular airdrops of an unlimited supply of food, medicines, arms and ammunition, and our ready access, even in the deepest and remotest jungle, to rapid medical assistance and, if necessary, evacuation to hospital, I had to admire his tenacity in pursuing, what was, to him, a political ideal.

Siputeh (1955)

By Dennis Wombell (Ex Malayan Police Field Force)

Police Special Branch had received good information that a CT unit, operating from a jungle camp in the Batu Gajah area of Perak, was obtaining food and supplies from Siputeh, a typical small Perak village located astride a fairly well-used trunk road. The village, the population of which was largely Chinese, with a handful of communist sympathisers, was surrounded by the usual high barbed-wire security fence with guarded checkpoints on the road at either end of the village where vehicles were stopped and searched. Under Emergency Regulations in force at the time the gates were closed at 1900 and no one was permitted to enter or leave the village until the gates were re-opened at 0600 when the villagers, mostly rubber tappers, were permitted to leave to go their work places on the surrounding rubber estates. In order to prevent food being smuggled out to the terrorists, everyone leaving the village was searched and in order to prevent communist infiltration, the identity of anyone entering the village was checked at the gate.

The informer had told the Special Branch officers that a small group of two or three CTs were routinely despatched from their jungle camp, at night, two or three times a month, in order to collect food and supplies from a Min Yuen cell in Siputeh. They would follow a logging track from the jungle and turn off onto a smaller path which would lead them to a hole in the perimeter fence through which they would enter the village and, after having a meal with a group of their sympathisers, return to their jungle camp with the supplies vital to their survival. The informer was to let the Special Branch agent know of the date of their next visit and I was ordered to stand by with my platoon to be ready to leave at a moments notice to ambush the CT group.

One afternoon, several days later, I was told that the terrorists were due to visit the village that same night and that my operation was 'on'. In no time, Sergeant Yusoff had the platoon on parade, armed to the teeth and ready for action and we left in a convoy of a couple of armoured cars at dusk to enable us to arrive within reasonable walking distance of Siputeh in the dark and then to move into position on foot through an adjacent rubber plantation, hopefully unseen. Given that the area was under curfew by that time, this was not difficult and went without a hitch. Then followed a completely futile night. The information I had been given was far from precise and I had only been told to look for a wide track which led to small footpath which led to a hole in the fence in the north east corner of the village! Looking at my 1 inch Ordnance Survey map in broad daylight, this looked feasible, but on a dark night without the use of a torch, which would have given us away, it proved impossible and after stumbling about in the dark for some time searching for a path and a hole in the fence, I put out two ambush positions - one beside the wide logging track down which the CT were expected to come and a random one along a section of the village fence but without the faintest idea of where the hole was. It is a weird sensation to sit motionless, silent and unseen in the dark in readiness to fight and kill within a few feet of the sounds of village life - men playing mahjong,

chattering, the sound of pots and pans as women cooked, children playing, families eating and Chinese music from dozens of radios. And then, as the night draws on, total silence broken only by the sound of croaking frogs, a never-to-be-forgotten sound to anyone who has ever spent a night in ambush in Malaya. I don't know whether the terrorists visited their friends that night, but if they did, they came nowhere near us! Just before daybreak I tiptoed round the men in the dark, gathered them in, and we crept out of our positions feeling dirty, wet and exhausted and back to the distant road head, out of sight of the village, to be picked up. It was back to the drawing board!

It was obvious, that to be successful, I needed to know the precise location of the hole in the fence and how to get to it in the dark, without the use of a torch. In short I needed to reconnoitre the village without arousing suspicion. An impossible task for a European and Malays in a Chinese village with a number of communist sympathisers. But then I had an inspiration - I would become a surveyor! Using tape, I attached a telescopic rifle sight to a camera tripod - it looked convincing from a distance - and, taking Sergeant Yusoff and two of my corporals, all dressed in civilian clothes and wearing wide brimmed hats of the type much loved by surveyors, we returned to Siputeh in my car, parked it in the middle of the village and proceeded to 'survey' the entire village security fence, telling anyone who asked that we were from the Public Works Department. When we reached the north east corner of the fence, the hole in it and the footpath to it were glaringly obvious and I was able to draw a map of the spot and to select two good ambush positions without creating the slightest suspicion.

A few days later we again received information from Special Branch that the CTs were about to make another visit to Siputeh that night. On this occasion, knowing the precise location with its proximity to both Chinese houses in the village and Malay houses outside it, I decided to take only 12 men, and, to avoid information being passed to the village of a military unit heading in their direction, we wore civilian clothes over our uniforms and packed into two plain cars, stuffing our weapons in the boots. It had not occurred to me that we would have to pass through two Police checkpoints on the way to Siputeh and to explain two cars full of Malays in civilian clothes and the car boots stuffed with weapons took some doing - especially when I was not prepared to tell them where we were going. Some of them needed some convincing that we were actually on their side!

After again being dropped off by the roadside some distance from the village and knowing exactly where we were, we very quickly took up our positions. Leaving Sergeant Yusoff by the logging track along which we expected the CTs to come, I took up my position by the hole in the fence. I had instructed Sergeant Yusoff to let the CTs pass into my position at the fence and to open fire on them as they fled from me.

We lay there in the dark in total silence until, at about 2200, the night was abruptly shattered by machine gun fire from the corporal in my section only a few feet away. Then all hell broke loose, with firing in all directions from both terrorists and ambush

positions, from which the men were firing wildly at running shadows. It was so dark that it was impossible to tell who was firing and at what, and it eventually became clear to me that the only man who had had a distinct target to fire at was my corporal who had fired point blank at the black shape of a man who had suddenly loomed up immediately in front of him - a hell of a shock for them both! As the firing died down, I shouted for everyone to stop firing and to stay where they were whilst I stumbled around in the darkness with my torch in an effort to assess the situation. This was the most dangerous procedure in a night ambush, with men sitting in the darkness, their weapons cocked and fingers on triggers ready to fire at anything that moved. The answer to this was for everyone to stay exactly where they were until after I had visited each group and called out a password as I approached them and waited for a response. In my case the password was `terang` and the response `bulan` - the title

of a well known Malay song - `Terang Bulan` or, in English, `Moonlight`.

Meanwhile I had found in front my own position a dead, uniformed terrorist lying with his rifle on the ground beside him. It was he who had loomed up in front of my corporal who had killed him instantly with a bullet through the head. There had been four terrorists in the group and although we found various blood stains we found no other bodies, although information was received from the informer some days later that two of the other terrorists had been wounded and one had died of his wounds in the jungle soon afterwards.

We ourselves suffered no casualties and, after carrying the body of the dead man to the village police station, I called up our transport and we returned to our camp in Ipoh. My short, but successful career as a surveyor was at an end!

My Visit To Malaysia - June 2012

By Dennis Wombell (Ex Malayan Police Field Force)

I have visited Malaysia several times since I left the country in 1972 and have always returned to my planting background, staying with old planter friends and visiting my old estates. I had occasion to visit the country again in June and this time decided to attempt to visit the area in which I had operated as a Police Field Force Platoon Commander in the early 1950s. In order to gain access to the areas I wished to visit, I wrote to the Inspector General of Police and asked for his blessing and for any help he might be able give me. Two or three weeks later, I received a telephone call from a senior Malaysian police officer informing me that I would be supplied with a car and a driver for four days to take me north to the area I had asked to visit and that I should contact him upon my arrival in KL.

My visit was seen in its historical context and the officer put in charge of the arrangements was Superintendent Sayed Zainal, a senior police officer and the curator of the Police Museum. I was asked to meet him for a briefing at the museum where he gave me a coloured brochure outlining my itinerary and containing details of some of the activities in which I had been engaged during my police career. He told me that I would be collected from my hotel on the day of our departure two days hence.

He collected me personally from my hotel, as promised, and took me to the Museum to prepare for the journey. Upon arrival at the museum I found that "my car and driver" consisted of Supt Zainal himself, five Land Rovers and 22 police officers - both officers and other ranks!

We proceeded in convoy and at high speed to the Border of the Gerik (formerly Grik) Police District, where we were met

by a police car and two motor cycle outriders. After gorging ourselves upon durian from a roadside stall (it had become known that I am partial to durian - a fruit loathed by most Europeans!) we proceeded, now accompanied by our escort, at an even higher speed, with screaming siren and flashing blue lamp, to the very comfortable and old style Gerik Rest House, where we were to lodge for the night.

After a break, and after having had tea with a number of Veterans who had served as SC's, EPCs and Home Guards during the Emergency, the Deputy OCPD of Gerik, DSP Wan Jamil, took me for an unscheduled drive to Kuala Rui outside Grik, once the site of our 18 Jungle Company camp on the bank of the Sungei Perak. From here we had marched out over the suspended footbridge across the Sungei Rui outside our camp and into the jungles of our operational area in the Beium Valley and the headwaters of the Sungei Temenggor, where we were to build Fort Kemar. There is now a new bridge over the Rui and a good road to the place where we once crossed the Sungei Perak by raft to the mouth of the Temenggor. The sight which met my eyes was difficult to believe. The Perak has been damned at this point for a hydroelectric scheme, creating a lake - the Tasek Temenggor - 55 miles long, 4 miles wide, 350 feet deep (at its deepest) and covering 45,000 acres. It has completely transformed the topography of a vast area and has made our old operational maps redundant. The entire village of Kampong Temenggor and the riverside tracks along which I once marched, deep into the interior of the rain forest, are now deep underwater; as is a great deal of mechanical equipment used in the construction of the dam and abandoned when the waters rose more quickly than was anticipated. Spurs and low hills, once on the river's banks, are now islands and the dead tree stumps which line the shallower waters along the edge of the lake now stand as memorials to the small jungle rivers and streams along which they once stood, deep in the beauty and the silence of the rain forest.

We returned to the Rest House for dinner and speeches with groups of SC, EPC and Home Guard veterans who had served during the Emergency. One ancient wore his British medals and had served with Force 136 during the Japanese Occupation.

On the following day I was taken to Gunong Paku, the hill where I had met Chin Peng and from where I had escorted him to and from Baling for the Peace Talks in 1955. I have described this hill in the past as resembling the surface of the moon - a bare hill of laterite rock in the middle of a modest open cast tin mine. It is now unrecognizable. The mine covers a vast area and must be one of the largest in the country with massive craters and hills of bare rock. Much of the surrounding jungle has been cleared and mined and one can only guess at the exact spot at which Chin Peng emerged. However, a pergola has been erected on the hill where it is said the meeting took place and here, after being given fresh coconut milk, I was presented by the manager of the mine with an ingot of tin - in a glass case and asked to sign the visitors' book.

We then proceeded to the Pengkalan Police District adjacent to the Thai border and, after visiting the abandoned camp in Kroh, where I had once been based on detachment from 2PFF, and then Baling, the site of the 1955 Peace Talks, we visited the Thai - Malaysian border post on the Gerik-Betong road. Where there were, once, small police-manned posts on each side of the border, there are now large modern buildings manned by customs, police and immigration officers and ornate gilded arches welcoming visitors to their respective countries. Only a concrete stone marking the 'Malaya Thailand Border 1951' remains from the days of the Emergency. This is also the place, where, in 1968, a platoon of PFF travelling by road, were ambushed by the remaining Communist Terrorists operating on the border. 17 members of the platoon were killed and 16 severely wounded - the largest loss of life in the post-Emergency period.

After being entertained to a celebratory lunch by the Pengkalan District Police we returned to the Gerik road and stopped briefly at the isolated new police station on the roadside at Kampong Lallang. In 1953 at the commencement of Op KNOT I with 2PFF during which we were to attack a camp over the Thai border, we had, in order to avoid detection, entered the jungle at this point during the night. After inserting our platoons a short way into the jungle to await daylight, we three officers (Johnnie West, Ben Gard and I) slept in the cell of the old Police Station. I had thought the old building had been long demolished, but as I signed the visitors' book one of the officers had discovered it, overgrown and abandoned, on top of a hill set back from the road - very *Beau Geste* with a crenulated roof and there, inside, was the barred cell in which I had slept 60 years ago. To have me photographed in the cell, behind bars, caused a great deal of merriment!

We then continued our journey through Gerik to the new Perak-Kelantan highway - a beautiful road, cut through virgin rain forest and giving access to the once-isolated east coast of the country. About 70 miles east of Gerik the road

crosses the north end of Lake Temenggong by a fine new bridge at the foot of which is the Banding Jetty, from which boats are available for tourists visiting the Belum Valley Eco Resort. The Police Marine Branch also maintains a jetty here with a small fleet of fast boats which are used to patrol the lake and the surrounding kampongs and to which we were taken upon our arrival. We arrived to find tables on the jetty laid for tea, and, of course, my reputation having preceded me, an ample quantity of durian! After tea we embarked on the five Police boats awaiting us and sped off down the lake for several miles to a 69 Kommando camp, hidden down a small tributary deep in the jungle. A permanent small detachment is kept here to provide a presence in the area and to accustom their men to life in the rain forest. The camp consists of chalet-like huts on the side of a steep hill overlooking the lake and life there is basic but comfortable. The buildings were very professionally erected by the unit themselves some years ago and consist of a comfortable mess, barrack rooms, a dining hall and lecture room. The undergrowth has been cleared but no trees felled and the appearance is that of a kampong in an orchard with an idyllic view of the lake from the hillside. We had an excellent dinner in the communal dining room in the evening, followed by a briefing in the lecture room and a talk by me about my activities in the 1950s.

The next morning after a good breakfast we left, in our convoy of boats, for Fort Kemar - the fort I had built deep in the rain forest of the central chain of hills in 1953 and it was difficult to believe that we were able to go there by boat, when I thought of the punishing four-day march we had had to endure when we first went there. However, the damming of the Sungei Perak and the creation of Lake Temenggong has raised the water in its tributaries by 20 or 30 feet, changing completely the topography of the whole area, and the Sungei Temenggong, with its rocks, its pools, waterfalls and white water, down which we had rafted upon leaving the Fort upon its completion, was now one of the tentacles of the lake and its water deep enough to take shallow-draught boats. The limit of this deep water was, however, a couple of miles short of the fort itself and it was at this point that we landed on a sand bank and were taken to the Fort by Land Rover.

Our original jungle fort of bamboo and attap huts, of trenches, defences and strong points, with its Asli school and medical room has long gone and it is now even difficult to locate its exact position, although I am sure it is at the point where now stands a monument. There are now brick buildings - a school, a hospital and various community buildings surrounding a large padang, and, what was a jungle track beside the river, is now a road, lined for some considerable distance with Asli kampong houses among fruit trees and beyond these, between the houses and the jungle, a belt of rubber trees - much as one would see in a Malay kampong. To this extent, the primary object of the fort in the first place, to have the Asli settle in the fort area with its school, hospital and shop and to abandon their nomadic way of life, has succeeded. The Asli there now live much as do kampong Malays, to the extent that some have converted to Islam, and it appeared to be *de rigueur* to possess,

at the very least, a digital camera and a scooter. At the same time, a number of old men are still to be seen dressed in the traditional way, wearing only a "chawat" and, for high days and holidays, a woven crown and strings of beads across their chest.

There is even a vehicle track to Sungei Siput - a considerable distance away and recommended only for the hardiest of cross-country enthusiasts.

When we arrived at the small house in which the officers and I were to stay, I was surrounded by a large crowd of happy, laughing Asli - men women and children - and had a woven coronet perched on my head, beads around my neck and bunches of flowers wedged into my belt both front and back. It seems that my arrival, as the builder of the original Fort, had been widely broadcast and enthusiastically anticipated. Originally the Asli had been told to expect the arrival of Mr Dennis. This news was met with blank stares, and the Asli equivalent of "so what?" However, when the name Wombell (or Rombill, as they called me) was mentioned, it was altogether a different matter. Several of the very old remembered me and the building of the Fort, in which they themselves had played such a large part, and, thereafter, I was pursued, wherever I went, by a group of happy chattering Asli young men on scooters.

After settling in to the small house beside the padang, I was astonished to see a very large marquee in the middle of the padang rapidly filling with Asli men, women and children. In front of the marquee was a high bamboo stage and I was told that this was for the afternoon rock band and karaoke competition and then, later, for my reception! It was a great relief to find that my team and I were not expected to attend the afternoon proceedings and that we were expected to relax and to prepare for the evening's celebration. My idea of relaxation was to go up river to a waterfall to swim and cool off. The Land Rover drivers were resting, but there were plenty of volunteers among my band of camp followers to take me on the back of a scooter, and off we went in convoy for an afternoon swim. They took me to a beautiful unspoilt deep jungle pool, fed by a waterfall cascading from a pile of large boulders, and, joined by two of the Asli men, whom I am sure had been given instructions to ensure that I did not drown, I was able to wallow in the ice-cold crystal clear water of the deep pool, whilst my Asli followers sat on the rocks and gazed upon me, with what was, I hoped, was admiration!

The evening's proceedings were to commence at 2000 and I was, meanwhile, asked to attend a private ceremony in the old *sewang* longhouse in the kampong some distance away - a beautiful and immaculate building of bamboo and attap and raised upon stilts. I sat cross-legged at the head of the long room beside the *Batin* (a spiritual leader), whilst the Asli men sat along the bamboo sides on the left and a row of girls along the wall on the right. Each of the girls held two bamboos, each of a different length and used these to pound on a long tree trunk in front of them to keep the beat whilst they sang (in his study of the Asli, Williams-Hunt called this a 'stamper band'). After the *Batin's* assistant had chanted a long invocation, the

girls began their singing and drumming and we men stood in a long row and performed a gentle stamping dance to the beat of the girls' music. It was all quite hypnotic and calming and we must have danced for over 45 minutes until the singing stopped and we sat down again. The *Batin* then called me to sit in front of him whilst he blessed me. He ended his blessing by pouring a considerable amount of wild ginger water over my head, soaking me to the skin. Since I was already soaking in sweat, this came as a great relief, and, if it didn't purify me, it certainly cooled me off!

The evening's proceedings commenced at 2000 and the senior officers of our party and I took our seats in the front row of the marquee facing the stage, whilst several hundred Orang Asli - men women and children - sat on the ground behind us. There were a number of speeches and then my name was called. I mounted the stage and was handed, by the deputy OCPD of Gerik, a sack-sized cellophane package containing a very large quantity of Milo, biscuits, milk powder and sweet drinks. I wondered quite what I was going to do with this, when I suddenly realised that I was to hand it to an Asli boy standing expectantly beside me. It then dawned on me that I was presenting the prizes for the afternoon's karaoke competition! After a time I was called to the stage again, this time to be presented with a fine parang by the Gerik Police and then, a little later, to be presented with a beautiful Asli woven crown in a glass case. Finally, I was called again, this time to make a speech to the Asli. I had been asked to give several speeches in Malay during my trip, but on this occasion I protested that this was far too important and that I wanted one of the Police officers to interpret for me. They would have none of this and I was told that my Malay was good enough and to get on with it! Get on with it I did, and when I ended it by telling the Asli that I considered myself the "*Datok Orang Asli Fort Kemar - bukan pangkat Datok, tetapi Orang Inggeris chakap 'Grandfather' orang Asli Fort Kemar*" it brought the house down and when I left the stage I was mobbed, hugged and photographed by the whole assembly. To come back to this after 60 years was incredibly moving.

The evening ended with another '*seywang*', but this one on a bamboo platform built purely for the occasion and for fun rather than for a spiritual purpose. The entire population gathered round and as the dancing became more vigorous, I was, predictably, hauled up onto the platform to stamp around in a circle with the Asli dancers - much to the delight of the audience.

We left quietly early the next morning, seen off by the Penghulu and two or three of the kampong headmen and sped north across the lake back to the Banding Jetty. At that time of day the jungle looked indescribably beautiful, as the shafts of light from the morning sun pierced the light mist which hung over the hills and sparkled on the water of the lake. At the same time, when I looked, from the comfort of the boat, at the ground along which we had marched and the time it had taken to reach the Kemar area all those years ago, I wondered how we had done it. Perhaps it is more frightening to look at it than it is to do it, or, perhaps, I'm getting old!

Our final port of call was the Brigade HQ at Ulu Kinta near Ipoh, the home of 69 Kommando - the successors of our Field Forces.

Here we were entertained to a splendid luncheon with the Deputy Commander of 69 - certainly the best and most delicious food of the trip (and included even more and better durian!) - then more speeches and more generous gifts. I was to leave the party here and stay in Ipoh for the night before going back north to visit my old corporal of 1953 in his kampong. He was one of the survivors of the 1968 ambush and after being seriously wounded is now confined to a wheel chair. (On one of my visits to Supt Syed Zainal I met a retired officer now a member of the Malaysian Retired Police Officers Association and mentioned my corporal to him. He said he would have one of his members visit him to see if he required help of any sort. Within days of my return to the UK, I heard that the man had been given a new (motorised wheel chair!)

Chin Peng

From the Daily Telegraph

Chin Peng, who has died aged about 88, was decorated for his bravery fighting alongside British forces in the Second World War then afterwards took up arms against them in the Malayan Emergency.

His fight continued even after Malaya achieved independence in 1957, and it was only in 1989 that he signed a peace treaty with the government of what was by then Malaysia. Even so, he continued to be prevented from returning from exile to the land of his birth, where he remained a divisive figure.

Ong Boon Hua is thought to have been born on October 21 1924 in Sitiawan, a small town in the state of Perak in the Malayan peninsular that bordered southern Thailand. He was the son of a bicycle dealer who had emigrated from Fujian province in south-east China: it would be Malaya's ethnic-Chinese population which took up arms most willingly against the Japanese during the war; feeling themselves to be a disenfranchised minority, however, it was also they who formed the spine of the postwar communist insurgency against Britain.

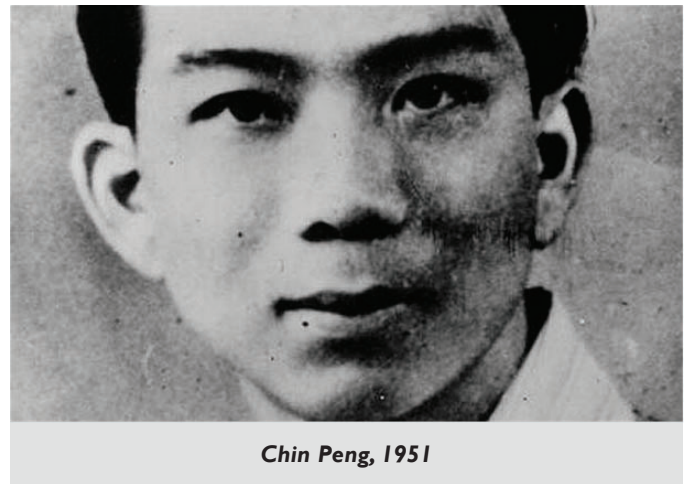
Chin Peng, as he would be known on the battlefield, was a studious youth, learning English at the Methodist School in Perak. At 15 he joined the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) and began work in the design department of Perak's Humanity News.

He was close to the CPM's leader Lai Teck, and his political rise was swift. But war would interrupt his ascent. After the Japanese invasion in December 1941 the CPM formed the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA). From February 1942 to the end of the war the MPAJA took on Japanese forces, often with Britain providing weapons and training.

Chin Peng was an MPAJA liaison with British officers (many from Force 136, a south-east Asian variant of the Special

It was a fitting end to what had been an extraordinary and wholly unexpected visit to the past. Nothing was spared by the Police, both the team who accompanied me and those in the outlying districts, in doing everything possible to make my visit comfortable, enjoyable and memorable. The team who escorted me, headed by Superintendent Syed Zainal, treated me like a close friend, with care and consideration, and I am enormously grateful to all of them, from those of the highest rank to the lowest police constable.

Amongst other things, my reception and treatment illustrate the respect, admiration and affection, in which those of us, who served in the Malayan Police in those dangerous and difficult days of the Malayan Emergency, are now held by present generation of all ranks of the now Police Di Raja Malaysia.



Chin Peng, 1951

Operations Executive). In an interview in 2009, Chin Peng recalled cycling from his home to the coastal town of Lumut to meet British operatives who had arrived by submarine: "I used the trunk roads and then the estate roads to avoid being spotted. I cycled everywhere."

For his contribution to the Allied war effort, Chin Peng was decorated with the Burma Star and appointed OBE. The latter would soon be rescinded as Peng segued from wartime hero to colonial villain.

After the Japanese surrender in August 1945 the MPAJA took control before British authority was restored that autumn. In the brief interregnum, reprisals were severe. The ethnic-Chinese MPAJA accused many ethnic-Malays of collaborating with the Japanese. Ethnic-Malays, meanwhile, would accuse the MPAJA of indiscriminate violence.

With the return of British rule, the CPM campaigned for independence. When it became clear that this would not be forthcoming, the party went underground. Leader Lai Teck was accused of being a spy and fled leaving Chin Peng, aged 24, to take control.

He immediately abandoned Lai Teck's moderate stance, advocating instead violent struggle on top of strike action as the best means to establish a communist state in Malaya and Singapore. On 16 June 1948 this new aggression was announced when CPM fighters attacked two rubber plantations in northern Malaya and murdered three British planters. Though he always denied personally ordering the killings, Chin remained unrepentant about them. "We considered the European planters as a symbol of colonial rule," he said. "They were hated by the workers."

I make no apologies for seeking to replace such an odious system with a form of Marxist socialism. Colonial exploitation, irrespective of who were the masters, Japanese or British, was morally wrong. If you saw how the returning British functioned the way I did, you would know why I chose arms."

Days later British authorities declared an Emergency, beginning a 12-year conflict that amounted to a war in all but name. The communists could count on up to 10,000 insurgents; Britain dispatched tens of thousands of Commonwealth troops. Chin Peng's tactics were clear: rely on the support of ethnic-Chinese smallholders on the fringes of the jungle, then retreat into that jungle when British troops moved in.

To counter this, in 1950 Sir Harold Briggs organised the resettlement of half a million largely ethnic-Chinese in hundreds of "New Villages" away from the jungle redoubts of the CPM. Cut off from the sources of food and support, Chin's forces became besieged.

This did not prevent the assassination of the British High Commissioner, Sir Henry Gurney, in October 1951, but the tide of conflict was turning. Having isolated Chin's forces, British troops began aggressive patrols of the jungle. Slowly but surely Chin's men were hunted down. CPM attacks fell dramatically.

Chin Peng, an obituary

By Anthony Reid

Editor: Anthony Reid is Emeritus Professor and Visiting Fellow at the Department of Political & Social Change, School of International, Political & Strategic Studies at the Australian National University. This article was published at <http://asiapacific.anu.edu.au/newmandala/2013/10/05/chin-peng-an-obituary/>

The passing of Chin Peng in Bangkok on 16 September 2013 brings to an end one of the longest of Asian political biographies. Chin Peng became the Secretary General and effective leader of the Malayan Communist Party (MCP), the country's oldest political party, in 1947 when he was only 22. He retained that position for the next 60 years, indeed until his death, even though the party became divided, moribund and irrelevant around him. Long after Communism ceased to be a threat to Malaysia he was refused permission to return

By 1955 the Malayan government offered communist insurgents an amnesty before, at the end of the year, the two sides met for talks. Chin Peng was not in emollient mood. He demanded recognition of the CPM and acceptance of its role in political life. "If you demand our surrender," he noted, "we would prefer to fight to the last man."

The talks collapsed and the amnesty was withdrawn. Despite half-hearted efforts to relaunch negotiations, it quickly became apparent that Britain was preparing to grant Malaya independence, stripping the insurgency of its *raison d'être*. Yet Chin considered the government of the newly-independent country colonial stooges, and some of his fighters continued to launch attacks into 1958. Most fled across the border into southern Thailand, however, and by 1960 Malaya declared the Emergency over. Chin Peng left Thailand for Beijing.

There he spent much of the next decades. Assured that south-east Asia was ripe for revolution, the CPM continued to maintain a base in southern Thailand. But revolution never materialised, and in the course of the 1970s the CPM was riven by bloody infighting. Finally, on 02 December 1989, a peace agreement was signed by the Malaysian and Thai governments and the CPM.

Chin, unrepentant for his role in a 40-year conflict which cost many thousands of lives, appealed - unsuccessfully - to be allowed to return to Malaysia.

He is reported to have married Lee Kwan Wa, with whom he had two sons.

Chin Peng.
Born 21 October 1924,
Died 16 September 2013.



Chin Peng, born Ong Boon Hua,
21 October 1924 to 16 September 2013

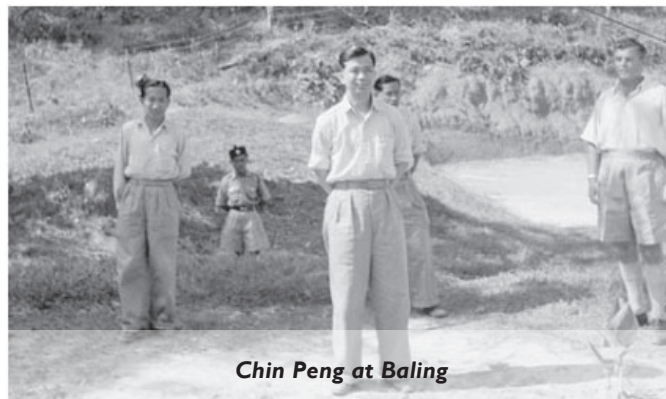
to the country of his birth (unless he publicly recanted all his views) and so he remained an exile.

The scars of that period have not healed. The role of Communists in fighting first Japanese and later British for control of Malaya is scarcely recognised in Malaysian textbooks and public memory. Many Chinese and a few radical Malays remain unnecessarily alienated from the Malaysian establishment, and it from them, while an important but polarised chapter in Malaysia-China relations remains off the table, unable to be discussed by either side. Chin Peng himself spent much of his later life attempting to explain and defend what he called 'My Side of History'. One hopes that his removal from the scene, after having his say, may make the integration of a very divided history a little easier.

Just why Chin Peng came to lead Malayan Communism so early in his life has much to do with accidents of his family upbringing and schooling. Although essentially educated in the Chinese medium like the overwhelming majority of Malayan Communist recruits, he had just enough English education at the beginning and end of this period to be comfortable, if a little hesitant, in English. His elder brother and his equally committed Communist wife were English-educated. In the crisis that endangered the party in 1947, when its long-term Secretary General Lai Tek was discovered to have worked for both Japanese and British and was assassinated by the Party, Chin Peng was well placed politically to succeed, not least because his English enabled him to talk to other communities. Indeed the early years of his leadership marked a striking reorientation of the Party to being 'Malayan', and looking for non-Chinese recruits, rather than a branch of the Chinese party.

As a teenager he had already taken a leading part in the Communist-supported Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA), the most effective armed resistance to the Japanese in Malaya. With a half-dozen other Communists in the resistance he was decorated by Mountbatten in 1946. But in May 1948, as the Federation of Malaya structure disappointed non-Malay hopes for a post-war democratic order, as the British increasingly cracked down on left-wing activists, and as both sides in what became the global Cold War hardened their international stance, Chin Peng led the Communists back to the jungle in armed insurrection. The Malayan Emergency which followed was a long and ruinous guerilla struggle, involving troops from Britain, Australia and New Zealand as well as Malaya. Progress to independence was speeded to deprive the Communists of their most powerful anti-colonial argument. Once the government that would carry the Federation of Malaya to independence was in place, led by the genial prince Tunku Abdul Rahman, a meeting was arranged at which the Tunku could try to persuade Chin Peng to give up the struggle since its nominal object of independence was achieved. Chin Peng proved clear and persuasive at the 1955 Baling talks in Kedah, but insisted that he could only bring his men out of the jungle to lay down their arms if they were allowed to enter the political process as a legal party. Under British advice the Tunku would not agree to this, or indeed to any significant

concession to the Communists once they surrendered. The talks failed, and all they had changed was to provide the Malayan/Malaysian public with an image of their "enemy" - a slim soft-spoken figure who vanished from sight as suddenly as he arrived.



Chin Peng at Baling

Malaya duly became independent in 1957, to be followed in 1963 by a broader Malaysia involving also Chinese-majority Singapore and the multi-ethnic British Borneo territories. The fortunes of the MCP in the jungle gradually declined in face of an effective containment strategy, and an increasingly prosperous independent Malaya. The MCP withdrew its central operations base to the Thai border region in 1953, to ease the military pressure. At the end of 1960, with his force shrunk from over 7,000 to fewer than 2,000 men, Chin Peng left his jungle hideout for a mammoth journey to Beijing via Thailand, Laos and northern Vietnam. There he was an honoured guest of the Chinese government for almost 20 years, though still controlling the Party's radio station in Hunan and by proxies the party on the Thai border. This was a troubled time, including the Cultural Revolution in China and its counterproductive extremism in relations with the rest of the world. Chin Peng survived, but the unity of his party did not. The internal purges in the party became severe in the late 1960s especially, with perhaps 200 executions of alleged spies and traitors. In 1970 two factions broke away from the Chin Peng mainstream, forming the Revolutionary Faction and the Marxist-Leninist Faction respectively. In 1983 they merged to form the Malaysian Communist Party, recognising the new politics of Malaysia as the older party would not. China's growing warmth towards Malaysia after diplomatic relations were established in 1974 meant that the MCP no longer had real support from Beijing for its armed struggle. Reconciliation should have occurred then, but each of the three parties - Chin Peng and the Chinese and Malaysian governments - had their own reasons for preferring a frozen status quo to any public change of position. Only in December 1989 did the Thais broker a peace agreement between the Malaysian Government and the MCP, whereby the few hundred remaining Communists laid down their arms and settled as cultivators in southern Thailand. Chin Peng was no longer an asset to China, and lived thereafter primarily in Thailand.

Long-standing MCP habits of illegality and clandestinity were gradually overcome in the 1990s as governments lost their fear of communism, and Chin Peng himself sought to make

his case. Some international journalists found their way to him through Thai military contacts, and articles began appearing from 1997. One of the enterprising journalists was Bangkok-based Australian Tony Paul. He finally managed to meet Chin Peng at the British Club in Bangkok in 1997, and encouraged his interest in writing his memoirs, in a place better served with libraries than his normal residence near Haadyai. On his behalf Tony Paul contacted David Chandler at Monash, and then Merle Ricklefs at ANU, who delegated the matter to me. As a result Chin Peng made his first visit to Australia and New Zealand (having nephews both in Sydney and Auckland), in the course of which I took him to lunch in Canberra on 3 February 1998. He was remarkably affable, charming and thoughtful, revealing nothing of the steely side that must have enabled him to survive the lurches in the Chinese and Soviet lines over his time in charge of Malayan Communism. I invited him to return for a month as a visitor at ANU working on his memoirs, in return for which we would hope for a rather intense seminar working over the history of the MCP with some experts.

A year later he was installed in the Coombs Building at ANU behind a door discreetly labelled Mr B H Ong. The ANU did not fund his visit, so he stayed with Mr C C Chin, omniscient chronicler of the MCP, who at that time was hoping to write an ANU PhD on the subject under my supervision. He charmed both his old antagonists and the students who gathered to hear him reminisce about "Why I became a Communist". On 22-23 February we organised a workshop under the auspices of the newly-formed Centre for the Study of the Chinese Southern Diaspora, where some 20 scholars grilled him about the key decisions and turning points of his long career. Everything would be on the table, he agreed, except the two most sensitive areas for him - the internal disputes of the party and its relations with the Chinese Party. Among those gathered for this remarkable occasion were not only the leading historians of the Malayan Emergency and the MCP - Cheah Boon Kheng, Yoji Akashi, Peter Edwards, Hara Fujio, Anthony Short, Richard Stubbs and Yong Chin Fatt - but several participants who had fought against him, notably Lt. General John Coates of the Australian Army, Leon Comber of the Special Branch, Malayan Police, and John Leary of the Malayan Scouts. The exchanges were cordial and

fascinating. On the whole his memory was better than most of those in the room, and his thoughtfulness in reflecting on the issues was second to none.

At the end of a remarkable two days of exchanges, revelations, and critiques, Chin Peng made some interesting personal observations.

Since the beginning of the 90s I think and think it over whether I made mistakes or not, whether my belief in Communism is wrong or not... At least I think my conviction to seek an equal society, that was what Communism meant - to seek an equal and just society - I think that is not wrong... And I think that human society will move on. It will take perhaps another millennium to achieve this fully, or to fundamentally achieve this.

Secondly, about the military defeat... We were defeated in a sense, we did not realise our goal to set up a government dominated by Communists. Or, in our terms, a people's democracy. But we didn't [experience] defeat in forcing the British to grant independence to Malaya. Without our struggle, I don't think the British would grant independence to Malaya. Or it will be many years later... I don't think we were humiliated. At least I never surrender, and at least I feel proud, not for me, for our movement, for all those supporters. We can carry on a struggle, a military struggle for 12 years against a major power... This is the longest, the largest scale guerilla warfare in the British Empire, in the twentieth century.¹

Chin Peng had shown that he was as adept at handling a group of expert academic antagonists as his own hardened guerrillas and the international forces ranged against him. Although the transcript of this exchange was eventually published, he also sought a more controlled version of his story, as related to Ian Ward and Norma Miraflores in *My Side of History* (Singapore: Media Masters, 2003). In October 2004 he was able to visit Singapore, to give a seminar and quietly meet the next most enduring regional politician, Lee Kuan Yew. That was also the last time I would see him. But despite several attempts he was never able to return to Malaysia.



¹ *Dialogues with Chin Peng: New Light on the Malayan Communist Party*, ed. C.C. Chin and Karl Hack (Singapore: NUS Press, 2004), pp.234-5.

Chin Peng's Farewell: A Letter to Comrades and Compatriots

My dear comrades, my dear compatriots,

When you read this letter, I am no more in this world. It was my original intention to pass away quietly and let my relatives handle the funeral matters in private. However, the repercussions of erroneous media reports of me in critical condition during October 2011, had persuaded me that leaving behind such a letter is desirable.

Ever since I joined the Communist Party of Malaya and eventually became its Secretary-General, I have given both my spiritual and physical self in the service of the cause that my party represented, that is, to fight for a fairer and better society based on socialist ideals. Now with my passing away, it is time that my body be returned to my family.

I draw immense comfort in the fact that my two children are willing to take care of me, a father who could not give them family love, warmth and protection ever since their birth. I could only return my love to them after I had relinquished my political and public duties, ironically only at a time when I have no more life left to give to them as a father.

It was regrettable that I had to be introduced to them well advanced in their adulthood as a stranger. I have no right to ask them to understand, nor to forgive. They have no choice but to face this harsh reality. Like families of many martyrs and comrades, they too have to endure hardship and suffering not out of their own doing, but out of a consequence of our decision to challenge the cruel forces in the society which we sought to change.

It is most unfortunate that I couldn't, after all, pay my last respects to my parents buried in hometown of Sitiawan (in Perak), nor could I set foot on the beloved motherland that my comrades and I had fought so hard for against the aggressors and colonialists.



Chin Peng

My comrades and I had dedicated our lives to a political cause that we believed in and had to pay whatever price there was as a result. Whatever consequences on ourselves, our family and the society, we would accept with serenity.

In the final analysis, I wish to be remembered simply as a good man who could tell the world that he had dared to spend his entire life in pursuit of his own ideals to create a better world for his people.

It is irrelevant whether I succeeded or failed, at least I did what I did. Hopefully the path I had walked on would be followed and improved upon by the young after me. It is my conviction that the flames of social justice and humanity will never die. - September 2013.

Chin Peng died at hospital in Bangkok on Malaysia Day, September 16, 2013 at the age of 89. This is his final letter to his comrades and compatriots published in his memorial booklet.

As Others See Us (Part II)

By Lt Col J P Cross

*O wad some Pow'r the giftie gie us
To see oursels as others see us!
'To a Louse' (1786)*

On pages 448 to 450 in his magisterial book, *Defeat into Victory*, Field Marshal Sir William Slim, has written a detailed encomium about a minor incident that took place in February 1945 that involved one Sherman tank and two platoons of 1/7 Gurkha Rifles against some Japanese. These latter were thirty yards in front of the attackers as they dashed for safety towards their previously prepared bunkers chased by the Gurkhas advancing in bounds supported by tank fire, and later as the Gurkhas, still with support from the tank firing solid shot into those bunkers, killed and captured them with bullets and

bayonets. He pleaded some indulgence for the length of the description for three reasons: that it was the nearest he had been to the fighting since he had been an army commander; that it was one of the neatest, more workmanlike bits of infantry and armoured minor tactics he had ever seen; and that he was Colonel of the Regiment of the attacking Gurkhas.

The Gurkha commander was Naik Lalbahadur Limbu, a strong, thick-set man with a robust sense of leadership and more brawn than brain. Seventeen years later, Captain (QGO) Lalbahadur Limbu, DCM, MM, was Company Second-in-Command of D Company. I was his company commander. He had the greatest respect of his men but, by then, had a strained look on his face for much of the time and smiled seldom. The battalion had been on Malayan Emergency Operations for longer than any other Gurkha battalion, 1948-1959, without a break and the following two years in peacetime Hong Kong, the first time the battalion had had proper accommodation

since the end of the Second World War, had made life towards the end of Lalbahadur Limbu's soldiering a much more complex and complicated affair than he had even been used to. Under peacetime conditions his company clerk and platoon commanders 'carried' him as much as I did. In 1961 we moved to Ipoh, in north Malaya, and at long last the Old Man's service came to an end.

We gave him a farewell party. He declined when I first asked him to address us, I having made my speech about him and his service by then. He had never been 'good' at speaking, relying on gestures and blunt grunts more than on detailed descriptions. I invited him once more to speak and accept he did. What he said has stayed with me ever since, more than 60 years later as I write this, as it struck a chord by its simplicity and truth. He started off bluntly and surprisingly: 'You British are strange people. You give a soldier a reward and for the rest of his service you give him a reward for having given him a reward. Let me tell you what I mean.'

Towards the end of the Burma War I chased and bayoneted a few Japanese soldiers. The Army Commander sahib was watching and gave me a Military Medal, MM. That was fine. I had never asked for a bravery award but if the Sarkar [the Government] wanted to give that to me of course I would accept it.

In 1947 we had "inding-pinding" [Indian independence] and our 1/7 GR was chosen for the British Army. I was called into the Company Office and the Major sahib asked me if I wanted to go with the battalion to Malaya or be transferred to the Indian Army or go back home? "I have to warn you," he said, "that as you are not very clever you will never be promoted higher than naik but, as you have an MM, you'll be welcome in the battalion. What is your choice?"

I told him that I had never asked to go higher than naik so was quite satisfied to go with the battalion to Malaya.

Once we got to Malaya our A, B, C and D Companies changed to P, Q and R Batteries as we were made into Artillery. After a year, that was cancelled and we went back to normal. I was called into the Company Office and the Major sahib said, "Corporal Lalbahadur, now we have four rifle companies, we are

a sergeant short. You will be promoted to sergeant but I have to warn you that you will never be promoted higher than that. But you have an MM so sergeant you will be but you'll never be promoted any higher. Have you anything to say?"

I told him that I had never asked to go higher than corporal but if he wanted me to be a sergeant, sergeant I would be.

I was then sent north with a couple of platoons where we were ambushed by a crowd of 'daku' ['dacoits', the word used to describe the Malayan Communist Terrorists, (CT)] and, after an hour or so's battle we killed some and drove the others off.

Some time later I was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal, DCM, and, after the investiture by the High Commissioner sahib in Kuala Lumpur, I was called into the company office by the Major sahib and told I was to be promoted to Warrant Officer, Class 2, Company Sergeant Major. "You have a DCM so you'll manage but you'll never be promoted any higher. Have you anything to say?"

I told him that I had never asked to go higher than sergeant but if he wanted me to be a WO2, WO2 I would be.

A few years later I was sent for by the Commanding sahib. I was marched into his office and told that, as I had a DCM and an MM, he was going to promote me to Lieutenant (QGO). You'll never get promoted any higher. Have you anything to say?"

I told him that I had never asked to go higher than WO2 but if he wanted me to be a Lieutenant (QGO), then Lieutenant (QGO) I would be.

And just before the battalion went to Hong Kong the new Commanding sahib called me in to the office and told me he was promoting me to be Captain (QGO) and here I am, going on pension as a Captain (QGO). You British are strange people: I was rewarded twice for what I was enlisted as a soldier to do and all my promotions came as a reward for already having been given a reward.'

And he shook his head almost in disbelief as he sat down to rapturous applause.

Emergency Married Quarters

By Mrs Whizzie Whorlow

My first days in Malaya were so very long ago;
I recall only random memories,
good or bad and all rendered hazy by the heat and humidity;
- early mornings were perfect.

My arrival in Seremban in August '56 was honoured by a party in the mess. The Suez crisis was in full swing; all the men wished to be there and taking part in the action, for the

Malayan Emergency was not enough for their warrior needs. One and all were welcoming. We returned home to a brand new house on the side of a steep slope - cracking everywhere. It belonged to a sad Chinese who had suffered at the hands of the Japanese and could only sleep with the aid of a large amount of spirits and then he was tormented with nightmares. The house stood or leaned on bare, raw yellow earth and the floors were painted in green distemper so no pushing of chairs allowed. Our first home.

Tim was the IO and from my perspective it was not a perfect job. Every day the news was gathered together and

typed up in triplicate after work and then it had to be signed, also in triplicate. Too much news meant no return home before nine o'clock.

It has to be said that I was bored beyond belief. There were maybe only four other wives. Two of them worked and one of them had a baby and I was not into babies in those days. The older wives lived in army quarters somewhere. My incredulous belief is that there was no swimming pool in Seremban. Was that really so? In theory we went to Port Dickson on Sundays to water ski with Vyvan and Moira Robinson in the deep blue sea. In practice we mostly had to stay at home waiting for possible important phone calls from Bn. HQ. So we got a glorious puppy to keep me company - she was called Spender - as she proved hard to train. It was not long however when our darling dog discovered the delights of chasing chicken and bringing the dead bird proudly home. We tried the time honoured cure of hanging it round her neck but only for a very short time as it festered fast and none of us liked it. Spender redoubled her efforts. Then Teddy Willkie, who is an animal man, took her out for special training. She failed to see the point. So, very worried I looked for the source.

Next door was a glossy Chinese house with big wrought Iron gates, a garden and a chicken run. How did she get to the chickens? I locked Spender up and entered through the big black gates. All was silent but the house was open wide, so I went inside calling out 'Hello'. All remained silent. Then I saw the guardian of the house curled up in a huge glass tank along one side of the wall. He was motionless, watching and waiting for his next meal of live chicken. He was huge. I fled home - any sane chicken would have followed. I've never liked snakes.

However, help was at hand. We were moved up to the Cameron Highlands where my life was exciting. Because of the Emergency, people had been moved out of their houses, which were scattered around on the edges of the jungle and the Chinese had been thrust into 'New Village' compounds with barbed wire about them and a curfew. So we were given a truly lovely house with a garden and a stream and a summer house and eight acres of jungle. It had diamond paned windows to remind you of leafy Bucks and geraniums, which were so tall that they made it to the bedroom windows.

There was somehow a delightful, very young girl, Amoy, who was the amah and an old woman who was probably her grandmother. We had kerosene stove to cook on and sometimes things would catch fire. Because the house was so remote we had a Gurkha guard at night, about which I felt guilty, but they seemed to like it and during the day Tim's unfortunate orderly hung about and tried to teach me some Gurkhali, but as he spoke hardly a word of English, we did not get very far. Sometimes, at night the lights and the telephone would die at the same time but nobody came out of the jungle to attack me. One sunny morning I was at home with Amoy and Spender when men did suddenly appear from the jungle. Spender put on a great defence and Amoy hid - it was Geoff

Walsh and his boys coming in for a cup of coffee, but nobody else ever dropped in.

Meanwhile there was one hazard. A huge hostile cat had been living in the house and claimed squatter's rights. One of the windows in the main room was broken and stopped with newspapers. He would push them disdainfully into the room and wander in. I feared for Spender and said to Tim 'We must get rid of it'. So he said 'Well, you hold it and I'll run over it'. So we took it to another home. We drove a couple or so miles to a perfect house and told him to 'Go live there'. He raced us back and sorted things out by falling in love with me so all lived peacefully together.

The final perfection was that I had a job offer working for the District Officer. He was an ex-submariner with a gorgeous wife and small daughter. We became lifelong friends though Myles died some years ago. He was very alive then and shouted at everyone in the office. I was shocked by all this but clearly they adored him and fell about in delight, so it seems it was all right. Spender came to work with me because it was such a daily tragedy to leave her behind. Life was golden. I had access now to all the intelligence reports and trawled through past ones to fill in time. I read one - no doubt there were many - where the CTs were welcomed into our local new village and feasted through the night. They settled some scores and melted back into the jungle before dawn. There was clearly a great deal of pressure and fear. To prevent food being smuggled to the enemy all the tins we bought were punctured and rice was in short supply.

We had our own sad reasons for realising this when we finally had to leave and go down to the heat again. There was an old Chinese man who had somehow escaped the New Village routine and was living in a little wooden house in the garden. He grew vegetables and would come to us with a cauliflower or something. When we were told our idyll was to stop, I was sufficiently worried about him to ask the Chinese Affairs Officer if he could house him. He had slipped through the net and had somehow kept himself in work as caretaker for the house. I was told he would not move although the house was to be empty. He was sitting on the doorstep weeping when we left and it was dreadful.

Later on I heard that 4 Malay Regiment had taken over from us. There was a 24 hour curfew in place. They were patrolling and saw our old man. They challenged him and he ran off and they shot him. They then went to his little house and under the floorboards they found rice and ammunition. Clearly he had been pressed into supplying the CTs and had paid with his life.

On that extremely sad note we left the Cameron Highlands. We did go back a great deal later, from Ipoh, where we found our house greatly extended and reformed into a school. I am not sure who for, but I think it was a religious foundation and for orphans. I hope that they loved it as much as we did.

OBITUARIES

Notifications of Death

The Editor records with regret the deaths of the following members notified between 1 January 2013 and 31 December 2013.

1 GR	Major P (Paul) Lynch-Garbett	01 May 2013
2 GR	Major E (Eric) Dennison	05 February 2010*
	Captain C (Clive) Dennison	15 December 2012*
	Honorary Major Tule Ale IDSM	13 August 2012*
	Mrs A (Anne) Cave	05 March 2013
	Major P H (Piers) Erskin - Tulloch MC	09 February 2013*
	Mrs J (Joy) Gay	01 November 2013
	E H S (Edward) Dillon Esq	31 December 2013
3 GR	R J R Rhodes-James TD MA	29 November 2012
	B P (Brian) Hayman Esq	14 March 2013
	Captain D G W (Derrick) Norris	26 April 2013
	Lieutenant Colonel D A (Bill) Brown	20 May 2013
4 GR	Lieutenant Colonel I L Simpson	20 December 2010
	Major D S ('Dicky') Day	28 September 2013*
5 RGR	Dr D M D Rice MB BS	end of 2012
6 GR	Lieutenant Colonel R C Neath OBE	27 October 2012*
	Lieutenant Henry K Maxwell	11 February 2013*
	Lieutenant Colonel D J (Trigger) Tregenza	13 February 2013*
	Major John G A Lucas MC	24 May 2013*
	Major L E (Lawrence) Pottinger LVO MBE	03 August 2013*
	(Mark) Sutton Esq	14 August 2013
	Captain (QGO)Bakhansing Gurung	05 September 2013*
	Captain (Richard) Mead	06 October 2013
	Captain Eric P Lanning	18 November 2012 *
	Captain D C G (Derek) Mole	30 November 2013*
	Colonel (Neville) Hunter	03 December 2013
7 GR	Major AD (David) Pritchard	29 January 2013*
	Lieutenant C P (Charles) Macdonald	12 April 2013
	Major C F (Charles) Merrylles	02 May 2013
	Major R S R (Pat) Carr MC*	23 August 2013*
8 GR	C F Collins Esq	2013
	Major J B Wilson	25 December 2013
9 GR	Mrs I E A E (Ingebord) Russell	31 May 2013
	Captain N G (Norman George) Scorey Esq	05 December 2013*
	Major W G (William) Towill	14 December 2013*
	Major W (William) McDuff Fraser	24 December 2013
10 GR	Captain Padambahadur Lama	03 April 12
	Captain Kharkabahadur Rai MC	04 October 12
	Major (GCO QM) Kesang Wangdi Lama MBE BEM	January 2013
	Mrs Sheila Wylie (widow of Charles)	21 June 13
	Colonel D F Mallam OBE	07 July 13*

	Lieutenant Colonel H S (Steve) Mullaly OBE	13 August 2013
	Mrs E (Betty) Mullalay MBE	15 August 2013
	Lieutenant Colonel J H (John) Jacob MC	09 November 2013*
RGR		
QGE	Major J (John) Parfect MBE	01 May 2012*
	Captain (QGO) Tekansing Gurung	January 2013
	Major M H R Thompson	20 April 2013
	Major D M L Bruges	13 June 2013
	Major D J Goddard	20 August 2013
	Captain R H Marriott	16 September 2013
	Major H A Caulfield	01 November 2013
	Major (QGO) Dharamlal Thapa	07 November 2013*
QGS	Major I W R (Ian) Seraph	26 May 2012
	Major (TOT) R (Reg) Banham	31 December 2012
	Lieutenant Colonel V H (Vic) Martin MC	20 May 2013*
	Captain Rajbahadur Rai	23 February 2013*
	Honory Lieutenant Jamyang Dorje Lama	November 2013
QOGLR	Mrs C (Cherry) Turpin	06 April 2013
	Lieutenant Colonel D A (Bill) Brown	20 May 2013
	Lieutenant Colonel A (Al) Beveridge	13 August 2013
	Lieutenant Colonel R (Ralph) Stocker	02 December 2013
	Major R N (Dick) Ablett	24 Dec 2013

Note: Those marked with an (*) have their Obituary published in this Journal

Major Eric Dennison (2 GR)

Eric was born on 30 May 1922, the son of Henry and Hilda Dennison. He was educated at Heaton Grammar School, Newcastle upon Tyne and, following his war service, at Newcastle University. Having enlisted in The Durham Light Infantry in June 1941, he volunteered for the Indian Army, and in 1942 he sailed on HMT Reina del Pacifico for Durban. After a few weeks ashore there Eric eventually reached Suez on the Isle de France only to have to wait ashore again for a few more weeks before being sent in a smaller ship to Bombay and thence by train to the Officers' Training School in Bangalore.

In November 1942, Eric was commissioned into the 2nd Goorkhas and joined the Regimental Centre in Dehra Dun. The following May he was posted to an Indian Army Ordnance Corps Depot in Poona but, as that was not at all to his liking, he pestered his new CO every week until he was sent back to Dehra: a rare and commendable success indeed, and a tribute to his determination to be a front line soldier. From the Centre, Eric answered a call for volunteers for an unspecified job in Burma, and in November 1944 he was sent to HQ IV Corps at Imphal, and placed under the orders of its Commander, our Lieutenant General Sir Geoffrey Scoones. Eric and two other officers were then sent to the Western Chin Levies in the Haka Zone of the Chin Hills.

Soon after his arrival the Levies started to advance south between the Myittha River valley and the River Chindwin to support the regular forces with ambushes and flank protection.

Captain Clive Dennison (2 GR)

Clive Dennison, who died on 15 December 2012, aged 54 years, was the son of Major Eric Dennison [1942 - 47] whose obituary appears above. He was educated at Queen Elizabeth Grammar School, Hexham, Northumberland, and then at Leeds University where he took a degree in Economic History. From Sandhurst he was gazetted to the 2nd Goorkhas as a Short Service Commission University Entrant and joined the 1st Battalion on 15 March 1980. He was appointed Company Officer and Platoon Commander in C Company in Queen Elizabeth Barracks, Church Crookham and was with the company in Belize from April to September 1980.

Once back in England he was sent to Hong Kong for the language course and at the same time given the task of escorting The Queen's Truncheon on its transfer to the 2nd Battalion there. In January 1981 Clive was appointed Intelligence Officer and two months later accompanied the Battalion from England to Hong Kong. He spent the remainder of his service in that post, largely in liaison with the Royal Hong Kong Police and studying the situation on the Chinese border, but he also went to Nepal to help with pension paying in the summer of 1981.

They were organised in columns about 200 strong with 40 or so elephants to help carry the food and ammunition they received by airdrop. During February 1945 they provided a protective screen to the west of the Tilin-Pauk road and were still finding groups of Japanese up to battalion strength in the area. After the fighting finished, Eric continued to serve with the Levies until they were disbanded in March 1946 and then stayed on in the Chin Hills to help to raise and train the 1st Battalion Chin Rifles of the Burma Army.

Having been demobilized in 1946, Eric ended his service in the 2nd Goorkhas in April 1947. In August that year he and Miss Iris Kirkby were married in Newcastle. He served in the 8th Battalion The Durham Light Infantry (TA) before he graduated BCom at Newcastle University but had to resign his commission when he went abroad to work with the United Africa Company. He stayed with that Company in Nigeria and the British Cameroons Trust Territory for eleven years. When he returned to England, Eric studied for a Diploma in Further Education and subsequently became a Lecturer at the College of Commerce in Newcastle. When he retired in June 1987 he was Senior Lecturer in Marketing at Newcastle Polytechnic.

It is our loss that Eric did not join The Sirmoor Club. He died in Hexham, Northumberland on 5 February 2010. We send our belated sympathy and good wishes to Eric's widow, Iris.

DRW

When the Battalion moved to Hong Kong Clive turned out for the Flying Kukris rugby team in the 1981-2 season in the second row and he was also a frequent sailor on the Gurkha Field Force sailing yacht. His pride and joy was a brown Audi 100 which he used to ferry the younger members of the mess and 6 GR to and from various watering holes in the New Territories and Kowloon. He used it so much that the paint blistered over the bonnet!

Prior to getting the car, his proficiency in Cantonese was such that on a night out in Wanchai, he ordered the taxi to take him to "Sek Kong" and ended up in "Sai Kung" - the other end of the Colony!

After retiring on completion of his Short Service Commission in August 1982 Clive moved to Newcastle upon Tyne and studied at Durham University's Business School for an MSc in Management Studies which he completed in a year. He then joined Lonrho Textiles, Ltd, in Cramlington, Northumberland, and thereafter moved to Brussels with Werner International, acting as a Consultant specialising in the textile industry. Returning to the UK, he joined Gherzi

Textile Organisation AG, headquartered in Zurich, and moved back to Northumberland. With Gherzi he undertook feasibility studies for textile producers seeking to invest in non-UK manufacturing. This role took him to the Far East and South East Asia, including Hong Kong, Malaysia and the Philippines.

He then moved into freelance consulting, advising various bodies including the International Monetary Fund, on projects involving the production of textiles. Again this took him abroad to conduct studies in Egypt, Madagascar and Uzbekistan. After the fall of the Iron Curtain in the late 1980s, he travelled extensively in the former eastern bloc countries providing training and advice to east European textile manufacturers about western manufacturing and marketing standards.

Clive's other interests included his role as Chairman of Governors at Stamfordham First School in Northumberland. He was also a keen game shot and an enthusiastic runner,

participating in the Great North Run to raise money on behalf of the Calvert Trust, and was a member of The Sirmoor Club.

Clive married Miss Brigid Hull-Lewis at St. Margaret's Church, Fernhurst, West Sussex on 17 September 1988 and had a son and two daughters.

At the time of his death Clive Dennison was living in Hexham, but prior to that he had lived at Fenwick Shield Farm Cottage, Fenwick, near Matfen, Northumberland. A Service of Thanksgiving was held on 21 December 2012 at Matfen Parish Church where he is interred.

We send our sympathy to Brigid and her daughters Harriet and Alice and son Robert for their loss of Clive at such an early age.

JJB and others

Honorary Major Tule Ale IDSM (2 GR)

Tule Ale who died on 13 August 2012 was the last serving IDSM in the British Army when he retired in April 1970 from being Gurkha Major of the 2nd Battalion 2nd KEO Goorkhas in Brunei.

His was a life that spanned huge events in our Regimental History having served in Two Column on Wingate's First Chindit Operation in 1943 and in Nick Neill's B Company at Tamandu in the Arakan Campaign of 1945 where he was awarded the IDSM (Indian Distinguished Service Medal).

Tule Ale enlisted into the 2nd Goorkhas on 14 October 1940 and after completion of recruit training at Dehra Doon was posted to the 3rd Battalion which in 1943 formed a major component of Wingate's First Chindit operation. The operation was designed to show that British forces could beat the Japanese at their own game in the Burmese jungle by getting behind their main forces east of the Irrawaddy and taking out key communication centres whilst Stilwell's Chinese attacked from the north. In the event Stilwell's attack never materialised so the Chindits were on their own.

In some ways Tule's Two Column were lucky as having bumped a large Japanese force short of the Irrawaddy they turned back and returned to India as a cohesive body in contrast to the rest of the force. As a result of Wingate's controversial 'scatter' order given after the Chindit bridgehead was attacked on the Irrawaddy, the other columns after some successes, mostly degenerated into small groups of starving fugitives ruthlessly hunted by the Japanese. Even so on their way back to India Tule's column suffered extremes of hunger and thirst but, keeping together and helping their wounded, got back exhausted but in one piece.

In December 1943 British forces for the second time tried to wrest the western Arakan peninsula from the Japanese and in bitter fighting slowly forced the Japanese back until, by early 1945, they were poised to take the key port of Akyab from the Japanese. As part of this operation 3/2nd Goorkhas were tasked with taking the two key hill features nicknamed Snowdon and Snowdon East near the village of Tamandu. Although 3/2nd had artillery support it proved largely ineffective against the deeply entrenched bunkers of the Japanese so that the position had to be taken by infantry assault.

The company commander Major (later Colonel) DF (Nick) Neill used Naik (Corporal) Tule Ale to do a reconnaissance of the Japanese position during which he identified five machine gun nests as a result of which Nick Neill based his plan of attack. During the ensuing battle Nick Neill wrote of Tule: "Naik Tule himself led the attack and was the first to reach the foremost enemy trench. This he attacked single-handed killing the two Japanese occupants with his Tommy-gun. He then called forward those left alive in his section and put them in position in the captured trench. Naik Tule's final objective was now only some fifteen paces away and was a trench holding four enemy. Ordering his Bren gunner to give him covering fire he again went forward alone to attack the position. With the greatest of bravery Naik Tule charged this trench and, hurling two grenades into it, killed all four Japanese in it."

In the last stages of this desperate battle Rifleman Bhanbhagta Gurung gained the Victoria Cross for single handedly taking out the final Japanese positions. Naik Tule Ale received the IDSM for his actions and 2GR received the battle honour 'Tamandu'.

After the war Tule joined 2/2GR when 3/2nd was disbanded. Nick Neill was again his Company Commander in B Company and now, as a Lieutenant (QGO), he commanded a platoon on operations against the Communist insurgents in Malaya. Later he was put in command of 99 Brigade defence platoon where he quickly gained the good opinion of the Brigade Commander, one Walter Walker.

He then returned to 2/2GR to be Company 2IC of B Company during The Borneo Confrontation against Indonesia with Nick Neill now as CO.

After Confrontation a huge run down of the Brigade of Gurkhas started and it looked as if Tule would have to go on

pension. However just as he was about to dispatch his MFO to Nepal (an occurrence he impishly relished) the GM of 2/2GR suddenly died in his sleep and Tule was called in to take over. It was a terribly difficult time for the Brigade having to make hundreds of fine soldiers redundant on pitiful terms but Tule proved a rock of sound sense and his good advice helped two 2/2GR Commandants, Tony Harrison and Johnny Lawes to make the best of an incredibly hard job.

Our thoughts go out to his family on the death of a very brave and distinguished Gurkha.

CJDB

Major Piers Erskine-Tulloch (2 GR)

Major Piers Erskine-Tulloch, who has died aged 83, won an MC in 1965 in the undeclared war with Indonesia.

In November that year, during the "Confrontation" with Indonesia, Erskine-Tulloch was commanding a company of 2nd Battalion 2nd King Edward VII's Own Gurkha Rifles (2/2 GR) in the border region of Sarawak's Lundu District with orders to ambush enemy routes into the area.

On November 10 he led his men on a gruelling five-day march through jungle swamps before reaching the ambush position, where he sited each of them along a track. After three days' waiting, a party of 19 Indonesians moved into the ambush. Erskine-Tulloch opened fire at a range of 15 yards. All the enemy were killed.

Three weeks later, in a second operation, he had temporarily halted his force on a hill near the position he had chosen for an ambush when the enemy, more than 100 strong, who had been trailing him, attacked without warning. Heavy fighting broke out, the enemy platoons charging to within five yards of the Gurkha's defences before being beaten back.

Erskine-Tulloch then discovered that his best withdrawal route had been cut off. He decided to hold on where he was and try to defeat every attack with small arms and artillery fire.

In order to control his defensive battle he had to move to the centre of his position, which involved crossing 30 yards of open ground under intense machine gun fire.

Once in his command position, he ordered his platoons to engage only visible targets at short range so as to conserve ammunition. He then ran to his forward Observation Officer's post and caused artillery fire from two howitzers to be brought down on the attackers when they came within 150 yards of his perimeter. The enemy launched four determined attacks. All were thrown back. Heavy and mounting losses eventually forced the Indonesians to withdraw.



The citation for the award of an MC to Erskine-Tulloch paid tribute to his inspired handling of his force and stated that for 30 minutes he had been exposed without cover to continuous machine gun fire.

Piers Hector Erskine-Tulloch was born in London on October 12 1929 and educated at Christ's Hospital School, Horsham. After attending Sandhurst he was commissioned into the Northamptonshire Regiment and served in Austria and Italy before seeing action with the 1st Battalion the Gloucestershire Regiment in Korea in 1951.

Service with his regiment in BAOR, Korea and Hong Kong was followed in 1957 by secondment to 2 GR. He joined the 2nd Battalion in Malaya and, in 1959, transferred to the permanent cadre of the regiment.

His service in Sarawak was sandwiched between two staff appointments at HQ Singapore District, and he then went to Brunei as second in command (2IC) of 2/2 GR. In 1971 he was GSO 2 at HQ Allied Land Forces Schleswig-Holstein and Jutland, and from 1973 to 1976 in staff appointments at HQ South-East District, Aldershot.

Erskine-Tulloch then moved to the Brigade of Gurkhas depot in Hong Kong as 2IC and chief instructor of training. His final appointment was on the staff of HQ 2 Armoured Division in BAOR.

After retiring from the Army in 1981, he was 2IC of the Sultan of Brunei's Gurkha Reserve Unit for seven years. On returning to England he was estate manager at St Paul's Court, London, until 1996, when he finally retired to live in Hampshire.

Piers Erskine-Tulloch married first, in 1953, Gerlinda (Linda) Ludmilla Andraschko, who died in 1957. He married for the second time in 1962, Teresa (Tessa) Halina Stevinson, who survives him with two daughters of his first marriage and two from his second.

Major Piers Erskine-Tulloch, born 12 October 1929, died 09 February 2013. Daily Telegraph 14 March 2013

Major D S ('Dicky') Day (4GR)



"The Last Parade, Closing Innings And Final Drive..."

*An Address in Memory of Dicky Day.
Given at West Hoathly Parish Church - St Margaret's
04 November 2013
By Roger Luscombe*

Introduction

What a magnificent turn out - thank you one and all for coming to Dicky's memorial service to give thanks for his life which we have christened; "*The Last Parade, Closing Innings And Final Drive.*"

Dicky often used to declare that '*getting old is a bore*' (actually he used a stronger epithet - also beginning with "B").

To paraphrase Dylan Thomas, *he fought, fought against the dying of the light!*

- in his 80s he was still getting that right and left and a brace of clean kills over the Hook valley
- arranging deals in the Indian aero-space sector with his trips to Delhi
- organising that amazing last parade of the 4th Gurkha association in June 2007 at Stoke Poges with the band, pipes and Gurkha dancers that so many of us enjoyed and to

which at least six Indian Army generals attended - including three "3 Stars"...

He was a man of many interests. To quote his favourite poet (Kipling), he could "fill the unforgiving minute with sixty seconds worth of distance run" as well "force heart and nerve and sinew to serve...long after they are gone."

Indeed his philosophy of life, or at least one of them, was "*carpe diem*" - live for today, for life is not a rehearsal. Why? The answer, I believe, lies in his early experiences as a very young 20 year old Company Commander in the Second World War when he survived (while many did not) which we will turn to briefly now.

Army Career

Dicky's life was indelibly marked by his military experiences in India and Burma. In the early 1940s these war experiences left him with what he perceived as a "sacred commitment" to remember and bear witness to his many Army companions and colleagues who did not make it.

In Malaya, as children, we were brought up on stories of those who had survived terrible experiences in combat and captivity - in Changi, on the Thai railroad ('Ran' Davison) on death marches across Sumatra ('Wicky' Fleming And Norman Marsh Banks), the Bilin River and the Sittang Bridge - all from engagements with the pitiless Japanese war machine in WW2 in SE Asia.

Quite a challenge to sum up Dicky's war experiences in a few paragraphs and I ask the forbearance of the Gurkha representatives here today if I skate too lightly over the facts and memories of those desperate days in India and Burma in the 1940s but herewith a few themes to ponder on that I hope would summarize his early adult life.

Youth

After schooling, at the renowned Royal Grammar School in Guildford, and childhood in Cranleigh, Dicky was just 17 - apparently adding a couple of years to his birth certificate - when he signed up to enrol in basic army training with the Buffs on 26 September 1939 - not for him the university place

or gap year but as one of that “magnificent generation” - he had, and always had, a strong belief in service to one’s country.

India

Still very young at 18 he was posted to Officer training in Bangalore in Southern India in 1940 (now a hub for the Indian technology and outsourcing industries) He chose the Indian army because the British Army officer posts pre-war often required a private income and Sandhurst training - neither of which his parents could afford.

India in 1940/41 not only allowed Dicky to play “first class cricket” as a batsman and wicketkeeper - but Bangalore ignited a life long love of India - the people, the cultures, the smells, the food markets, the ethnic diversities, the languages and the rich traditions of the Indian Army, which he carried to his dying day.

In later years no Indian meal was complete without an exchange in Urdu or Hindi initiated by him with the waiters who listened with polite smiles, head nodding but..... with expressions of complete incomprehension!

‘Crack’ Regiment

Dicky joined not only the Indian Army but the renown Gurkha’s, then ten Regiments strong - two battalions per regiment- which General Sam has referred to in his reading but in particular the “fighting fourth” 4th GKR just back in late 1941 from NW frontier - fighting the great-grandfathers of today’s Taliban on the Pakistan frontier with Afghanistan - to his mind, if the Gurkha Regiment as a whole were the cream, the 4th PWO were the *‘crème de la crème’*.

Others agreed with him - John Masters wrote, in his famous book on pre - war soldiering in India in the *Bugles and the Tiger*, on Dicky’s regiment;

“Fourth - an honourable number. I soon came to believe, with a passion worthy of a religion, that there was no regiment on earth like it. The first Gurkhas were earnest, the 2nd idle, the 3rd illiterate, the 5th narrow minded, the 6th down-trodden, the 7th unshaven, the 8th exhibitionist, the 9th too high cast, and the 10th alcoholic. As for the rest of the Indian Army, they were not what they used to be ... the British Army, lock, stock and barrel was hopeless BUT we FOURTH were wonderful, stiff with battle honours...witty, happy, carefree, tough, efficient, wise...”

“Dicky”

On joining the Fourth, Dicky was not only put in charge of 180 Gurkhas as a company commander but also earned a nickname “Dicky” that lasted the rest of his life. It all started with a horse called “Dick” shared with a fellow officer (possibly Peter O’Bree - whose son and grandson we are delighted to see here today) in those days infantry officers - albeit foot soldiers

or riflemen - needed to be mounted on a horse occasionally on formal parades in front of their company.

On a particularly important parade with a General inspecting the whole battalion - a general salute was ordered - with bugles blowing Dick, the horse, ignoring Dicky’s frantic efforts to halt him walked to the front of the parade - turned 180 degrees and dropped an offering on the General’s well-polished boots. From that moment on words, the phrase “doing a Dicky” entered mess legends and Dicky became his name for life.

Desperate Burma Days

Not yet 20, Dicky had barely arrived in the 4th GKR when he was shipped and transported with his battalion as part of the 17th division (later to be called The “Black Cat - no connection!) to confront, in Southern Burma, two battle-hardened Japanese divisions who had invaded from Thailand in January 1942 after the fall of Hong Kong and just before Singapore surrendered!

Dicky’s baptisms of fire were two major engagements in February 1942 - both very challenging for someone barely out of his teens. First at the Bilin River. Then outnumbered, they were forced into a fighting retreat over 100 miles along narrow jungle tracks to defend a bridge over the Sittang River. The retreat was very tough, ambushed by Japanese (who’s fighting capabilities the British high command consistently underestimated) with much hand to hand fighting with Kukris and small arms. As a Gurkha officer you led from the front - like any Rifle regiment.

Dicky summed up his experience of that forced march from Bilin to Sittang in a later radio interview as follows: “As we got to the Sittang Bridge, strung out over miles and with our transport jam packed, the Japanese attacked in force and cut us to pieces!”

Arriving at the Sittang bridge on the West and safer side in late February 1942 Dicky’s battalion as part of 48 brigade witnessed one of the tragic military disasters of WW2 when the bridge was blown up by demolition by the British General to deny the Japanese’s access to Rangoon - leaving nine battalions (of about 8,000) of his division on the wrong East bank. The survivors either swam or drowned in a river a kilometre wide or were captured. Many could not swim and were either drowned or machine gunned in the water. 1st/4th Gurkhas then took part in an epic fighting withdrawal of Indian and British armed forces across Central Burma to the NE states of India - on foot and over 1,100 miles. Dicky, with a serious back injury, was invalided out to India as Burma was lost to the Japanese as 1942 ended. He was spared by his war injuries from much of this retreat and subsequent action by the forgotten 14th Army to recapture Burma in 1944/45. He ended the war as one of the youngest battalion commanders in the Indian Army.

Remembrance

After the war, and to his death, he was devoted to the 4th PWO Gurkhas Association, latterly as President. He never forgot his beloved Gurkha's, and his past comrades and their families and also important links with his old regiment in the Indian Army. On his death a member of the association was kind enough to write and note...

"He was a tremendous ambassador for the 4th PWO Gurkha Rifles and without his leadership I am sure the association would have been folded years ago. His inspired leadership made our association the envy of the rest of the brigade - not only in terms of an active UK association but because of the very strong relationships with the regiment in India."

Shooting

After the war there then followed a varied but exotic civilian life - five years of tea planting in Darjeeling with a wonderful outdoor life riding around the estates, with his Alsatian dog at his side. There he met his first wife Anita and his elder daughter, Donita, was born. His tea experiences left him with very definite views on tea blends and making tea - "cold water - a yard of steam - warm the pot - brew for two minutes!"

Another five years followed with import/export trading in Chittagong, Eastern India, and then in Singapore and Malaya working for the UK trading company James Warren. In the mid-50s in Malaya his major pursuits were shooting and, latterly, my mother - a widow from HK and PA to the Governor of Malacca at the time (political resident) with the two children in tow - me and my younger sister Rosemary.

As some of you know, my parents met at the Malacca swimming club in the mid 1950s when my elder sister Donita had somehow locked herself in the ladies changing room and Jill was drafted in to release her. A happy courtship followed - which survived my mother driving a favourite car into a Malayan storm drain - and a marriage resulted at the famous red "Dutch" church in Malacca in June 1956 which lasted over 55 years.

Shooting was certainly a passion; We have his six game diaries (to be given to Tom Buckley) from 1956 through 2007, from his last shoot in Pakistan in Jan 1956 to Malaya in the late 50s with Armoured cars guarding the gun line against terrorists (CTs). These diaries reflect his passion for his sport and the geographical breadth of his experiences.

On his return to the UK, records note of early days in the 1970s in Sussex at Cobham, Hayes, Wadhurst, Nymans, Beaufort Park and elsewhere.

Also particularly happy days, more recently, 1990 -2011 at the West Hoathly or Hook syndicates with diary references to his favourite drives - Scotts wood, Courtlands, Whitestoke, Upper Coneybury, Springfield Shaw, Ashurst Wood. We look forward to laying some of his ashes on his favourite stands on a much

loved shoot that Tom and he restarted - as Will has already kindly mentioned.

- As a proprietor of "Coneybury Game Farms," he tried his hand at breeding pheasants with Jack Pike - and later his son Guy. Jack was especially good at puncturing any pomposities with trenchant Anglo-Saxon observations.
- Sometimes there were unusual breeds such as 'Famous Grouse' that were noted in his accounts and came in boxes of 12 "birds" - or Kamikaze pheasants that could drown themselves early morning in just two inches of water.
- He had faithfully kept records of other guns and friends, but, loyally, few references to shooting performance but grumbles about those "numbers and roamers in the gun line!"
- He was indebted in his later years to Jo, Mandy and others developing a technique to hold his back as he shot at the high pheasant flying fast over him. His shooting season invariably started with a bottle of champagne and, as the days got colder, a 'whisky mac' was a must.

Dicky's various gun dogs and their feats were just as important as "wiping the eye" of the younger guns in front. There was Max - the great Fudge of Parkwalk, Coco, and, lastly, Toffee (or could I have muddled the brown labs?)

- In a comfortable arm chair - whisky in hand, wet dog drying at his legs, we would hear the extraordinary feats of man and dog.
- On one hilarious occasion Toffee, (or was it Fudge?) sitting between Tom and Dicky in their famous Mule, put a paw on the accelerator and the mule took off downhill with Tom and Dicky jumping clear!
- His last wish at the Hook was to shoot one last high cock pheasant off Springfield Shaw in his 90th year, and, with a little help from his friends, this was achieved at 89.
- We liked to think that those lovely Poplar trees he planted - that march down the drive to Coneybury House - contain his spirit and memories of his "outside days".

Cricket

Dicky loved most sports - avid fan of "Match of the Day", and thrilled to Murray Walker's commentaries on Formula One.

- Golf he struggled manfully to master and partner Jill - latterly at Piltown - but his war injuries made his balance unpredictable and his slices more predictable.

However he was a closet "petrol head" - cars were a passion. From his early years one sport in particular he loved was cricket. Not knowing the Test score at any time of the day was met with mild disapproval.

He loved nothing more than to pack up a few sausages and pork pies, with a few cans of beer or the odd bottle of champagne, and, with a mate or two, head for Lords or the Oval. His great boyhood cricketing hero was Jack Hobbs, the most famous name in English cricket at the time who once replied to Dicky that the

answer to beating Donald Bradman was “Hobbs, Hammond and Day!” - The framed response was on his mantel piece. For him - *Cricket was a metaphor for life itself ...*

Family

Dicky was devoted to Jill - I recall him calling me on the day of the London bombings July 2005 frantic with worry - as mum had taken a train to town that day. We found her serenely taking morning coffee at the Ritz. The same concern presented itself in their last months in Lindfield when Jill fractured some bones. In his final year, in his nursing home in Somerset, he showed great stoicism in coping with the nursing staff, who while admirable, inevitably challenged his strong sense of independence. He regretted not being able to see the stars on a summer's night or have his favourite breakfast fry-ups.

His final year in his home in Somerset was greatly helped by my sister Rosemary who, living nearby, not only dealt with his emergencies but kept his whiskey supply topped up, chocolate rations replenished and odd fry-up smuggled in.

Undoubtedly their happiest years were at Coneybury and West Hoathly from 1970 - 2001 which started from converting a

small gamekeeper's cottage, on the Clarke estate, to an expansive country home with superb views.

Dicky loved to sit on the south facing patio looking to High Brook and beyond to Cuckmere Haven - often at night to see the stars. Many of you here today so enriched Dicky and Jill's time in West Hoathly - on the shoot, in the Cat, on the church committees and the Piltdown Golf club. And, as a small token of gratitude, we have donated, on advice from Lionel and the wardens, a projector and screen to be used by the church, local youth club and primary school in memory of those happy days. A bench also arrived on Friday - All Saints day 01 November - with their names and the Kohima epitaph.

In conclusion, and as many of you have communicated in your kind letters of condolences, Dicky was a unique and special individual - “one of a kind”. We all will miss his understated sense of humour; that Irish twinkle in his eye, his wise unpatronising counsel, his wide interests as well as his good friendship and fellowship! but above all, because of his many and varied experiences, an ability to focus on the really important things in life.

CARPE DIEM! CHOTA PEG - AYO GURKHALI!

Lieutenant Colonel Roger C Neath OBE (6GR)

In the darkest days of the 1939-45 War, Roger won a scholarship to Downing College Cambridge to read English, which he completed with great success. This almost certainly provided him with the intellectual rigour that so characterized his thinking processes in later life. In September 1944 he was commissioned to the Second Battalion and sailed to India where he completed the language course at Dehra Dun before returning westwards to Italy in 1945. He disembarked at Toranto and caught up with 2/6 GR a few days before the Battle of Medecina. The Second Battalion was by now at the top of its form and it must have been hard for Roger to gain a foothold in the battalion hierarchy during the short and extremely violent period leading up to the final disengagement in Italy. He remembered the period directly after the 09 May ceasefire with greater clarity, when the battalion moved to prepare a defensive position on Italy's eastern border with Slovenia. After the ferocity of the recent battle, they enjoyed contemplating their survival and he remembered basking in the warmth of the Italian orchards and the kindness and natural hospitality of the local people.

After Italy a series of troop movements brought the battalion across the world via Lebanon, Palestine, Syria, Abbotabad, Secunderbad and finally to Delhi in February 1947. By this time India and the Indian Army regiments were gripped by the whole agony of Partition. During this unbelievably chaotic period Roger, now Operations Officer and Adjutant, took on a central organising role in the battalion. His huge capacity for creating order from chaos kept them as an entity; drafts of men and officers were demobilising, or transferring from



the Indian Army to the British against a landscape of terrible inter-communal bloodshed. The villages and communities around their camp in Delhi at Anand Parbat were seething with violence and without much warning or rehearsal rifle companies were “pitchforked” (as the regimental newsletter

put it) into the blood-spattered confrontations, which characterised partition. Violence in Delhi and the surrounding villages continued to grow, magistrates were no longer asked to authorise the garrison to take action, rifle companies fired on rioters day after day and all that stood between the survival of the city and total anarchy was a handful of battalions.

On the final day of the British Raj 2/6 GR played a crucial role. At last light on the eve of the handover ceremony, 2/6 buglers rehearsed by Roger sounded the retreat for the last time at the Red Fort and, after it had been hauled down forever, the Union flag was "secured" by Roger for the mess where it was proudly displayed; it is now in the Gurkha Museum. At the Independence ceremony on the following day (15 August 1947), the battalion marched through huge crowds to get to the Red Fort and as the population swarmed forward to touch the Indian tricolor, the rifle companies had to grip each other's weapons to prevent the ranks from being broken apart. In his characteristic way Roger wanted very little credit for himself in the hectic day-to-day planning and execution of these actions, but as Adjutant he had played the key role in what was a moment of history.

In March 1948 2/6 GR embarked on the P&O Ship Strathnaver at Bombay. The battalion was once again on the move - to Singapore, to Hong Kong and finally back to Kluang in Malaya. Roger was still adjutant during this strange period of transition when the battalion was frequently quartered under canvas and dinner nights were held under rotting EPIP tentage, the officers in Canadian pattern mess kit, the mess sergeant Riluram Dogra, locally recruited during the Indian Army period, still wearing a tall turban and long frocked jacket and, as mess call sounded, Roger teaching the naya Sahibs how to tie their black ties.

In May 1966 during "Confrontation", Roger took command of the Second Battalion. We were based in Brunei and had just moved from our previous operational area in Sarawak to Sepulot in Sabah with rifle companies at Pensiangan and Long Pa Sia. The energy had gone from the Borneo campaign and political processes were taking primacy over every military operation. Roger's precise interpretation of the politics and what our military posture should be was always spot-on. In the ops room he had the calmness that goes with intelligence, he could always

see beyond small things and small people to the bigger issues. He was also a man of action. Visiting B company at Long Pa Sia his RAF Single Pioneer, a notoriously accident-prone aircraft, stalled in a down draft and crashed gently onto the top of the jungle canopy in pouring rain. We girded up a search party and set off into the darkening jungle soon enough finding the plane - but where was Roger? Meanwhile a rather stormy CO and his bedraggled pilot had already arrived in camp. Roger had taken over from the shocked pilot, smashed his way out of the cockpit, supervised their escape to the ground, pulled out his compass and marched towards B company. Later the scurrilous element of the ops room had some fun rehearsing various versions of the exchange, which may have taken place in the tree tops with the hapless pilot.

After "Confrontation" we moved to Kluang. Two issues occupied Roger - the operational lessons from Vietnam and amalgamation. In planning the latter, his structured thinking provided us with a wonderfully precise and carefully staged plan. Across the Brigade, Roger's command of the detail and the social implications of forced redundancies made him a key figure. Brigade Staff came to him for a read-through before issuing their instructions. Meanwhile the war in Vietnam continued to generate new ideas and lessons on the Vietcong's Maoist-style strategies. To test these ideas he staged a detailed and carefully planned reconstruction of a Vietcong defensive position as a live exercise including a bombing run by the RAF (they missed with their only bomb).

Roger was not a *gaphe-manche* or a garrulous man and yet there were flutters of anxiety for the young officer when his little black note book appeared in which he remembered all things, and those things left undone would be sternly noted. But he was also a shrewdly humorous observer of human nature; he had a happy and successful family life and engaged in a huge range of interests beyond the regiment. For those who knew him and served him in the battalion he was the very best sort of commanding officer; resolute, intelligent, fatherly and enormously caring. He will always represent key chapters of our history during which he gave us all he had. What more could we ask for? We shall remember him.

Lieutenant H K (Henry) Maxwell (6GR)

Lieutenant Henry Kennedy Maxwell was born in the Naval Hospital at Haslar near Portsmouth in 1927 where the family lived, his father being the Surgical Specialist. They returned some 20 years later when his father was the Surgeon Rear Admiral in charge. Bosun Maxwell, as he was known in 1/6GR, went to Kelly College and after leaving school enlisted in The Queen's Regiment at Wrotham. Despite his naval upbringing, his purpose however was to get an Indian Army Cadetship to the officer school at Bangalore. His cousin, Charlie Gray of Skinner's Horse had successfully persuaded him to join the Indian Army and opt for Gurkhas - Bosun having little interest in horses!

Commissioned from Bangalore in 1946, Bosun sailed to Rangoon where he joined 1/6GR, who were in post-war Burma to assist that country's transition to independence. Under the able command of Jim Robertson, the Battalion was itself in a state of transition with war-time officers and men of different regiments arriving from a turbulent and recently partitioned India.

The Battalion moved to Sungei Patani in Northern Malaya in 1948 and were immediately deployed to secure the plantations and tin mines against a well organized insurgency. It was a dangerous time for the fragile post-1947 Gurkha Battalions.

The newly formed officer cadre and the post-war intake of new subalterns including Bosun, had little time to knit together. Professionally, they were rapidly altering their modus operandi from war-fighting to countering insurgency and all this was further exacerbated by a huge draft of untrained recruits arriving in every unit.

I/6GR were lucky to have an exceptionally gifted commanding officer and at platoon level junior officers soon learned to cope. In 1948 the tempo of contacts was accelerating and the British responded with massive sweep operations supported from the air. By now commanding his own platoon, Bosun (aged 21) wrote in a rather understated fashion to his parents:

We're off again tomorrow morning early for another spell in the jungle - this time with air support and strike aircraft. It's generally good fun especially being out on your own.

But by the summer of 1948 I/6GR were facing large and well organised Communist Units and the insurgency was approaching a tipping point. The insurgent force was experienced and also well armed. Fire fights took place in the jungle and the plantation areas and the CT were standing their ground and returning effective fire.

In another, even more understated-letter, Bosun told his parents:

Saw rather too much of the jungle last week; the mosquitoes were almost unbearable although we applied insect repellent at hourly intervals. Our op got quite a headline in the local papers.

In reality Bosun's platoon had been ambushed by a well-armed and determined Communist unit. His leading scouts had returned fire and thrown grenades. In the fire fight that followed Bosun lost two killed including Lieutenant (KGO) Randoj Gurung, his right hand man. Carrying their dead and wounded the platoon managed to return to the base.

Bosun Maxwell had joined the Battalion at a time when the outcome of Malayan Emergency was far from certain. He came at the leading edge of the post-war short service officers who were characterised by their courage, enthusiasm and their ability to adapt to a very foreign environment. He sailed to UK on demobilisation in 1948 to take up a Diploma of Education at Trinity College Dublin after which he became a successful and much loved schoolteacher. He died on 11 February 2013.

Lieutenant Colonel D J (Trigger) Tregenza (6GR)

Editors note. *This abridged account of Trigger's life is taken from several sources and I especially wish to thank Vyvyan Robinson and Alistair Maclean for their contributions. The largest and most important source however was Trigger himself, referring to his own 90 page (112,000 words) biography, which I received last year from Jennifer Tregenza. Written in a bluff but precise style, it's a tremendous record of the troubled post-war period in South East Asia and beyond. The brief extracted version below hopefully reflects something of its historical value as well as Trigger's extraordinary path through life.*

Lieutenant Colonel David John Tregenza, a much loved and popular Cornishman, was 42 years a soldier with 5th Royal Gurkha Rifles (Frontier Force), the South Waziristan Scouts and 6th Queen Elizabeth's Own Gurkha Rifles. Commissioned in 1944, he served on the North West Frontier, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaya, Borneo, Hong Kong, and Oman. From the visiting General to the newest subaltern he was always 'Trigger', a true and humorous companion, a fine soldier and greatly missed by his family and friends. His funeral took place at Mawnan Parish Church. His Union flag-covered coffin carried a 5th Royal Gurkha Rifles topi and a case with his medals.

Tregenza is a good Cornish name and the family originally came from St. Stephens in Brannel in 1665. Trigger's grandfather had been a builder and fish merchant, a very public spirited man who was a Justice of the Peace, County Alderman and Mayor of Penzance in 1935. His mother was from a Quaker family.

Trigger was born in the School House at Roche in Cornwall on 10 June 1926, in the middle of the General Strike. His father, who was the Headmaster of the local Church School, intercepted a note in the village that day, which declared "master has a son". After several moves Trigger followed his father and uncles to Truro School as a boarder. Being tall and well developed he successfully presented himself for enlistment before reaching the age of 17, the recruiting Officer having phoned the Truro headmaster, who assured him that Trigger was "a good lad".

Although pressed to enlist in the Welsh Guards, he opted for the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry and in summer 1943 boarded a train from Liverpool Street Station to join the Light Infantry Training Centre in Colchester. Thirty men were accommodated in the old cavalry barracks, sleeping on two tier bunks with straw palliasses and no sheets. Only one man, John Cross, who later joined the 9th Gurkhas, wore pyjamas, the rest slept in their long johns.

After initial training, when he met Alistair Maclean, he decided to apply for a commission but thought it wise to declare his correct age first. The Pre-Officer Cadet Training Unit at Wrotham Camp in Kent, was hidden in Nissan huts among the woods. According to Trigger they were a motley crew drawn from all regiments of the British Army and he was the youngest. Here training was more advanced - battle craft, assault course, bayonet training, live firing, grenade throwing, night exercises, as well as drill and PT. Towards the end, after a

lecture from an old Indian Army Major on the Indian Army, they fell in on parade and the Sergeant Major shouted "volunteers for the Indian Army two paces step forward march". Trigger stepped forward.

Before sailing to India Trigger went home on leave, dressed in "field service marching order" plus rifle for a few happy last days with his parents. Then one sunny afternoon in early April 1943, the Indian Army contingent marched down to Euston station in uniform to catch the train to Liverpool. They boarded the SS Stratheden, a liner converted to a troopship. For the month-long journey to India, officer cadets were allotted a deck space deep in the bowels of the ship beside the magazine. They slept in hammocks, which according to Trigger were very comfortable. Because of its greater speed, the Stratheden detached from the convoy and passed through the Gibraltar Strait in darkness. At the island of Pantelleria they encountered enemy submarines and from their deck well below the waterline, the troops experienced the unforgettable shock of friendly depth charges.

At Bombay the rail journey to Belgaum on the Deccan Queen took a couple of days, sleeping in a four-berth cabin with a bucket of ice to try and keep cool. For meals they would stop at a station and eat in the restaurant. A photo records Alistair MacLean, who had also joined the 5th Royal Gurkha Rifles, and Trigger standing on the footplate of a locomotive, which they drove for a short distance.

They were commissioned on 22 October 1944. Trigger's first choice was the 5th Royal Gurkha Rifles (Frontier Force), because he liked the Frontier Force title and the look of the Gurkhas. He was accepted. After the passing out parade and the inspection, they marched past in slow and quick time. Next day, when Trigger cycled out past the Quarter Guard (10th Baluch Regiment) wearing his 2nd Lieutenant's pip, he received his first salute from the sentry. He had made it at last - aged 18 years 4 months!

Accompanied by Alistair Maclean, Trigger headed for Abbotabad the 5/6th Gurkha depot. This turned out to be an attractive garrison in the foothills of the Himalayas and therefore much cooler than Belgaum. There was a Brigade Headquarters, Military Hospital and the depots of the 5RGR (FF), 6GR and 13FF Rifles. The cantonment included three Officers' Messes, bungalows, Church, Club, polo ground and playing fields and in the distance, the Thandiani range of hills covered in snow in the winter months, where he was later to trek.

Alistair and Trigger were each allocated a tent with mud walls and a bearer. The 5th had a comfortable Mess and beautiful garden. Mess life was very formal, with dinner nights on four nights, and a guest night on the fifth night with band in attendance, at which they wore green patrols. At the weekends mufti was permitted. The majority of the regular 5th Officers were bachelors married to the regiment, new 2nd Lieutenants kept pretty quiet for the first month and conversation was not encouraged at breakfast.

Trigger was a Company Officer for six months, his task was to learn Gurkhali, to get to know the men, study the regimental history, talk to his orderly, and so on. Not much has changed; except newly joined officers were not allowed into the cookhouse for the first nine months until the men had got to know them and Gurkha ranks shaved their heads except for a small tuft of hair at the back, with which they could be drawn up to heaven.

Like his Father, Trigger was constantly on the move, and in 1945, having passed his language exams and having gained acceptance into what was the most operationally renowned Indian Army regiment of that time, he was ready to encounter the chaotic post-war environment of Southern Asia. First to the South Waziristan Scouts, where he learned a new language Pushtun, and acquired a new set of unusual uniform: pagri, shirt outside, Sam Browne belt, shorts, stockings and chaplis for gashting (patrolling) and at other times pagris, kamiz (shirt outside), baggy trousers and chaplis. Then in 1946 he was posted to Sumatra to be ADC to the Division Commander, General Hedley, according to Trigger - a great chap who liked to relax over a good curry with his senior officers on a leisure boat run by the Japanese. Then in 1947 with 2/5 RGR to Japan, quartered in a factory at Okayama and on with C company to Shikoku Island, where he became a detached commander, living in the splendor of "Flag Staff House" complete with the outgoing Brigadier's house staff.

Towards the end of 1947 Trigger returned to India to transfer to the British Army. In Trigger's own biographical account:

My new regiment, the 2nd Bn 6th Gurkha Rifles had been selected to transfer to the British Army. 6th GR and 5th RGR (FF) shared the same home station in Abbotabad for many years and had much in common. The battalion was commanded by Lt. Col. NFB. Shaw DSO - a decent chap. We were stationed in a camp on Delhi Ridge. Life in 6GR was very formal, - on entering the Mess before dinner junior officers would stand to attention and address the senior officer present with "Good evening Sir". No one was allowed to leave the Mess on formal nights before the Commanding Officer and, unfortunately, he often chose to stay late! In January 1948, I witnessed the parade at which the last British troops left India, passing through the Gateway of India for the last time. A most impressive affair at which there was a Brigade of Indian Army troops drawn up who "presented Arms" as the 1st Bn the Somerset Light Infantry slow marched through the Gateway, before boarding the troopship, which also carried me home.

Trigger's first operational experience in 2/6 GR was in the Malayan Emergency when he was posted to Ferret Force under the overall command of the legendary Lieutenant Colonel WC Walker, who turned out to be rather strict and referred thereafter to Trigger as "the officer who can't read a map".

We usually operated in our small sections of ten to twelve men, initially in the Cameron Highlands area, then Pasir Pjang Forest Reserve and Tronoh Tin Mine. Regrettably Corporal

Bhaktabhadur Thapa, an excellent NCO in my group, caught Wyles disease by bathing in water infested by rats. He developed a fever and Jim Vickers and I helped carry him out of the jungle, but sadly he died in Ipoh Military Hospital a few days later.

Trigger's service with the Brigade of Gurkhas through the Malayan Emergency including a posting to the Depot at Sungei Patani and a brief spell with the Royal Artillery as part of the experiment involving 7GR. His account from which much of this tribute is derived - is a treasure, especially for 6GR whose effective history of this period has still to be written.

Like Trigger himself, his record is original, his recollection of people and their nature sharply observed and accurately

Major J G A (John) Lucas MC (6GR)

Major John George Anderson Lucas MC was born at Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire on 25 April 1921. He was educated at Mayfield School, Sussex and joined a territorial battalion of the Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Light Infantry with his brother Geoffrey. On becoming a regular he was stationed in Northern Ireland where he befriended an RAF pilot at nearby Aldergrove, who provided the occasional seat for a flight to Liverpool and the taste of 'real beer'.

John's first posting in the Far East was to the Khyber Pass. His preparations included the purchase of a 'pith' helmet to protect him from the sun. Having failed to check dress regulations for the type of 'pith' helmet required, he discovered on board ship, on the order to 'don pith helmets', that his was in fact a Governor's plumed helmet, which generated much uncharitable amusement from his fellow passengers. A Saville Row tailor had succeeded in reducing his old redundant stock on the trusting Lucas; John's solution was to toss it overboard.

John was quick to volunteer for service with Wingate's Chindits and joined the 3rd Battalion of 6th Gurkha Rifles (3/6GR) for the second 'Chindit Expedition'. The Chindits were air-landed deep behind enemy lines where they created defended bases from which they operated to disrupt and cut the communications of the Japanese forces facing north towards the Chinese. In March 1944, 3/6GR, part of 77th Indian Infantry Brigade was flown into a landing zone named 'Broadway'. Many gliders were destroyed and considerable casualties sustained, but a stronghold was established. John's fondness for the mule as the beast of burden in the jungle was, like most Chindits, genuine. But his first experience of them in the gliders was terrifying. Fearful that the mules might break loose and cause havoc he had his revolver at the ready throughout the flight.

A Chindit Column operated in the most difficult conditions, without regular support, behind enemy lines and having to contend with extremely rough terrain and

recorded. He was a deeply committed Christian. His loved the rhythms and routines of regimental life. He also had a wise understanding of the invisible Gurkha system, which governed and took care of day to day matters as well as sorting out some darker things. He tended to upset the nakedly ambitious by reacting to them fearlessly and honestly, speaking what came into his head. For the young officers of the 1960s, Trigger was a legend. When he came in, the mess sprang to life, he would unfasten his belt and slap his stomach with a greeting addressed to all. He laughed uproariously; he made us laugh uproariously; he enriched our lives.



impenetrable jungle. In the monsoon resupply of clothing was difficult and many were lousy and soaked to the skin much of the time. Columns were required to strike and move on quickly to avoid detection. Many sick or wounded were left behind in order to maintain rapid movement. John contracted sand-fly fever, a very disabling illness, and was left behind, unconscious with only a rifle, a few rounds of ammunition and some water; he was effectively 'left for dead'. Days later, having regained consciousness he felt strong enough to set out on his own to find his company. After a terrifying march in enemy held territory, this remarkable young officer caught up and rejoined the main body of his company. It is said that on his arrival he looked like 'death' so much so that some of his comrades fainted with surprise to see him. A few more days later, John was back in action at Natygon.

At first, the issue weapon for officers was a revolver, but John felt that it was inadequate and was soon seen carrying a rifle like his men. This was at first met with disapproval, but it soon caught on and even Brigadier Mike Calvert could be seen with rifle in hand.

On 14 and 15 June 3/6GR were ordered to attack Natygon, an important stage in the capture of the Mogaung bridgehead, where later two members of the Battalion were to win the Victoria Cross. John Lucas took command of A Company after the Officer Commanding had been wounded. A Company was pinned down by machine gun and sniper fire from a determined and well concealed enemy in thick jungle immediately to their front. In an inspirational and selfless action and despite being wounded, John Lucas led a charge to clear the enemy to their front ensuring the advance that was in danger of faltering, maintained its momentum. For this selfless action John was awarded the Military Cross. Lucas, by now badly wounded himself, was ordered by the Commanding Officer to the casualty station; he went reluctantly, unwilling to leave A Company.

Eight days later on 23 June, John was back in action, this time alongside Captain Michael Allmand in the battle for Mogaung. It was here, after the last of a series of incredible acts of bravery that Allmand was awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross. On the same day in a different part of the battlefield, Rifleman Tulbahadur Pun also won a Victoria Cross. John Lucas was promoted to Major in the field and continued

with 3/6GR until they were pulled out of the line and sent back to India for rest and reorganisation.

Travelling back to England from India he recalled that he had a grandstand view of Bombay "from the arse end of a troopship". On arrival in Southampton, he was met by his father who walked straight past him not recognising his son who weighed less than seven and a half stone.

At the end of the war John was involved in the investigation of artefacts stolen by the Nazis in Europe, a role he did not enjoy. He retired from the Army to run his family furniture business in Aylesbury, where he was managing director. His sense of fair play and kindness made him a much loved 'boss' and a steadfast supporter of the 'underdog'. His outside interests ranged from being the founding member of the Aylesbury's rugby club to the 'round table' and many others for which he will be fondly remembered.

Compassion and modesty were important to John and these values never left him throughout the campaign in Burma and in life afterwards. It was said that he attributed his promotion to Major as "desperation due to casualties" and his MC "to the artistic writings of James Lumley".

John Lucas was married in 1952 to Barbara Thrasher who survives him together with their devoted son and two daughters.

Major L E (Lawrence) Pottinger LVO MBE (6GR)

Major Lawrence Eldred Pottinger LVO MBE was not a typical war-time officer. He was a gentle person, small in stature and not notably athletic, who avoided the floodlit centre stage that attracted his more boisterous colleagues. Nevertheless he touched our lives, and was loved and respected by Gurkhas and British Officers across the Brigade.

Lawrence was born in Teignmouth, Devon in 1921. He was a direct descendant of the East India Company Pottingers, Lieutenant General Sir Henry, who went on to become Governor of Hong Kong in 1843 and Eldred Pottinger, the Hero of Herat, whose actions during the siege of that city are still a legend. Following the tradition of this illustrious family, Lawrence's father Robert was Agent for the Resident (or Governor) to the Bombay Presidency. Lawrence however grew up in Devon with his grandmother and followed the path of previous Pottingers to Cheltenham College. By the time he had finished school, Britain was once again at war. After a brief spell of teaching in a local prep school and in the Home Guard, Lawrence was awarded a Cadetship for the Indian Army and set off by steamer - for the first time, to the country where generations of his family had made their name over the past century.



Lawrence's war-time experience was confused and turbulent. Commissioned to the 9th Gurkhas, he was transferred to 4/9GR to reinforce that battalion prior to taking part in the second Chindit operation. Having survived the gruelling pre-operation training under Wingate's eccentric supervision, Lawrence deployed with 49 Column. After

supervising the Air Base Organisation at Hailakandi, Lawrence was taken seriously ill (possibly diphtheria) and evacuated. In 1946 he was posted to GHQ New Delhi as a Grade 3 staff officer.¹

After the war in Burma was over, India seethed with civil violence. As the process of partition continued, millions of Muslim refugees fled across India to the supposed sanctuary of Pakistan. By now transferred to 1/9GR, Lawrence wrote one of the most remarkable eyewitness accounts of the violence and the agony of his transition to the post 1947 Brigade of Gurkhas.² As 9 GR attempted to secure the rail arteries for the mass migration, Lawrence witnessed awful events on the western bound trains that passed through his area. Each train was stacked with passengers, refugees huddled perilously on charpoys lashed to the roof and hung in clusters to the doorposts of the carriages. Those who managed to get inside, were packed in with their bundles until they touched the ceiling. On one occasion he came upon a "ghost train" halted on the line with no sound or movement except for the buzzing of flies. It had been attacked further up the line and its passengers had been literally put to the sword including all the women and their children.³

In December 1947 Lawrence sailed from India to Rangoon on the British India Steam Navigation ship Ethiopia just in time for another independence imbroglio in Burma. Although he travelled with a noisy crowd of young officers (Lys, McGurk, Cross, Whitehead, Jenkins) they had embarked with heavy hearts. As well as the horrors of partition, they had all left their respective regiments in an unbearably sad state of low morale and resentment. As Lawrence explained, the GOs and the men simply could not understand why the British officers were abandoning them at such a dire moment when the entire sub-continent seemed to be falling apart. The sense of hurt was most particularly felt in 9GR; due to a Brigade prejudice against Thakurs and Chettris, the 9th were not even allowed to ask for volunteers for the British Gurkhas, which was an additional blow to both officers and men.

Despite these adversities, Lawrence Pottinger maintained a strong sense of the ridiculous. At Rangoon their personal kit was looted from the Customs Warehouse and for several weeks Lawrence kept an eye out for "any Burman wearing my excessively gaudy Cheltenham blazer" - but to no avail. At 1/6 GR, the new officers arrived just in time for the BOs mess Christmas party where, after the briefest of introductions, Lawrence was instructed to brush up his Scottish Country

dancing. He commented later, "I loathed Highland dancing!" - ten officers bobbing and prancing under the hot afternoon sun to the earnest encouragement of Jim Robertson, "perhaps that was one of the reasons why I have not advanced further in the Army".

In the Malayan chapter of his life, Lawrence established himself as the quiet, observant, acutely witty member of the post Indian army group of officers in the mess. He did his share of jungle bashing, but he excelled as a staff officer dealing with procedures, events, people, which he did with precision, an interest in detail and an urge for getting things right. To the new arrivals of the '50s and '60s, Lawrence was the regiment's memory. Their initiation to the tiny permanent cadre included a session with Lawrence, when he gently explained the Regimental lore, Gurkha kaida, the provenance of the artefacts and the silver, how to behave in the mess and so forth. In the evenings he was to be found - before dinner, after dinner and almost until dawn, seated in an easy chair on the mess veranda with Ian Brebner, Henry Hayward-Surry and Colin Scott, each clutching a brandy ginger, arguing and agonising through the night. Hayward-Surry was the mischievous provocateur, Brebner the appeaser and Pottinger always economical with words but generally having the last say. The only perceptible effect of the alcohol was the increasing slowness of their delivery.

In the 1950s, 1/6GR had become something of a forcing house, endowed with several talented and ambitious officers making their name, who went on to become successful commanders. During this time the Battalion was fortunate also to have Lawrence Pottinger, whose calm and thoughtful presence had a soothing effect on what was at times a hyperactive mess. In an ideal world, every regiment needs an older officer with these characteristics to maintain the humanity of the group.

When he retired from 6GR, Lawrence became the Protocol Officer for the Hong Kong government working in almost the same building that his ancestor Sir Henry Pottinger had occupied in the 1840s. It was a perfect job for him demanding an astute sense of history, precision with detail and an interested concern for people.

Lawrence Pottinger died 03 August 2013 in Melbourne, Australia. It is a testament to this quietly spoken, gentle officer that so many have written with individual memories of him.

¹ Indian Army List

² Thanks to Paul Pettigrew who found his account: L E Pottinger 6GR, *Coming Across*, THE KUKRI. 1970 Page 45- 49.

³ Pottinger *ibid*.

Captain Bakansing Gurung (6GR)

On Thursday, 5 September 2013, lying down for a rest after his morning meal, Captain (QGO) Bakhansing Gurung, died. He was, English reckoning, in his 99th year, in Nepalese reckoning in his 100th. (The Nepalese count pregnancies in lunar months as opposed to most other people who count them in solar ones.)

I wrote his early history¹ and if any particular person should have had a big accolade during his service, it was he in that, without the trouble he took, the loyalty he showed and the courage it took to do both, those volunteering for British Army service in Rangoon in 1947, would have been far, far fewer. It therefore gladdened my heart, I having known him well for the past 37 years and not so well for more than 60, when Brigadier John Anderson and Majors Gopal Gurung and Gyanbahadur Gurung visited him just prior to the main event in the 2013 6th Gurkha Rifles Durbar. The recognition given to him can only have made his remaining days the richer as he played back to himself all that had happened upstairs in his room.

The news of his death spread quickly. My surrogate son and my eyes, took me to his house on the following day. Many people from far and wide had gathered. The corpse was still upstairs when we arrived shortly after midday. A group of people, quite how near family-wise or relative-wise I do not know, filled the downstairs corridor where, people talked socially. Some of the elder women had unbraided their hair so it hung down loosely. One was weeping almost hysterically, comforted by her youngest son, while the rest looked stern and mournful. None had taken out nose ring or ear ornaments: they were the daughters, all in their high seventies or eighties.

And then there was a shuffling and heavy footsteps as the corpse, on a bier, was brought downstairs. Bakhansing was a heavy man and the stairs had a sharp bend in them so the journey was not easy. The corpse was brought down and laid in front of me, purely by chance as I had been told, first to sit then to stand at a certain place. It was covered with a rough cloth, which had to be properly tucked around it before another, dark coloured piece of material, the pitambar or normally orange shroud, was wrapped around it. Ropes were pushed under the body from one side and recovered by someone on the other. About eight lateral ties were made and some lineal ones, but not over the head. Wailing crescendoed while this was done. Instructions were given from some of the senior lookers on. About ten minutes later it was lifted up and, as it was taken past me, I saluted it.

During the time we were there Buddhiman explained to people individually why I was wearing a black suit and black tie: it was mourning dress of the English, always worn to show respect to the dead. No one, not even one time Gurkha Majors, had any idea of that.

I did not see what was happening once it was put on the ground outside. Buddhiman came to me with a bag containing a



mala. 'I'll call you at the end. It will be less crowded then,' he said as he hustled out to take part in the ceremonies. Quite a long time afterwards he came for me and, helping me to keep my balance in the throng, he took me to the feet of the corpse to lay my wreath. I noticed that the corpse was covered with wreaths and flowers. I added mine, made namasté, was led to the head where I saluted again and led round the other side, having to make a circle around it and led away. We went past the truck that was to take corpse and mourners to Ram Ghat near the Sete Khola.

In front of the truck was a huge photo of Bakhansing with his medals. He would have been the last Gurkha alive to have worn the 1937 Frontier Medal. That caused interest two years before, when one of his grandsons had taken his oath at the recruits' kasam khane parade and Major Rick Beven had placed Bakhansing the proud grandfather with his medals as near the inspecting General as he could.

The bier was loaded onto the wagon and was driven along the feeder road. It stopped and waited while two young Lamas marched in step blowing horns. It is a difficult feat to master, to blow a horn without a break with no bag as a piper has and holding 'reserve' air in puffed up cheeks while the lungs are refilled. They

¹ JP Cross, 2007. *Gurkhas at War*. Pen and Sword Books UK

wore the orange dress all Lamas wear. A man not in Lama clothes came behind them beating a gong. Behind him came a woman with a stick on which a white sheet was draped on top of which was a Nepali topi. I had never seen Bakhansing with one. Even when he wore daura sural he wore a white brimmed hat. Behind her came five women bearing the white sheet, draped on five upright pieces of wood that is essential to guide the man's soul in the direction it needs to go. I believe the soul is meant to go along it then fly free, but it will not go to its final destination till after the arghau which is due on 12, 13 and 14 September in the Lamjung Community Centre, 20 minutes' walk away from my house. I'll be there on two of those days. By then his sons will have reached Nepal from wherever they had been, certainly some in England.

A good two plus hours after the corpse had been put on the bier upstairs the procession started on its way to the place where corpses are burnt. Buddhiman took me home then went on for the next part of the ceremony. He did not come back till the following morning. In fact he was there till 1000 when he was called away to the arghau of a friend whose eyes and nose had been destroyed by a buffalo's horn. A sheep, due to be slaughtered at the ceremony, could only be if it was quiet. It was nothing but bleating and trying to get away. When Buddhiman reached it, it became quiet and nuzzled its nose in his hand. There was no need to quieten it so it was ready for slaughter. Buddhiman spent the rest of the night there, getting home at 0500.

John Cross

Captain Eric Lanning (6GR)

Captain Eric Pearce Lanning served with 6GR during the Second World War from 1942 to 1946. Eric was born in 1921 in Shanghai and returned to UK to be educated at King Edward's School Bath. During the Second World War he served with the Regiment in Burma rising to the rank of Captain. He left 6GR in 1946 for the Colonial Service to become a senior District Office

in Nigeria and later worked for the British Council in Ethiopia. On return to UK, he held a post in the MOD until retirement, when he returned to Bath. He was a charming raconteur and is sadly missed by all who knew him. He had two sons and four grandchildren, his wife Helen, having predeceased him. He remained a member of our Association until the last.

Captain D C G (Derek) Mole (6GR)

Captain Derek Charles Gerard Mole 1/6 GR, was born in Wellington, India in 1925. His father Brigadier Gerard Mole, formerly of the Royal Ulster Rifles, had been stationed in India during the 1920s and returned to the UK in 1935. After his early childhood in India Derek moved with the family to the South of England and went to school at Mount St Mary's in Yorkshire. By the time he finished school, Britain was mobilizing for war and Derek Mole enlisted in the Queen's Regiment before sailing to India. In 1944 he was commissioned to 1/5 RGR, and in the same year his father, commanding 129 Brigade, was killed in a multiple mine explosion at Brunssum.

After the war in Burma, India hastily prepared for independence. During the chaos and bloodshed of partition Derek Mole opted to transfer to the British Gurkhas. At that time, 1/6 GR was stationed in Rangoon. In common with most Gurkha Battalions, they kept a visitors' book on the hall table in the British Officers Mess, which Derek signed "on joining" and dated 27 December 1947 with JL Vickers and RGH Golightly. Soon after, 1/6 GR sailed on the Dunera heading for Sungei Patani in Kedah, Northern Malaya.

Prior to the start of the emergency, Malaya was proving to be a dangerous station. 1/6 GR was swiftly deployed to protect British planters and mining staff who were attacked and intimidated by local gangs. This violence turned out to be the leading edge of Chin Peng's uprising. Meanwhile 1/6 GR was in a weak state with a high proportion of new recruits but very few experienced NCOs to train them. After a spell of regimental



duty with 1/6 GR Derek Mole left the British Army and joined the Royal Malayan Police Service at a time when they were very much at the front lines of the counter-insurgent campaign.

Derek Mole retired in 1957 under the terms offered for the "Malayanisation" of the police force and returned to UK. He was by then the police officer commanding the Kulai Division. Since the 1960s, Derek has lived in the family home near Taunton where he had a job as a civil servant in the Meat and Livestock and Commission. He died in November 2013 and will be greatly missed by his wife Valerie, their surviving six children, eleven grandchildren and a great-grandson.

Major AD (David) Pritchard 2nd Bn 7th DEO Gurkha Rifles (7GR)

David was born in York on the 22 July 1930. He was the only son of Mervyn and Kathleen Pritchard who were farmers. He went to school at Christs Hospital and then on to the Royal Military College Sandhurst in 1949; he was in the sixth intake after the war. He was commissioned on 9 February 1951 and was posted to the 2nd Battalion 7th Gurkha Rifles. He sailed out to Malaya on the Empire Fowey, a troop ship, with Jumbo Oliphant. On arrival at Singapore they were met by Alastair Rose in a ¾ ton truck and were driven up Malaya to their respective battalions. The 2nd Battalion was in Bentong.

David would have been posted to a Rifle Company and learnt both his jungle craft and also the basics of Gurkhali as in those days few in his Company would have spoken English. He would also have attended the language course in Sungei Patani after about a year in the Battalion. In March 1953 he was made Assistant Adjutant and not long after took over as Signals Officer. He did some basic Signals training in Seremban with 63 Gurkha Brigade Signal Troop. It was during a signal exercise when David, carrying a heavy wireless set, was heard shouting for help. He had fallen into one of the many bore holes found in that area. He was trapped but luckily held up by his wireless set and was rescued. The holes were deep and it might not have been such a lucky escape. The Battalion was in Bentong and David would from time to time play rugby in KL. Mike Barrett well remembers David telling him about driving 'home' after the match and the following few beers. He had a 60 mile drive on a road with multiple sharp bends and two high passes round Frazer's Hill and of course this was during the Emergency when roads could be ambushed by the CT. He had to keep waking himself up and make it back in time for first parade at 7000.

In 1955 he had home leave and on return was appointed temporary Captain and posted to be ADC to the Commander in Chief Far East Land Forces based in Singapore. There are many stories of David's time as ADC but shining through comes the David we all knew so well. He was charming, relaxed, always undertook any task with enthusiasm and had a healthy disregard, in the nicest possible way, for officialdom. It was whilst on an official trip to New Zealand with his General that David woke late on the morning of their departure. He had to move fast as he and the General were due at the airport for the official send off. There was no time to assist the General who had to pack his own case and indeed had to help David finish his. Once in the car and speeding along the General enquired if all the cases were aboard. It turned out that they were not and the car had to speed back to collect the missing item. By now David was probably feeling under some pressure. On arrival there was the official line up to bid farewell and once the cases were loaded David allowed himself a moment to take his cap off and wipe his brow. Out fell his tooth brush and toothpaste which in the rush he had forgotten to pack so had tucked them under his hat. With the VIPs watching he just scooped them up and replaced them under his hat. Later the General said that it was not often that a General had to do the packing for his ADC.

In November 1956 David was made Adjutant to Colonel Pockson in Tan Mei Camp Hong Kong. It was not the easiest of postings as all the Company Commanders were very much senior to him, some with war service. They did not take kindly to being told what to do and David did not have an easy ride. He seemed to spend a lot of time visiting Hong Kong Island and when asked why replied that he was visiting his 'Chinese Cousin'. This of course turned out to be Jenipher.

He did plan and oversee the move of the Battalion from Hong Kong to Mersing Road Camp, Kluang, Malaya in 1957. The move went well which was great credit to David. He then handed over to Mike Henderson and took over the Signals Platoon for a very short time before handing it over to Bob Wardlaw. While he was Signals Officer David was told by the CO, Maynard Pockson, that he wanted some BT ration packs for Tac HQ as he was tired of Bhat. David duly got these but failed to instruct the cook at the HQ what to do with them. When served up the CO declined to eat the resulting mess but David happily finished it off. On enquiring what he had eaten he found out that it was curried ginger pudding. The other abiding memory of David was during one afternoon when the monsoon rain was hammering down; David borrowed a chinese labourer's hoe and went to work to dig a very large hole in the garden. When he came in soaking wet and covered in mud he said it just felt right!

It was during this time that the Regiment had its 50th Anniversary Ball held in the Mess at Mersing Road. David was to collect the oysters from Princes in Singapore. He set off in the back of a truck safely ensconced in an arm chair taken from the Mess. He returned with the oysters but had forgotten to bring back the tool for opening them. This resulted in all and sundry being employed trying to open them with Kukris and knives without breaking the shells. Not long after he left to go home to UK on long leave and get married to Jenipher (The Chinese Cousin!).

On return from leave David was posted to assist in the raising of the Gurkha ASC which was officered by RASC officers who had no experience of Gurkhas. David was one of four British Officers attached to the Gurkha ASC to be the liaison officer to assist and educate the British Seconded Officers in the ways of their Gurkha soldiers and of the Kaidas in general. As a past GASC Officer put it, 'The Regiment owes a huge debt of gratitude to David for the tremendous assistance that he so readily gave during those formative years.'

Once again David was singled out to be an ADC this time to the Commissioner General South East Asia. As far as history relates there was only one incident that survives from that year and that was when The Commissioner was away on leave in UK. He kindly told David that he could entertain a few friends if he wished. With the Battalion based at Blakang Mati the few friends grew in number and a decent hole was made in The Commissioner's wine cellar which did not altogether please him on his return.

David then rejoined the Battalion on Blakang Mati in Command of A Company. In those days The Battalion spent quite some time over on Singapore on Internal Security exercises. On one of these, that had lasted several days and nights, the Police Station Commander, Inspector Pritam Singh, laid on a large succulent prawn curry for the British Officers. There was, of course, plenty of refreshment. Some of the Officers embarked on a sampan to cross over to Blakang Mati, David sat in the prow and rocked the boat so that it began to ship water sending the sampan wallah apoplectic. David's great cry on these occasions was 'ki swasti nei' which really meant that it was fate and 'what to do la!!'

David was not much involved in the Borneo Campaign but he did once go over and take the Pipes and Drums on a hearts and minds tour of the interior.

A final short story that typifies David. He and Jenipher went to tea with a Ewan Macleod near Dorchester. He was

taken to see the Mill wheel and there below him was a small bird caught up in the current being swept towards the turning wheel. Quick as a flash David said 'hold my legs; and immediately leant over head first to rescue it. Ewan was not paying too great attention but did react fast enough to get hold of David's legs. In he went head first. He was hauled out and then had to explain to Jenipher and his hosts what had happened. The bird swam away unharmed.

David was one of this world's gentlemen. His glass was always half full and he took life as it came with great calmness and with his wonderful sense of humour. He enjoyed life to the full and made the most out of all that came his way. The Regiment has lost a truly marvellous friend who gave us all such joy and pleasure. We will all remember that lovely slow smile of his. We send our heartfelt condolences to Jenipher and the family.

KGR

Major Rex (Pat) Carr MC* (7GR)

Pat was born in Stowlangtoft, Suffolk on 22 October 1922. He was educated at Malvern College after which he immediately joined the Suffolk Regiment at the outbreak of war. After a period of service with the Suffolk's, Pat applied for the Indian Army. He did his Officer training at Mhow before being sent to the 1st Gurkha Regimental Depot at Dharamsala in 1943. Pat was almost immediately posted onto the 4th Battalion 1st Gurkhas in Burma. The 4/1st had been fighting in the Arakan but were flown over and were concentrated at the Hautley Tea Estate near Golaghat some 50 miles North of Dimapur the main British Base and rail head on 17 April 1944 as part of 33 Brigade, 7th Indian Division, to protect this vital area. It was here that Pat would have joined them.

To understand what Pat and the 4/1st were getting into one needs to remember that the Japanese's 31st Division and part of the 15th Division had surrounded Kohima with its small garrison of 3,500 men on 04 April. Although a relief force reached the garrison on 19 April, the Japanese continued to tenaciously hold onto every ridge and hillock in the area and the fighting was to go on for another 50 days.

To take up the story by 15 May the main features overlooking the western approaches to Kohima were in our hands. Colonel Horsford now Commanding 4/1st, states 'We were ordered to take Treasury Hill but although it was reported to be held in strength no patrols had actually been on the hill. It was therefore decided to patrol on to the Hill and A company under Lt RSR Carr was detailed to carry out a night infiltration. Two patrols came back and reported no enemy the third reported some Japs on the hill. I would like to congratulate the excellent way that the A Company patrols carried out their tasks'.

A company (Pat's) with D Company were immediately sent forward to attack and hold the Hill which they did and the whole Battalion then moved in and consolidated the position. An interesting aside is that in the Officer's Mess dug out an enterprising Officer had found and installed a piano which he played lending tone to the scene of savage destruction all around.

The next phase was to clear and capture three features called False Crest, Nose and Basha. Once C Company had seized False Crest, Pat was to pass through and occupy Nose. He achieved this by 0400 The going was very difficult in the dark, the approach lay down a steep hillside, along a stony nullah and then up a steep hill for some 500 feet going as quietly as possible in the steamy wet jungle.

The final mention of Pat is later when the Battalion had moved down to South Burma along the Irrawaddy River. Pat was out patrolling with a detachment when he came across a number of Japanese, in the ensuing fire fight, his detachment killed 19.

Although it is now impossible to delve deeper into what Pat was up to then, what is quite certain is that he fought his way with the 4/1st Gurkhas from Kohima to Rangoon over nearly two years. Officers who served with him testify to his courage, fighting against a ruthless enemy in extremely difficult terrain and in very close contact and this demanded leadership of the highest order. Pat displayed this totally.

VJ day saw the Battalion north of Rangoon where they were rested and refitted before being flown to Siam on 20 October 1945. Their orders were to assist in the round up of the 100,000 odd Japanese who were still at large in Siam and to salvage much of the valuable equipment. This took some six months before the Battalion was given a warning order for another

overseas posting which turned out to be Malaya. Pat was still with A Company which with the rest of the Battalion arrived in Singapore on 23 January 1946. The Battalion was employed in patrolling and keeping order as even then the Communists were actively attempting to take over the Country. A Company took part in the last anti bandit drive, which covered a coastal strip and had the appropriate code name of Mudlark. They had attempted a nautical exploit in three country boats one of which sank and the other two proved unlaunchable and the men floundered about in sticky mud. No bandits were found.

In October the Battalion sailed for India and disbandment. Pat was posted to the 2/4th who were involved with Internal Security duties in Peshawar before moving down to Muttra. This was also the time of Indian Independence and the British Officer handed over the Battalion before going on long leave. Pat, after his leave, was posted to the 2nd Battalion 7th Gurkha Rifles.

Pat sailed with the 2nd Battalion from Madh Island near Bombay on the SS Strathnaver in March 1948 and on arrival they were put into a dilapidated tented camp on the Wadieburn Estate just outside Kuala Lumpur. In June the decision was made to turn the 7th into an Artillery Regiment. The 2nd Battalion became 102nd Field Regiment RA. Pat was Battery Captain of Q Battery with what was then called a Short Service Regular Commission. Training in their new role went well but then the Emergency burst upon Malaya and both Field Regiments had to revert to infantry in the jungle. The whole idea of keeping the 7th as Artillery was then abandoned and they happily reverted to being the two Battalions of the 7th again. Pat now commanded B Company and was almost continually involved with jungle patrolling in search of the CT. In June 1953 in the Bentong area he was making a reconnaissance with three men of a CT camp when he was detected and realising that the CTs would escape in the fading light he immediately attacked with his small force. He was met with heavy fire including a Bren gun. One of his men was wounded but Pat charged the Bren gun and killed the gunner and another terrorist with grenades but not before he had been shot in the hand holding his rifle across his chest. For this courageous action he was awarded a very well deserved Military Cross which he won on Coronation day.

Pat celebrated this award by a weekend long party on the Sabai Estate that raged until the early hours.

Pat had hardly recovered from his wounds when he was back in action against the CT. He was put forward for a DSO by his CO, the Brigade Commander and the Divisional Commander but this was downgraded to a Bar to his MC by the C-in-C. The citation reads:-

During the past two years Major Carr has without doubt been the most successful company commander in Malaya and great deal of his success has been due to his fearless leadership of his men in action, which has so inspired his troops that time and time again they have attacked with such skill and dash that all the enemy have been killed. In July his Company, under his leadership found and destroyed a gang of seven armed terrorists and by this action alone greatly contributed to the destruction of the domination that the enemy had exerted over the area. It is not too much to say that Major Carr's skill, bravery and relentless pursuit of the enemy whether in deep jungle or swamp or any other kind or terrain have become a byword. He has shown utter disregard for danger and such skill in operations that he is an outstanding example to every officer taking part in this campaign.

Pat had six months home leave and then returned to Hong Kong in 1956 but it was only for a year before he was posted to Jalapahar as Adjutant of the then Eastern Recruiting Camp. The next posting was as OC Barrackpore Transit Camp outside Calcutta.

He was posted to the Depot Brigade of Gurkhas at Sungei Patani in 1960 as a Recruit Company Commander. In 1963 he went on long leave to UK where he married Rosemary and they returned to Dharan with Pat as Deputy Recruiting Officer. They had two tours in their lovely bungalow in Dharan where their children were born.

Pat left the Army in 1969 and took up horticulture where, amongst other interests, he became a renowned expert on Fuchsia.

Pat died on 22 August 2013 and we send our most heartfelt condolences to Rosemary and the children.

Captain Norman George Scorey (9GR)

George Scorey was born in January 1926 and died on 5 December 2013

He served with the 9th Gurkha Rifles from January 1945 when commissioned from the Indian Military Academy. He was part of the same draft of cadets assembled at Sandhurst in 1944, the same contingent on a troop ship to India and the same Cadet Platoon at the IMA as the author of this Obituary. He spent the whole of his service at the Regimental Centre in Birpur, Dehra Dun, where he was engaged in both training young soldiers and later filled a valuable role in charge of the farm when many Gurkhas were being retired through the reduction of the Regiment to peacetime numbers. The farm was used to pass on some good farming practice to numbers of those retiring.

On release from the Army, he studied to become a member of the Chartered Institute of Secretaries and joined the retailing Company, C & A Modes, where he attained senior positions.

He married Enid shortly after being released and they were happily married for 61 years until her death in 2009 after which he found life very difficult. They were blessed by two daughters, Alison and Carolyn and two grandsons and six great grandchildren.



For many years he was a strong supporter of the Regimental Association and never forgot the life changing circumstances of service with the Regiment where he was a popular and enthusiastic member.

Bruce Roberts January 2014

Major William Towill (9GR)

Bill Towill, a much loved man and veteran of the 3/9th Gurkha Rifles (Chindits) died aged 93 on 14th December 2013.

His father was a Devonshire farmer who was gassed and wounded in the First World War. His mother had strong religious convictions, which would have influenced Bill to enlist as a non-combatant, on conscientious grounds, in the local RAMC Territorial Unit as World War 2 approached. The unit was absorbed into the Regular Army within 72 hours of war being declared, and he went to France, as part of the British Expeditionary Force.

At the end of May 1940, in the midst of the German Blitzkrieg, his unit was operating a casualty clearing station, on the coast at La Panne in Belgium. As the German Army approached, the Officer called for volunteers to stay behind to look after the wounded in the Station and be taken prisoner. All repeatedly volunteered, to the point where the issue had to be decided by drawing numbered lots. The blank drawn by Bill, determined his future. His subsequent walk of several days along the beaches to Dunkirk, strafed by German planes, without rest, food or water, to catch one of the last of the rescue ships to Britain is described, graphically, in the 2008 newsletter of the Regimental Association. He describes the first sighting of Dunkirk as "looking



and sounding like an outpost of hell". This experience changed his view of the War and caused him to transfer to a combatant role and he was recommended for a Commission. He was sent to India for Officers' training.

He arrived at Bombay in 1941 en route to the Indian Military Academy at Dehra Dun. The pleasant country, the modern layout of the buildings and all the facilities was a very pleasant surprise after his hideous experiences in France. It was here, attending

morning service in the Cantonment Church with two fellow officers, he met Mrs Wise and her two teenage daughters and was invited to tea. This was when he first met Pamela who later became his wife.

After completion of Officers' training, Bill applied to join the 9th GR and was posted direct to the 3/9th at Jhikargacha Ghat with 4th Indian Infantry Brigade. For a spell he was able to continue to visit the Wise Family who had moved to Calcutta. He was however, then sent on a driving and maintenance course in early 1943, refused an offer to be an instructor, and re-joined the Battalion which had already been deployed into the Arakan to make a bridgehead against the Japanese. He was appointed Brigade HQ Orderly Officer and put in charge of the Brigade defence platoon which gave him his first engagements with the Japanese Army. He also became acquainted at that time with two famous figures of the Regiment, "Jimmy" Blaker, who was awarded a MC in this campaign at Taung Bazaar and later a VC in the Battalion's Chindit operations, and John Bradbourne who had escaped the Japanese invasion in 1942 by sailing a small boat to Sumatra.

The Battalion gained experience of jungle warfare in the campaign and its success in operations probably accounted for the early withdrawal from the 26th Indian Division at the end of 1943, to join the Special Forces being assembled for training for long-range penetration behind the enemy's lines, later to be styled the Chindit operations. In a short leave at this time, Bill renewed his acquaintance with the Wise Family, now in Calcutta, and proposed marriage to Pamela who had retained her interest in him from two years ago. As she was only 17 and with Bill soon to be thrust back into battle, they were asked to postpone engagement until he returned from fighting the Japanese.

With Lt Col Noel George, the CO of the 3/9th Battalion, Bill, as Intelligence Officer, flew with the advance party by glider to establish Broadway in March 1944, one of the bases to form a defended jungle airfield to provide the build-up of the fighting Columns, with their equipment and mules for transport. Unfortunately, their glider crashed but was successful on a second attempt, unlike others; 37 gliders landed a Broadway but only three remained for re-use. There were a number of casualties. However, with an airstrip established shortly after, Dakotas were soon landing with supplies and the defences were prepared.

At the end of March, the Japanese, having realised the scale of the operation, started ground attacks which went on overnight and continued on a daily basis. Bill was lucky to survive two mortar bombs landing simultaneously just three feet away. A fraction earlier, hearing the bombs approaching, he ducked into a trench; a split second later and his head would have been blown off.

It was decided to abandon Broadway and establish another stronghold some four days march away to be called Blackpool. These strongholds now began to have fierce and continuous Japanese attacks; Bill's book *A Chindit's Chronicle* describes the desperate circumstances of all these actions, always soaking wet,



hungry, bitten by mosquitoes and assaulted by leeches. He was always full of praise for his Gurkhas and fellow officers. Finally, the decision was taken to abandon Blackpool, with the enemy in command of all the salient points and pursue the objects of dislocating the Japanese supply routes. There was no place for the wounded. They took all who could walk but those near to death or seriously wounded were put to death to avoid them being sadistically and brutally treated by the Japanese.

Then followed a long trek to Mokso Sakan and the Indawgyi valley, carrying very heavy packs, sleeping in the open jungle, often without food supplies for days and all in the dreadful circumstances. At one point, they killed a mule for food but found it inedible. The intention was to capture Mogaung and to take and hold point 2171, all with skirmishes with the enemy. Jimmy Blaker earned a VC in this drive but died as a result and had to be abandoned in the jungle. By mid-July, they had all but ceased to be a fighting force through starvation, disease, losses and casualties. They were all medically examined for fitness. Out of over 2,000 men only 118 men consisting of 7 British Officers, 21 British other ranks and 90 Gurkhas were fit for action. Bill Towill was considered fit but spent five weeks in hospital for an unidentified fever when evacuated to India. His book, *A Chindit's Chronicle*, brilliantly captures the terrible conditions endured by all who were there.

The leave for Bill which followed in Kashmir with the Wise Family, including Pamela, was an utter contrast to the horrors of the Chindit campaign. However, he had to re-join the Battalion which had been built up to strength by drafts and which, in the first half of 1945, as part of Special Forces, was undertaking advanced training for new operations. At the end of the War in August, however, the Brigade was disbanded and the Battalion was sent to Singapore to assist the 2/9th and to organise the surrender of the Japanese. In October, 49 Brigade with the 3/9th sailed to Indonesia to arrange for the capitulation of the Japanese forces and for the release from captivity and repatriation of Allied prisoners of war and foreign nationals. They were faced with a nationalist rising of many thousands, trained and armed by the Japanese. This became a major campaign and the Battalion lost 18 killed and 62 wounded; Bill had another lucky escape as Jim Vicary was shot by a sniper, when standing next to Bill, and was severely

wounded. The Battalion left Surabaya in mid-March to return to Malaya and Bill was sent home to England to be released from Army Service. All his baggage was stolen at Waterloo Station whilst he telephoned his arrival.

Back home he commenced studies to become a Solicitor and married Pamela Wise in 1948. His war service therefore provided him with 65 years of a "marriage made in heaven", as described by Pamela, their two wonderful daughters, Diana and Anthea, as well as a lifetime of terrible nightmares from the horrors he had witnessed in his service life. He was a great supporter of the Regimental Association and the Burma Star Association and wrote movingly of all the British and Gurkha soldiers who gave so much in these campaigns.

Bruce Roberts January 2014

Colonel DF Mallam OBE (10GR)

David Mallam was until shortly before his death on 7 July 2013 Hon. Treasurer of both the Association and the Trust.

Little is known of David's birth other than he was born in 1937. He and his younger sister Judy were adopted in 1938 by Leslie and Marie Mallam, who took them to India where Leslie was a Political Officer in the Afghan-Indian border area. Marie Mallam died shortly after giving birth to Marcus, David's brother, in 1944 and within a year Judy also died. David was returned to England and put in the care of an aunt and sent to Sherborne Prep. He went on to Sherborne where he thrived on the sports field and, although he denied it, probably in the classroom as well. In the Civil Service exam that potential officers sat he finished in the top ten of 300 candidates. He won the Sword of Honour at Sandhurst and was commissioned in the Royal Tank Regiment joining 3RTR in 1957. Marriage to Carolyn ended his appointment in Norway as ADC to General Pyman and he then elected to go flying. Posted to Malaya he flew on operations in Borneo where he supported 2/10GR and other units, crashing two helicopters while trying to rescue a casualty deep in the jungle, and earning an MiD.

After Staff College he commanded the Independent Parachute Squadron RAC during the difficult post internment troubles in Northern Ireland in 1971. He was appointed an MBE and subsequently, during a most illustrious career elevated to OBE. He then returned to flying and transferred to the Army Air Corps. He was an instructor at the Nigerian Staff College and his final appointment in the Army was Commandant at Middle Wallop (AAC Centre).

In 1985 he left the Army prematurely and took on the challenging roles of running the Lady Hoare Trust and the Leonard Cheshire Foundation. He was then Secretary of the Parachute Regiment and Deputy Curator of the Parachute Museum and helped the Ulysees Trust, GWT (East Anglia), the AAC Museum, his Parish Church and the 10GR Association and



Trust, and doubtless many other good causes as well. He had a remarkable network of friends that he galvanised to support charitable causes and was in a direct way a 'go-getter' and a leader who closed with what needed to be done.

Although he did not serve in the 10th Gurkhas David became one of the Regimental family when in 1962 he married Carolyn, the daughter of Lt Col 'Chappie' Dawe (CO 2/10GR 1957-59). The association was rekindled when David, then an ROI, was working with Andy Watt, who perceptively tipped off General Garry, who asked David at a reunion in 2007 if he would be prepared to take on the role of Hon. Treasurer and David accepted. We are most grateful that he did for David brought to the appointment huge experience of the charity world and a determination to better the lot of our Gurkhas in need. This coupled with his enthusiasm and energy and a sense of fun that he conveyed with a remarkable twinkle in his steely eyes made him an ideal choice for the role. He went with Bill

Dawson to Nepal on the 2010 Reunion 'recce' and established a strong rapport with the personnel in the Association's Nepal branches. His forthright, friendly manner, and prowess on the golf course, made him many friends in Nepal which helped resolve a number of challenges later. He gave unstintingly of his time to IOGR for which we are most grateful. He never missed a meeting or a bhat, which he loved.

David was diagnosed with terminal cancer 18 months before he died. He bore his illness with an uncomplaining courage that was remarkable. He continued to serve only handing over his appointment at this year's Reunion just two months before the end. To Carolyn, their children and their grandchildren we extend our sincere condolences and thanks for sharing him with us.

Lieutenant Colonel John Jacob MC (IOGR)

Lt-Col John Jacob, who has died aged 85, was the last commanding officer of the Durham Light Infantry (DLI) and was awarded an MC in the Malayan Emergency.

John Howard Jacob was born on June 24 1928 at Castleton, North Yorkshire, where his father was the vicar. He was educated at Durham School, where he played for the 1st XV. At Sandhurst he captained the modern pentathlon team, and in 1947 he represented the Army team in Sweden. The following year he won the cross-country race in the British Army Modern Pentathlon Championship.

Commissioned into the DLI in 1948, for the next 22 years Jacob served proudly and enthusiastically in the regiment. The Geordies' banter and sense of humour were a constant source of enjoyment.

In 1951 he was seconded to 2/10 GR. He was quickly mentioned in despatches and, with his gallantry and dash in antiterrorist operations, made a name for himself throughout the battalion, winning the respect and admiration of Gurkhas of all ranks. Eighteen communist terrorists were accounted for under his direct leadership.

On January 16 1952 Jacob was on secondment with 2nd Battalion 10th Princess Mary's Own Gurkha Rifles (2/10 GR) and commanding a company in the Gelang Patah area of South Johor. Leading a patrol into an area of thick rubber in search of a party of terrorists, he came under fire from several concealed positions in the dense undergrowth. He returned fire with one section and then led his men in search of the insurgents. When one of them was seen fleeing, Jacob set off in pursuit.

He engaged a group of five of them. Three were killed, two being accounted for by Jacob. He then led a search for more than two hours, but was forced to give up when the bandits' tracks were lost in a swamp. The citation for the award of his MC paid tribute to his drive, initiative and qualities of leadership, courage and determination.

Jacob returned to the DLI, but in 1966 he was back in action in Borneo during the undeclared war with Indonesia known as the "Confrontation". Their role was to prevent incursions by Indonesian forces across the border, and the conflict was characterised by limited and restrained ground combat.

The widespread forests and jungle meant that supplies had to be dropped by air or brought in by helicopter. While Jacob was there he found time to play a vigorous version of polo with the local tribesmen; the players - up to 12 in a side - were mounted on diminutive ponies.

In 1968 Jacob took command of the 1st Battalion in Cyprus, where it was deployed with the UN Peacekeeping Force. The regiment was subsequently merged with three other infantry regiments to form the Light Infantry.

He retired from the Army in 1970 and served for several years as secretary of the North-East Yorkshire Community Health Council. As a county councillor, he campaigned successfully to save from closure Welburn Hall School, an establishment for children with special educational needs. He was subsequently elected chairman of North Yorkshire County Council.

Settled at a village near Scarborough, Jacob enjoyed collecting stamps and watching rugby on television. When England were not playing well, he used to bellow at the set while the family dog cowered under a chair.

In the role of cook, he was part tortured artist and part mad scientist. All his recipes had to be put through rigorous tests before he was satisfied with them. After these tests the kitchen resembled the scene of a chemistry experiment gone dreadfully wrong. Despite the mess, however, he never did the washing-up.

John Jacob married, in 1965, Jane Keenlyside, who survives him with their two sons and one daughter.

Lt-Col John Jacob, born 24 June 1928, died 09 November 2013

Major J (John) Parfect MBE

Major John Parfect MBE was a Royal Engineer who played a significant role in the Malayan Emergency with 1/6GR and was one of the original officers in the newly formed Gurkha Engineers. He was born on 09 April 1924 and at the age of 21 joined the Bengal Sappers and Miners in India where he served until 1947, initially commanding a training Company at the Regimental Centre at Roorkee. Later he commanded 74 Indian Field Company, 5th Division in Ranchi Bihar. In 1948 he served a three month attachment with Gil Hickey's Coy in 1/6GR¹ and from then on until 1950, he served with the Queen's Gurkha Engineers.

The QGE was formed in 1948/9 by the transfer of 11 King's Gurkha Officers and 23 Warrant Officers and NCO's from Gurkha Battalions, who had switched to British Service after Partition. From this nucleus, and together with re-enlisted

soldiers from Nepal, John raised C Troop. When 67 Independent Gurkha Field Squadron was formed on 01 October 1949 in Kluang, Malaya, he was appointed Squadron Admin Officer. He returned to the UK in September 1950 and in 1957 was awarded an MBE for his staff work in Northern Command both in connection with Operational Planning and his work in the Suez Crisis.

On leaving the Army he worked for ICI but also became a North Yorkshire County Councillor from 1981 to 1992 and during that period served five years on the Police Committee.

John Parfect never forgot his connection with Gurkhas and worked as a fund raiser with the Pahar Trust, which has done so much charitable work in Nepal. He also remained a member of our own Association until his death on 01 May 2012.

Major (Qgo) Dharamlal Thapa (Qge)

by John Getley

398045 Major (QGO) Dharamlal Thapa, Ex 2/6 Gurkha Rifles and The Gurkha Engineers, died last year aged 96. He was born on 13 October 1918, in Siddetar village, Udaipur, East Nepal. He first enlisted in 13 October 1935 and finally discharged on 27 July 1965.

Surjabahadur Saheb writes "He was my father's PT instructor when father was doing recruit training 1939 (2/6 GR) at Abbotabad, Pakistan".

I met Dharamlal Sahib in 1956 in the Ayer Hitam jungle camp: He was Gurkha Captain 68 Field Squadron and I had newly joined as A Troop Commander. At that time all the Gurkha Officers and many of the NCOs were wartime re-enlistments. Dharamlal himself was ex 6 GR. Our old soldiers had a wonderful attitude to the engineers that they had now become and their traditional infantry values. It was here that the camp sentry found it necessary to shoot a tiger and the plant operators left scorpions on their tractor's seat to dissuade others from playing there. All great fun but the discipline was rigid and the standards high. For this a great credit must fall on Dharamlal Sahib.

He followed this appointment becoming our 4th Gurkha Major in January 1962. Perowne tells us that Dharamlal Thapa stood at the Commandant's right hand when the Gurkha Engineers saw at last the fulfilment of their hopes and reached the fullness of their evolution. We made the Nepal Cup final in 1962 and the final of the 17 Division Hockey Competition the following year and surely he must take credit for this too.



Dharamlal had a son in QGE: the late 21142417 Sgt Ghanbahadur Thapa. Sadly Dharamlal's wife died at Sungei Besi Camp, BMH Kinrara hospital, in 1960 or 61.

¹ See 6GR Journal 2002

Lieutenant Colonel VH Martin, MC (QGS)

Lieutenant Colonel VH Martin, MC died in New Zealand on 20 May 2013 aged 93. Vic served as RO2 Tels at HQ British Forces, Hong Kong where he was responsible for the Hong Kong military telephone network. His most notable accomplishment was the planning and implementation of the move of HQ BF from Victory Barracks to the new HQ at HMS Tamar with little

or no disruption to the telephone network. During his time in Hong Kong he was a keen supporter of the Regiment and attended all our functions. There is a wonderful picture of Vic at the parade commemorating the granting of the Queen's title dressed impeccably in bowler hat and furred umbrella. He is survived by his wife Betty.

Captain Rajbahadur Rai (QGS)

Captain Rajbahadur Rai died in Darjeeling on 23 February 2013. Raj enlisted on the clerical roster in Gurkha Signals in 1972 and was commissioned in 1990. He became Assistant Adjutant in Hong Kong and then Head Clerk Queen's Gurkha Signals in 1994. He had a very successful tenure as Head Clerk, playing the central role in managing the transition of our manpower from Hong Kong to the UK throughout the drawdown and Handover period. As the Gurkha Major, Maj Silajit Gurung, became more unwell in his final illness, Captain Raj provided him invaluable support and advice. He retired in 1997. After retirement

Captain Raj worked for the Gurkha Welfare Scheme firstly as AWO Darjeeling and then as AWO Med Dharan. He enhanced his reputation in both these appointments as a relentlessly optimistic, caring and effective champion of the downtrodden, a particularly vital role in Darjeeling where a less confident officer could have found himself browbeaten over resource allocation by the powerful ex-clerical lobby in residence there. He will be especially remembered for his unconditional welcome, beaming smile and easy laughter. He is survived by his wife Mrs Ranjana Rai and their two sons.

BOOK REVIEWS

Britain's Gurkha War: The Invasion of Nepal 1814-1816 (Hardback) by John Pemble, Frontline Books, 2008

Britain's Gurkha War: The Invasion of Nepal 1814-1816

by John Pemble

Foreword by J P Cross

The British love affair with the Gurkhas began during the early nineteenth century clash of the expanding English East India Company and Nepalese hillmen.

The remarkable fighting abilities of the Nepalese contrasted with the most incredible British ineptitude. But on both sides, the war was harder fought than either the Afghan War or even the struggle with the Sikhs. And on both sides, the most colourful characters were involved - such as the drinker, dicer, duellist Rollo Gillespie or the legendary Gurkha hero Bhakti Thapa.

In the end, the British wrested key hill tracts from the Gurkhas. As Sir David Ochterlony - perhaps the only figure who saved the British reputation - was poised to attack Kathmandu, the Gurkhas prudently made peace which maintained their kingdom as an independent state.

John Pemble's account is a comprehensive history of the conflict, detailing the origins of the war, the consequences of strategic errors, and the enduring impact of the final victory. Even before the campaign had finished, the nucleus of the Gurkha Brigade had joined the East India Company's Forces.

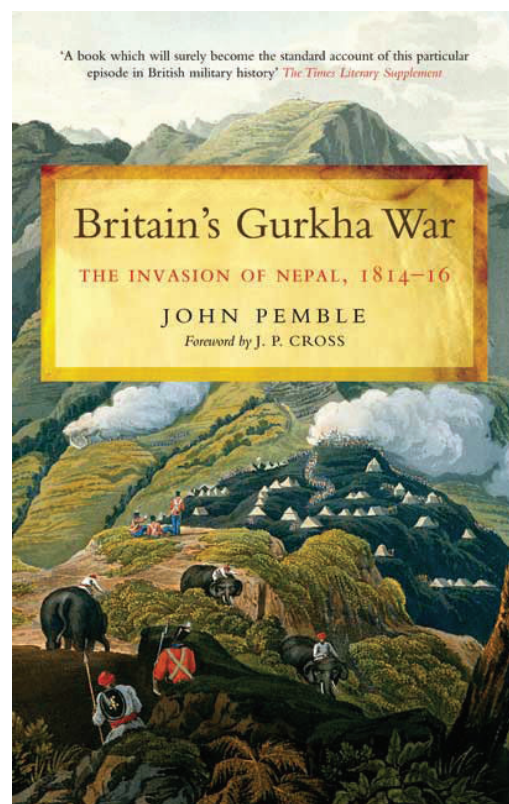
This is a thrilling telling of a little-known war. John Pemble has fully authenticated his work from original sources and on-the-spot research, all presented in a lively, engaging style.

Reviews:

A lively page turning narrative... *Britain's Gurkha War* is essential reading. *Military Illustrated* - April 2009

John Pemble's well documented account is written in a most engaging style and should be of more interest to those interested in military history and/or in Indian history in general. It is thoroughly recommended. *The Forces Pension Society*

It is not only a splendid historical record which everyone interested in India should have for reference but good reading and value for money as well. *Col Dennis Wood, The Britain-Nepal Society*



John Pemble's book is a well-written and well-researched comprehensive history of the conflict... and this is a more accurate description of what the book is about... military-history buffs will also relish the vivid descriptions of the many actions of the war. Particularly memorable are the scathing characterisations of the senior-British commanders... Particularly moving and memorable are his descriptions of the scene of slaughter found when the British entered the Nalpani fort... *Ochterlony's Men*

Available through Frontline Books

Pages: 400

ISBN: 978-1848325203

Published: 20 November 2008

Hardcover £16.73

War From The Ground Up (Hardback, Kindle) by Emile Simpson, Hurst Books, 2012

War From The Ground Up: Twenty First Century Combat As Politics

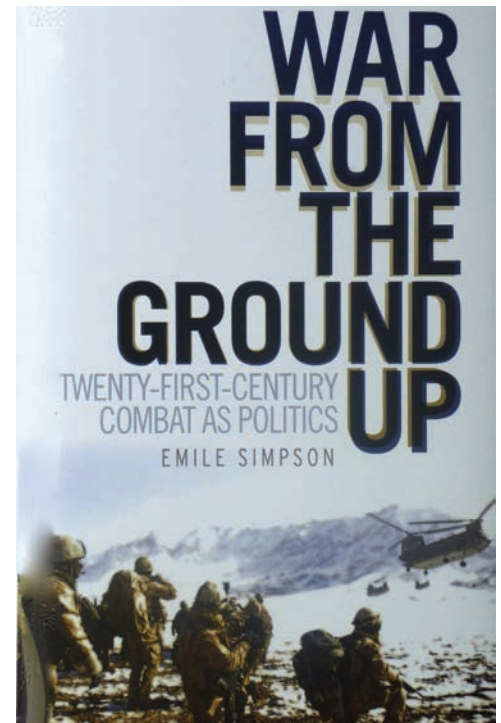
by Emile Simpson

Emile Simpson served on three operational tours in Afghanistan and recently left RGR as a Captain to continue his family tradition as an academic. Between school and Oxford he had taught in a remote area of East Nepal during the Maoist insurgency and had thus gained first hand acquaintance with guerrilla fighters four years before joining the Army. Though much of the content of this book is informed by considerable first hand experience in Afghanistan, it is not primarily an account of that campaign; it draws lessons from several others over a spread of time and area.

The key is in the title. Simpson's vivid descriptions of memorable moments on operations, not necessarily in action, lead on to so many pertinent questions about the nature of the current conflict and, in these times of all-intrusive media, to wide-ranging answers and retorts from an ever increasing audience. For me the most memorable vignette concerning attitudes and propaganda comes from a taunt passed through the local village to Simpson's Company Commander that the Gurkhas are not willing to fight the Taliban on an equal footing. When it is announced that the Company Commander and a dozen men at a set time and place will appear, with no supporting arms or aircraft to back them up, to take on a similar number of local fighters, the other side do not turn up. This also underlines another of the author's maxims, that the best weapon in counter insurgency is the one that does not need to be fired.

Simpson is particularly strong on updating the concepts of Clausewitz's seminal work *On War*. This came from the Prussian General's extensive campaigning in the Napoleonic Wars, and despite many revisions, was unfinished at the time of his death in 1831. Clausewitz favoured a dialectic approach to decipher the components of war, stressing the essential interaction of the emotional with the rational aspects. Simpson summarizes this point neatly: "The political object of war had to have purchase on people's emotions for it to be successful." Looking to the present context he goes on: "Plans cannot therefore be made in the abstract without consideration of how they will be interpreted by their intended human audience."

The chapter on 'Strategic Narrative,' the explanation of actions, I found particularly clear and informative. The way that events are read in diverse ways in Afghanistan is documented by numerous examples. A Taliban bomb in a market kills 13 civilians, instead of the police for whom it was presumably intended. From this the BBC takes up the predictable line of the Afghan Government and ISAF versus the Taliban. A local rumour then arises that a group of traders planted the bomb



to wipe out their rivals. A soldier is told by a mullah "You (ISAF and Taliban) fight, we die."

Wars still occur that follow a traditional approach of a single government enforcing policy "by other means," as Clausewitz termed military action. These include the Sri Lankan suppression of the Tamil Tigers and Russia's two wars in Chechnya. But Simpson is more concerned about the continuing conduct of the 'Long War' against terror and he is scathing about our sometimes muddled approach: "The dry, banal, bureaucratic language and legalese of official justification for a conflict, or the endless announcement of 'investigations' into who did what in relation to allegations of wrongdoing, characterise the West's strategic narratives today."

The author adds to our already jaded views of the continuing conflict by explaining the many advantages the Taliban possess in relation to local support; the term 'franchise' is used to explain how individuals buy in and sell out for personal advantage. This self-interest is all pervading: "An Afghan police commander was told to eradicate some poppy fields. In front of an angry crowd protesting against the (legal) destruction of their livelihoods, he drove five metres into the field, in his red government-issued opium-crushing tractor, then

stopped and lit up a cigarette. That was his opium eradication effort for that year.”

The historical side to our latest Afghan campaign, in the oral traditions of the area, is also shown to advantage. When the Gurkhas move into Maiwand the cry goes up that it is in revenge for the British defeat there - in 1880. We are also reminded that earlier British losses in battle with Muslim extremists were not limited to the three previous Afghan Wars. The cry for jihad frequently arose across the frontier in British India, resulting in dozens of bloody campaigns and thousands of casualties, which only ended on Partition in 1947. I just re-read in the Regimental History that in 1919, after the Third Afghan War had finished, in what was not even dignified with a campaign title, the 1st Battalion lost 27 men killed in one morning near Fort Sandeman in Baluchistan, with eight more dying over a two day period the next month.

Emile Simpson writes lucidly and illustrates his narrative with some surprising examples, ranging from Russell Crowe in ‘Gladiator’ to ‘All Quiet On The Western Front.’ A case study from Borneo Confrontation continues the Gurkha subtext. Where I was a little disorientated was in following some of the detailed diagrams. I think I understood most of them but some old brain cells died in the attempt. Though you don’t buy this sort of book for the pictures, I did find some of the photographic quality disappointing. This volume is necessary reading for an up-to-date and challenging view of how counter-insurgency is managed and how it is constantly changed by innovation elsewhere, particularly in communications and other technologies. *Reviewed by John Patchett.*

Available through Hurst & Co Books

256 Pages (Hardback)

ISBN: 978-1849042550

Published: 1 Oct 2012

Hurst at £20

Kindle: £10.80 (Amazon)

The Malayan Emergency and Indonesian Confrontation (Paperback) The Commonwealth's Wars 1948-1966
By Robert Jackson, Pen & Sword Aviation, 2011

The Malayan Emergency and Indonesian Confrontation

by Robert Jackson

The struggle with Communist terrorists in Malaya known as The Emergency became a textbook example of how to fight a guerrilla war, based on political as much as military means. This book deals with both the campaign fought by British, Commonwealth and other security forces in Malaya against Communist insurgents, between 1948 and 1960, and also the security action in North Borneo during the period of Confrontation with Indonesia from 1962 to 1966. Both campaigns provided invaluable experience in the development of anti-guerrilla tactics, and are relevant to the conduct of similar actions which have been fought against insurgent elements since then. The book written with the full co-operation of various departments of the UK Ministry of Defence contains material that until recently remained classified.

This is the first full study to cover the role of airpower in these conflicts. It will be of relevance to students at military colleges, and those studying military history, as well as having a more general appeal, particularly to those servicemen and women who were involved in both campaigns.

Imprint: Pen & Sword Aviation

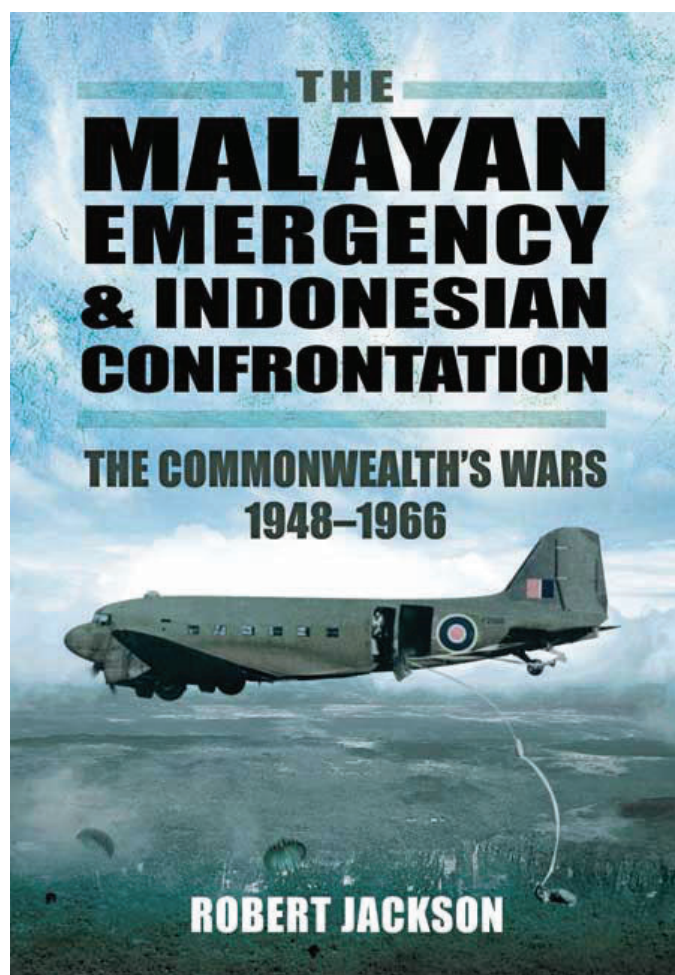
Pages: 176

ISBN: 9781848845558

Published: 18 May 2011

Paperback £12.08 (Amazon)

Kindle £9.59 (Amazon)



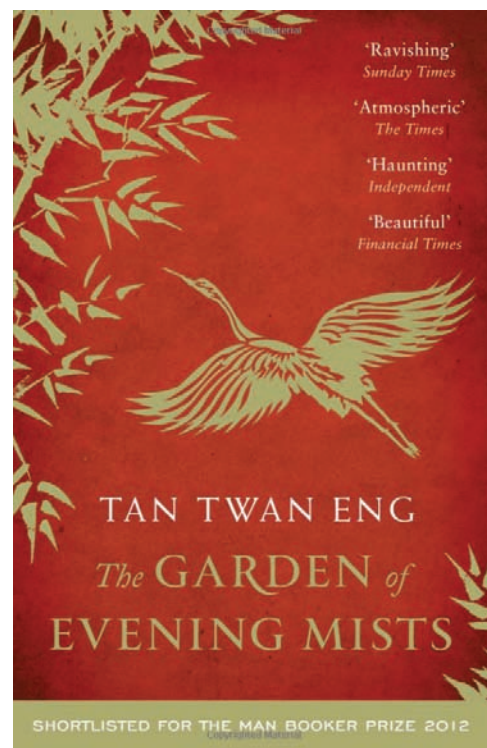
Garden of Evening Mists by Tan Twan Eng, Myrmidon Books UK 2012

Garden of Evening Mists

by *Tan Twan Eng*

Tan Twan Eng is a Malaysian writer. His book *Garden of Evening Mists* was shortlisted for the 2012 Man Booker Prize with perfect timing so that it could be included in our book reviews. Set in post war Malaya and told by a Straits Chinese narrator, his story is absolutely relevant to this Malaya- Borneo edition. From the Asian perspective, post war Malaya was an experience of constant insecurity punctuated by acts of terror and extreme cruelty. The vacuum left by the Japanese had become a mêlée of returning colonial officials, emotionally damaged survivors and the increasingly dangerous terrorist forces. As the emergency took hold, fear stalked any isolated families that had failed to support the ever-present Communist terrorists. But by 1952 the Templar effect had improved security and across the country "white areas" cleared of terrorists grew larger and more numerous. The rubber industry recovered and in the Cameron Highlands, where the story is set, tea estates were once again restored to their former profitable serenity. Nevertheless, despite the gradual process of reconstruction, the scorch marks of Japanese occupation were still visible, there were abandoned villages, individual Japanese stragglers still at large and thousands of former prisoners and slaves who were deeply damaged.

Against this background, the story is unfolded by a Straits Chinese narrator Yun Ling. She was the daughter of the rich rubber trading Teoh family, who had lived in a large Victorian house in Penang. When the island was finally invaded, the Teoh family were on the Japanese army's wanted list and after a few weeks in hiding they were captured. Yun Ling and her sister were transported across Malaya to a labour camp near Ipoh. At the closing stages of the war the prisoners were slaughtered in a mass execution including Yun Ling's sister. However Yun Ling escaped. By now a damaged and vengeful young woman she became an energetic prosecution witness in the war trials that followed and personally witnessed eight hangings. Later she studied law and became a prosecuting attorney. After several years, a chance meeting brought Yun Ling to the Majuba Tea estate in the Cameron Highlands. Her purpose was to try to contract a famous Japanese garden designer to create a formal garden in memory of her sister. The gardener refused but Yun Ling was determined and gradually they reached a compromise. Physically and psychologically damaged by the occupation, Yun Ling had every reason to hate Aritomo the Japanese gardener and to be repelled by his culture and his humourless formality. However his strange genius proved to be irresistible and her hatred was gradually disarmed.



This is a surprising book. Superficially it describes colliding cultures and ideologies but at a deeper level it is about an extraordinary relationship between the vengeful and damaged young Asian woman and her sombre Japanese mentor. Above all it is about a garden and the Malayan rain forests surrounding it. Aritomo's garden is a serenely hypnotic space and beyond its paths and hedges, soldiers and terrorist bands kill each other in the jungle. Tan Twan Eng is a compelling writer, he has researched carefully, there are few historical gaffes and I was drawn into the forests with page-turning urgency.

The International Bestseller
Winner of the Man Asian Literary Prize 2012
Winner of the Walter Scott Prize for historical fiction 2013

Imprint: Myrmidon Books UK 2012
Pages: 352
ISBN: 978-1782110187
Hardcover £15.90 (Amazon)
Paperback £6.29 (Amazon)

My Side Of History, Alias Chin Peng (As Told To Ian Ward & Norma Mirafior) Media Masters, 2003

My Side Of History

by Chin Peng

About This Book

This remarkable and insightful memoir by the former leader of former Communist Party of Malaya leader Chin Peng, makes essential source material for any scholar or general reader concerned with the recent history of Malaysia and Southeast Asia, as well as anyone interested in guerilla movements. Chin Peng's story, as related to the husband-and-wife team of former journalist and publishing executive, sheds new light on the complexities of the Japanese Occupation years 1942-45, the confused and often-corrupt British Malaya Administration period 1945-48, and the long "Emergency" years of guerilla activity from 1948, and from which the 1989 peace accords finally emerged. While the point of view is of course that of a high-ranking Politburo official, Chin Peng's insights and rethinking of events offer not only much new information but also sensitive appreciation of the complexities of a period that still tends to be seen mainly through mists of "spin".

Format: Paper Back, 492 pages

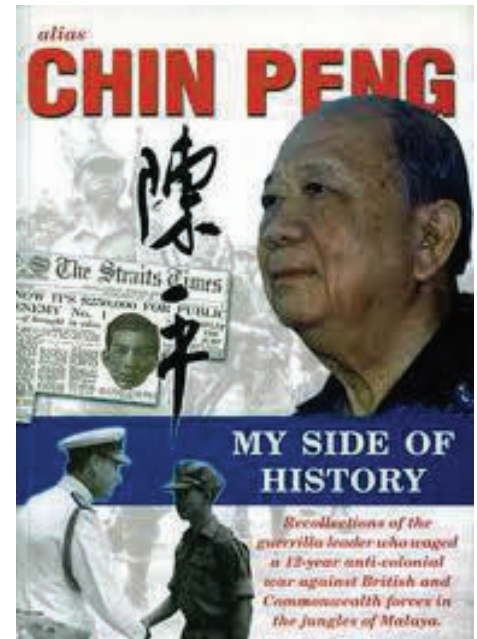
Published: 2003, Singapore, 1st Edition

ISBN-10: 978-9810486938

SB#: 034385 (130)

Paperback £41.51 (Amazon)

Price: US\$28.00 (SGD35.00*)



Four Brothers In Arms By Ian McGill, Melrose Books, 2011

Four Brothers In Arms

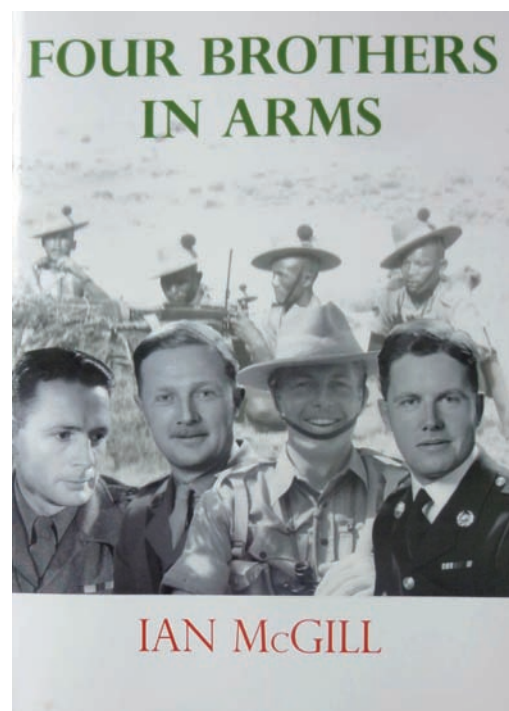
by Ian McGill

This is a carefully crafted account of the lives of four brothers, including Ian's father, and their parents, drawn mainly from family letters. It is beautifully illustrated by clear maps and some amazing photographs. The text which links the letters is a masterpiece of clarity and the whole forms a compelling little volume of 153 pages which, like some other reviewers, I simply could not put down till I had finished it. From the back cover I noted that fellow enthusiastic readers include the current Chiefs of the Defence Staff and the General Staff, so, for once at least, I am in good company.

The McGill family had served in India since the early 1800s. Ian's grandparents settled in Jersey after the Great War, his grandfather having been invalided out of the Indian Army in 1919. Their four sons went to school on Jersey from where the eldest two attended Sandhurst and were subsequently commissioned into the Gurkhas. The third went to Woolwich and the Royal Signals and the fourth became an Officer in the Royal Marines.

The war story side of this takes in a huge sweep including the North West Frontier, Palestine, Madagascar, the Philippines, Italy, Burma and Malaya. Then there is the nightmare of the Partition of India. In the meantime the grandparents suffered the German occupation of Jersey and the detail in this part is very touching. Though leadership in battle is rewarded by numerous decorations, it comes at a cost with the death in action of the eldest brother in Burma. Equally moving is the account of Ian's parents' decision to move to Rhodesia and the various triumphs and tribulations there amongst the "wind of change." As it is a short book I will not spoil your reading with any more detail but I am sure you will not be disappointed in any way.

Ian McGill followed the family tradition of service on operations in Northern Ireland, Kuwait and Bosnia. He was awarded the CBE and a Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service and ultimately led his Corps as Engineer-in-Chief. But I feel that he may well now be best remembered for this remarkable tale, half the sales from which he has very generously donated to the Gurkha Welfare Trust. *Reviewed by John Patchett.*



Imprint: Melrose Books

Pages: 153

ISBN-10: 978-1907732423

Published: 22 November 2012

Paperback £10.99 (Amazon)

Kindle £5.99 (Amazon)

Quintology Historical Novel Of Gurkhas J P Cross

Quintology Historical Novel Of Gurkhas by J P Cross

These five historical novels are aimed at presenting Nepal, India and some other parts of Asia from a hill-man's perspective:

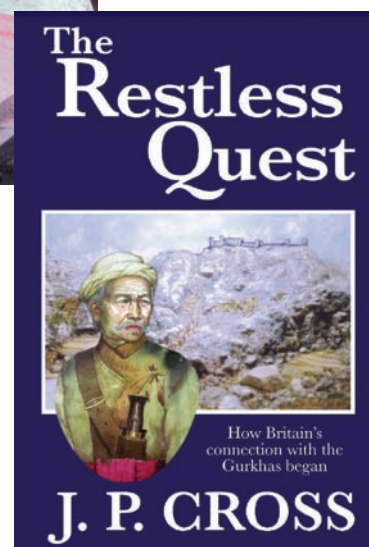
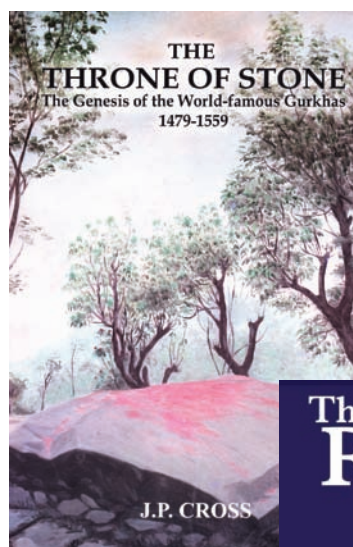
- I 1479-1559 The Throne of Stone: The Genesis of the World-famous Gurkhas.
- II 1746-1815 The Restless Quest: How Britain's connection with the Gurkhas began.
- III 1819-1857/8 The Crown of Renown: Gurkhas and the Honorable East India Company
- IV 1857-1947 The Fame of the Name: How there is much more to the Gurkha than sheer courage.
- V 1947-2008 The Age of Rage: Gurkhas, Gorkhas and Nepal in the post-War World

SYNOPSIS

I 1479-1559-The Throne of Stone: The Genesis of the World-famous Gurkhas.

For three generations struggles in parts of what is now Nepal and northern India mired the peace by land-grabbing, kidnap, murder, poisoning, feuds, passion, magic and blind lust but kindness, compassion, common sense and unrequited love also made their presences felt. What started over five hundred years ago, because famine used up seed corn, resulted in plans for acquisition of territory that went badly wrong. The consequences are still felt today. In north India during quarrels between Muslim rulers in Delhi and Bihar a small Hindu village was raided with grisly results that spread into the mountains. The conflict was only resolved after an epic wrestling march that eventually reverberated with full force into the heart of Nepal. To the valley of Kathmandu the scheming of one ruler resulted in the deaths of 12 leaders of another community in unexplainable and fearful circumstances. The following manhunt resulted in two trials by ordeal with unpredictable results. In 1559 a hill race decided who would be local king and, after a ritual human sacrifice, the new ruler of nearby Gorkha sowed the seeds of modern Nepal. This period also saw the genesis of the world-famous Gurkhas.

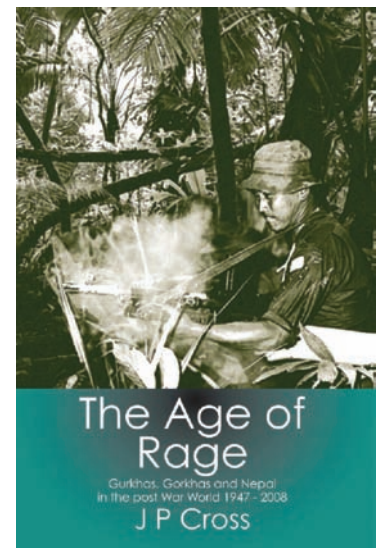
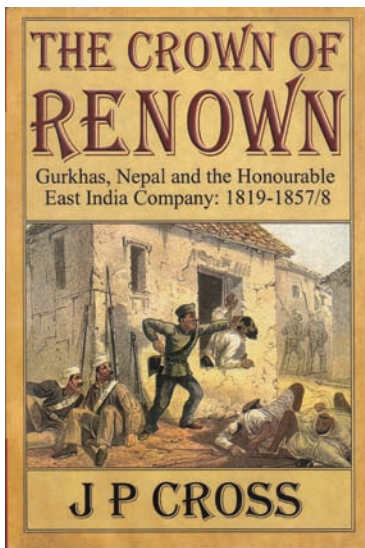
First published in Nepal in 2000 and revised in 2012.
jpxpkr@wlink.com.np
£12, incl p&p



II 1746-1815 The Restless Quest: How Britain's connection with the Gurkhas began

This volume covers a seventy-year period leading up to the Anglo-Nepal War in 1814-1816. Through the story of the legendary Bhakti Thapa, reconstructed from both folk memory and previously unknown written sources, it tells how the hill men of Nepal and the British in India originally developed a great respect for each other. After the infamous Black Hole of Calcutta incident on 21 June 1756 the East India Company was in such straits that it could have lost its potential superiority in India. 'Destiny can turn on a very small point' and, for the English, it turned on four. The first was because an obscure Gurkha woman in the foothills of the Himalayas died in childbirth, the second because an equally obscure Frenchman in Lyons was caught in *flagrante delicto* committing incest, the third because hornets were accidentally annoyed by a chance shot from a matchlock, English v Nepali, and, lastly, because an innocent Gurkha was blown from the muzzle of an English gun. This is the story that shows how these four unrelated, unusual and, except for the actual persons involved, insignificant episodes were responsible for India remaining British for the next 191 years.

Published in Nepal in 2005 and in England in 2010.
blenheimpress1@btinternet.com



III 1819-1857/8 The Crown of Renown: Gurkhas and the Honorable East India Company

This is set in the final stages of the East India Company's existence. It shows how Nepal's hill men adapted to then-modern military conditions, personal calamities and unpredictable circumstances, mostly with resilient stoicism and unquestionable prowess. It explores what happened when Brian Hodgeson met Gurkha hill men in Kathmandu, how the pioneer veterinary surgeon and Superintendent of the East India Stud took a Gurkha bodyguard on his five-year search for horses, how the Lord Bishop of Calcutta toured Upper India, the siege of Bharatpur, 1825-6, which was the first time Gurkhas fought alongside British soldiers, Thugs, the battles of Aliwal and Sobraon, Jang Bahadur Rana's inspection of the Sirmoor battalion and lastly the part the Gurkhas played in the Great Mutiny of 1857.

Published in England in 2009.
hallmarkpress@googlemail.com

IV 1857-1947 The Fame of the Name: How there is much more to the Gurkha than sheer courage.

After the Mutiny British power reach its peak at the Delhi Durbar in 1910 then its steadily decline. In this time frame, there are far too many events in which Gurkhas of all sorts were involved to make a 'single-thread' story so I have not woven one colourful tapestry of events but have shown Gurkhas' prowess by individual stands of its threads, till now almost invisible. Here is how a Gurkha left behind after the defeat of Afghanistan was used for long-range reconnaissance work, with Cossacks, against the Russians and again after disaffected Indian soldiers join the Russian army, how secret societies in Malaya 'pulled in' Gurkhas, what happened when the Duke of Edinburgh visited Nepal for shooting, how Gurkhas were made into spying 'pundits', the Delhi Durbar, back to Afghanistan to work for the Amir, the campaign in Sikkim, in Malaya, at Neuve Chappel, the defeat in Malaya in 1942 and

the escape of a Gurkha back to India, via Burma and China, with news of missing men and his subsequent unbearable disappointment at the Red Fort trials post war. Finally, King George VI and Mountbatten discuss whether Gurkhas are to be brought into the British Army.

Published in England in 2011.
blenheimpress1@btinternet.com

V 1947-2008 The Age of Rage: Gurkhas, Gorkhas and Nepal in the post-War World

The people of Nepal were not immune to the upheaval caused by the 1947 partition of India. This story is about a cloak-and-dagger operation that foils Soviet-inspired efforts to penetrate the Gurkha fighting in the Malayan emergency - a cold war in a hot climate - and bring about their disbandment. Then after the Sino-Indian border war of 1962 - a hot war in a cold climate - the Chinese 're-educate' a group of Indian Army Gorkhas taken prisoner with a view to infiltrating them back into Nepal for an eventual rising. A daring attempt to rescue them is mounted. However, this is only partially successful and those not rescued do eventually return to Nepal to wait until conditions are ripe for a people's war. Finally, the officer who took a leading part in the two earlier operations has to deal with the political jockeying of foreign intelligence services in Nepal as they try to outwit each other and take control of the country.

Published in England in 2013.
blenheimpress1@btinternet.com

For further information on sales, please contact:

Vol 1: jpxpkr@wlink.com.np
Vols 2, 4 & 5: blenheimpress1@btinternet.com
Vol 3: hallmarkpress@googlemail.com

Jungle Warfare Experiences & Encounters by J P Cross, Pen & Sword Military 2008

Jungle Warfare Experiences & Encounters

By J P Cross

The physical conditions of jungle warfare and the closeness of contact with the enemy pose unique problems and call for special soldiering skills. Colonel John Cross, a life long Gurkha officer, has an unrivalled knowledge of this demanding warfare and uses it to best advantage in this instructive yet personal account of techniques and experiences. He uses examples from British and Japanese sides in the Second World War and goes on to demonstrate how tactics and strategy developed in the Malay, Borneo and Indo-China theatres thereafter. He laces his work with vivid recollections and assessments of friend and foe along with entertaining anecdotes from a wide range of sources. This excellent book offers a perfect blend of factual military history and personal recollection and the reader gains a unique insight into this most challenging form of warfare.

Imprint: Pen & Sword Military

Pages: 256

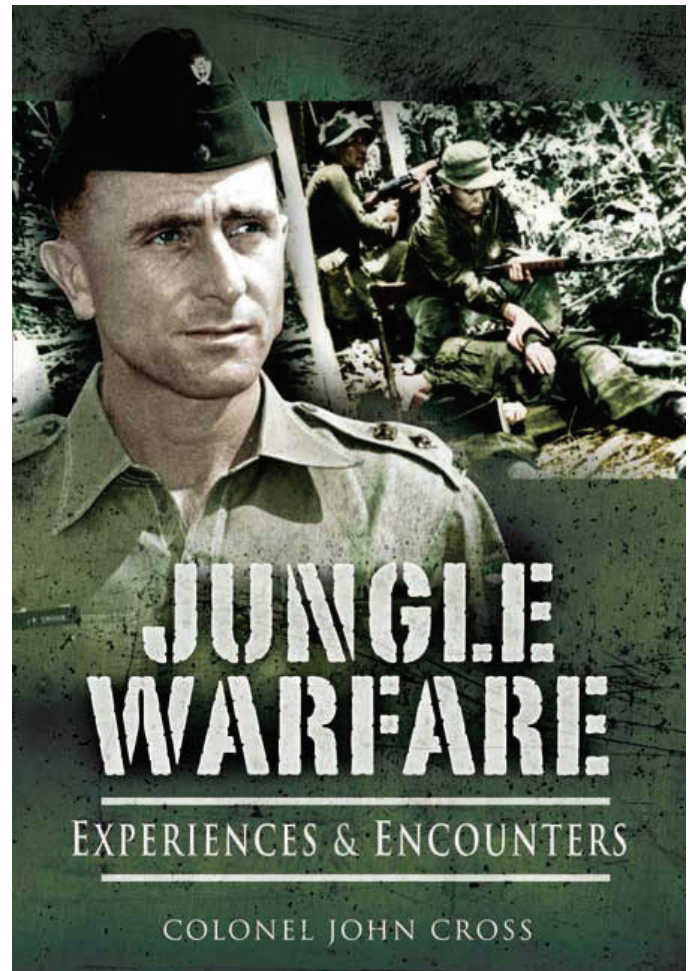
ISBN: 978-1844156665

Published: 21 February 2008

Paperback £8.10 (Amazon)

Hardback £17.98 (Amazon)

Kindle £10.98 (Amazon)



Gurkhas at War (Paperback) Eyewitness Accounts from World War II to Iraq by J P Cross, Greenhill Books, 2007

Gurkhas at War

by J P Cross

The first time the Gurkha soldier's voice has been heard at length. Historical overviews of Gurkha operations. Vivid, first-person descriptions spanning more than 60 years of warfare 'Breaks new ground by relating experiences of Gurkha soldiers over the past 60 years - in their own words ... It is beautifully produced and edited' - *Field Marshal Sir John Chapple*

'A fascinating book ... a pioneering work' - *Red Flash*

The Journal of the 8th Gurkha Rifles Regimental Association (UK) *Gurkhas at War*, the result of in-depth interviews conducted by editors J P. Cross and Buddhiman Gurung, offers these remarkable soldiers a voice in print for the first time. These first-person narratives centre on the 60-year period from the outbreak of World War II to the confrontation in East Timor, including the lengthy battles against the Japanese in the Burmese jungle, campaigns against the Communists in Malaya and Hong Kong, as well as more recent deployments in the Falklands Campaign and Gulf War. We also gain insight into the changes wrought by Indian Independence, which forcibly divided the Gurkha allegiance between the ex-colony and her old master. The tactless mismanagement of the various 'handovers', and the punitive measures directed at many Gurkhas who disputed their resettlement, remain a painful memory for those subjected to the change. The editors - who travelled 5,000 miles to rescue material from surviving soldiers - provide a thorough introduction to Gurkha culture, a historical overview of each campaign fought, and record some of the peculiarities of their encounters with these most resilient of soldiers.

By J P Cross

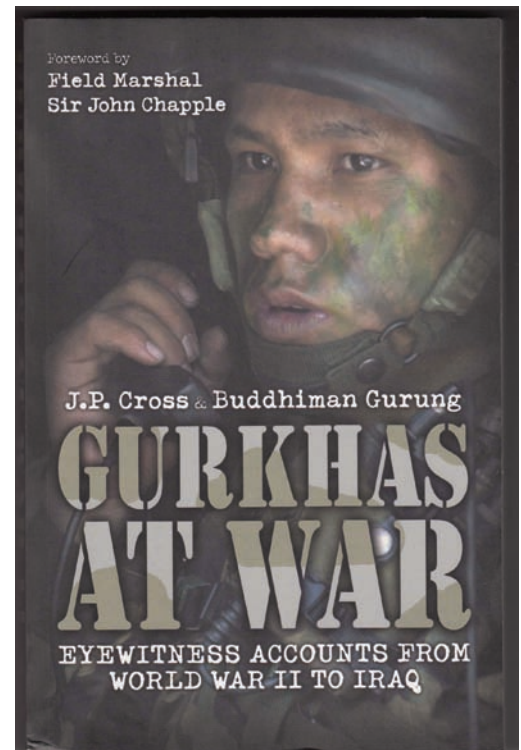
Available through Greenhill Books

Pages: 320

ISBN: 978-1853677274

Published: 15th May 2007

Paperback £16.99 (Amazon)



Gurkha Tales From Peace and War, 1945-2011 by J P Cross, Frontline Books, 2012

Gurkha Tales

by J P Cross

Gurkhas have served with the British for almost 200 years, first with the army of the East India Company, then with the Indian Army of the Raj, and then in 1947 becoming an integral part of the British Army. This anthology of articles from *The Kukri* by J P Cross covers much of the past 60 years of their history, taking in the last days of the Second World War and the Indonesian Confrontation in the 1960s, and also gives an insight into the culture and beliefs of these renowned soldiers.

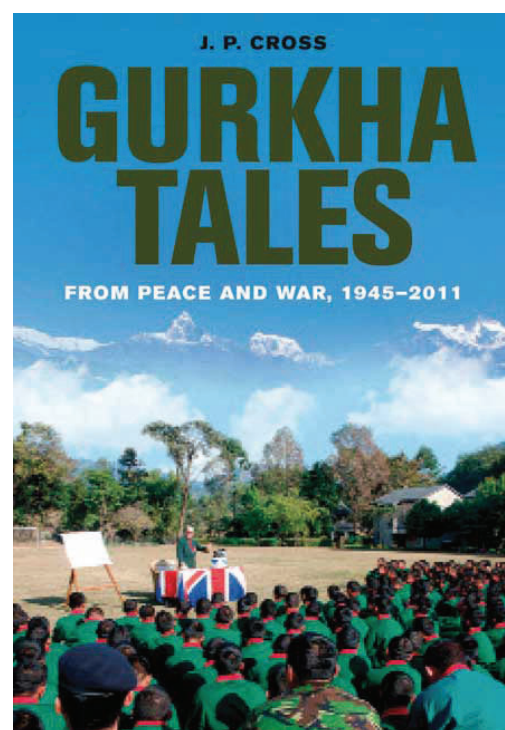
As a Gurkha officer, J P Cross had many unusual experiences in his long career: in 1945, for example, he was attached to a Japanese battalion in Indochina which was fighting for the British against the Viet Minh, and the only photograph taken of this Japanese unit finally laying down its weapons appears in this book. Later, he just managed to resolve a potentially deadly dispute between an offended Gurkha and a visiting South Vietnamese trainee at the Jungle Warfare School. He also describes several seemingly supernatural experiences whilst serving with troops from a culture in which such things are firmly believed.

This is a unique anthology drawn from an equally unique military career and a relationship with the Gurkhas that has lasted for over half a century.

Reviews:

It may be said, with some authority, that John Cross' knowledge on matters Gurkha, their language, customs and history is unsurpassed. Not only has he served some 39 years in the army, mostly with Gurkhas, but has seen much active service during the war, the Malayan Emergency and the Indonesian Confrontation in Borneo. Now retired, he resides in Pokhara, Nepal, where his total association with Nepal and its Gurkhas extends to some 67 years. He has been prolific in the writing of fictional historical novels, in addition to many autobiographical publications, reviewed and published in both past 'Kukri's' and the 7 GR Regimental Association Journals. By common cause his command of Gurkhali will very probably never be surpassed by any non-Gurkha. In addition, he also holds the position of official historian for the Nepalese army and currently much of his time in Pokhara is devoted to charitable causes.

For me, a highlight was the extraordinary event of the surrender of the Japanese Yamagishi Butai unit to John's battalion, 1/1 GR, in Cochin China, November 1945. A hitherto unpublished photograph recording the event is amongst other outstanding photographs. Together with the aforementioned, there are no fewer than a total of remarkable 31 separate 'mini-tales' of equal interest within 'Gurkha Tales.'



The book's foreword is written by Field Marshal Sir John Chapple and is described to perfection by the words: "There is so much to enjoy in these Gurkha Tales, and so much to learn about these superb soldiers with whom we have been privileged to serve."

Gurkha Tales is interesting, amusing, and represents an anthology drawn from a kaleidoscope of events during John's unique military career. Highly recommended as a 'must-read' for anyone connected with, or interested in Nepal and its very special fame, the 'without-equal' Gurkha. *Peter Quantrell, 7th Duke of Edinburgh's Own Gurkha Rifles Regimental Association Journal*

Gurkha Tales is an eclectic and fascinating collection of autobiographical stories by the legendary "JPX". Ranging from the strategic and tactical, to the whimsical and occasionally spiritual, this anthology provides unique, first-hand insights into service in the Brigade dating from the end of WW2, through Malaya, Borneo and the people's revolution in Laos. There is as much in it for Brigade and South Asia fanatics as there is for casual military historians, particularly those who have served in the Brigade and know the author, either personally, or if only by reputation. He writes in his characteristically pithy and wry style, but the detail of his experiences on operations

is written with great clarity and contemporary relevance, and is both refreshing and candid. All of the stories provide a rich window into his career and the Brigade of Gurkhas. Although drawn from articles written largely for the *Kukri Magazine*, they are as graphic and relevant today as they were then, and in one book, allow the reader to dip in and out of the Brigade's history, and into one of the Brigade's charismatic and mercurial characters. *Lt Col Elton Davis (Deputy Commander/Chief of Staff, HQ British Gurkhas, Nepal)*

This book is called *Gurkha Tales* but as John Cross explains in his introduction, it is not tales of or about the Gurkhas rather, tales the Gurkhas tell and there is a subtle difference. Each chapter is autonomous but such is the subject and style one is seduced into reading one after the other. Highlights include a description and comments of a visit to Laos in March 1975 when the Vietnam War was ending and a trip to Ootacamund

in Tamil Nadu during the India/Pakistan War of December 1971. I warmly recommend this book to all with even a passing interest in Nepal. Furthermore, his final paragraph in the book includes an invitation to all travelling in Nepal to visit him and his extended family in Pokhara where he now lives. *Britain-Nepal Society Journal*

Other reviews are available on line.

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