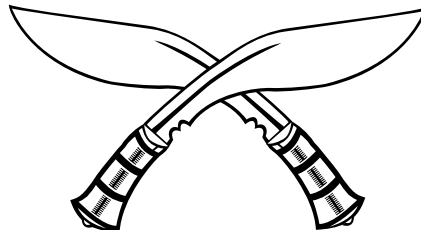


The Kukri



The Journal of
The Brigade of Gurkhas
2009/10



The Kukri

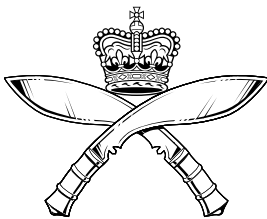
NUMBER 61

December 2010

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Headquarters Brigade of Gurkhas
Trenchard Lines, Upavon
Pewsey, Wiltshire SN9 6BE
United Kingdom

The Journal of The Brigade of Gurkhas 2009/10

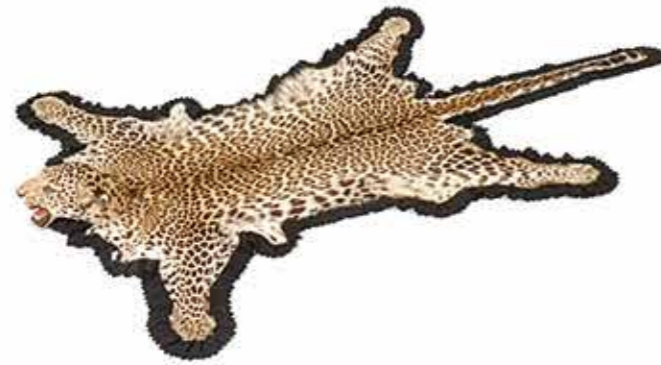


**Front Cover
Queen's Gurkha Orderly Officers**

*Capt Yambahadur Rana RGR
Capt Prembahadur Ale QGE*

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Editorial

The theme of this edition of *The Kukri* – as has been the case for the last several editions – is operations. In particular, there are vivid and comprehensive accounts of the 2nd Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles in Afghanistan on Op HERRICK 9 (October 2008 to April 2009), the 1st Battalion on Op HERRICK 12 (April – October 2010) and the Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment on Op HERRICK 11 (October 2009 to April 2010). There is also coverage of operations by The Queen's Gurkha Engineers and Queen's Gurkha Signals, and Foxtrot (Tavoletto Company), one of the three Gurkha Reinforcement Companies.

All these operations have enjoyed a great deal of success and the various articles convey the mood that tangible progress is being made. However, there has been a serious cost in killed and gravely wounded. The treacherous murders of Major Josh Bowman, Lieutenant Neal Turkington and Corporal Arjun Purja Pun of 1 RGR by a rogue Afghan soldier in July 2010 cast an especially sombre shadow over the scene. (Their obituaries and those of our other casualties will appear in the next *Kukri*.)

The usual authoritative review of the work of the Brigade of Gurkhas today is provided in the Report to the President of Nepal by the Colonel Commandant, General Sir David Richards. This covers operational deployments, recruiting, progress with the implementation of the Review of Gurkha Terms and Conditions of Service, the outcome of the Judicial Review on Gurkha Pensions, and the work of the Gurkha Welfare Trust, among other matters.

The Colonel Commandant's Report also touches on the new immigration policy for retired Gurkhas announced in May 2009, and this edition includes a description of the role of the Gurkha Welfare Centre – jointly operated by the Gurkha Welfare Trust and Headquarters Brigade of Gurkhas - which is helping to coordinate welfare support for retired Gurkhas in the United Kingdom, working closely with Government departments, local authorities, service charities, other agencies and Gurkha communities, in response to the surge of Gurkha settlement.

A most distinguished member of the Gurkha community in Britain was Havildar Lachhiman Gurung VC, 8th Gurkha Rifles, and it is with great sadness that we must record his death on 12 December 2010. His funeral took place in Hounslow on 22 December and the Brigade, serving and retired, was well represented, despite the severe winter weather. An obituary, describing his sublime heroism at Taungdaw in Burma in May 1945, will be included in the next edition.

Another poignant reminder of the old Gurkha Brigade was the disbandment in May 2009 of the 1st King George V's Own Gurkha Rifles (The Malaun Regiment) Regimental Association – the last of the associations of the regiments which remained

in India in 1947 – and we record their Chairman's evocative and moving speech at their final reunion.

We have a number of fascinating individual articles, including General Sir Sam Cowan on his crossing of the Larkya La, and Brigadier John Anderson on his visit to Nepal for the Gurkha Welfare Scheme conference in 2010 when he also saw the new residential home at Kaski. It is clear that readers especially enjoy articles of this kind – *Kukri* used to feature more of them in the past – and we would urge members of the Brigade, serving and retired, to put pen to paper. Recollections, essays on aspects of Brigade history, anecdotes - even poems - would be gratefully received.

November 2009 saw the publication of Brigadier Christopher Bullock's magnificent official history of the Brigade – *Britain's Gurkhas*. As the Colonel Commandant says in his foreword to the book:

"Many fine writers and historians have turned their attention to the history of the Brigade of Gurkhas, but surely none have been better qualified to address the subject than Brigadier Christopher Bullock. He knows the Brigade in all weathers, and from many points of view. He writes, therefore, with unsurpassed authority – and with a very warm but informed regard for Gurkhas."

The book covers the whole panorama of the history of the Brigade from the Nepal Wars, through the campaigns of 19th Century India, to the World Wars and the operations of today. A lively review by Major Gordon Corrigan, himself also a historian of repute, will give readers the flavour of the work,

Another important review, by Peter Quantrill, is of *The Crown of Renown*, the latest book in the epic series of novels by Lieutenant Colonel John Cross which are set against the background of the story of the Gurkhas and their service to Britain.

Since it was first published in 1948, *The Kukri* has had some editions which covered calendar years, and others which covered financial years – and one or two that covered more than one year. This one falls, very clumsily, into the last of these categories. It concentrates on events in 2009, but because its production is so woefully behindhand, we have seen fit to include some more up-to-date material. Our intention is to try to get back on track in the next edition, which will deal with the 'balance' of 2010 and the whole of 2011. We should be very grateful for contributions from units and individuals no later than 16 December 2011.

Imperfect though this *Kukri* may be in its construction, we can confidently assert that its component articles are full of interest and will give readers a vivid impression of the valour, skill and spirit of the Brigade of Gurkhas.

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

By General Sir David Richards KCB CBE DSO ADC Gen, Colonel Commandant Brigade of Gurkhas

Honourable President

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

The operational tempo of the Brigade of Gurkhas remains extremely high. Gurkha units are contributing to all major operations being undertaken by the British Army. Over the past 12 months Brigade of Gurkhas units have been committed to Afghanistan, Iraq, Cyprus and Kuwait; in 2009 over 30 % were deployed on operations, and in 2010 nearly 40% of the Brigade will be deployed to Afghanistan. I am delighted to report that all members of the Brigade continue to achieve success on operations in very challenging circumstances. The military capability the Gurkhas deliver is highly regarded and valued.

It is, however, with deep regret that I reflect on the tragic death of a Gurkha soldier whilst deployed on operations in

Afghanistan. Corporal Kumar Pun of the 1st Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles, died on 7 May 2009 as a result of enemy action when an Improvised Explosive Device detonated in a bazaar in Gereshk, Helmand province.

Corporal Kumar Pun's body was repatriated to the UK and the last rites were carried out by his family. We are caring for his wife and her two daughters, as they wish to remain in the UK.

Recruiting for the Brigade remains strong with more than 11,000 applications in Nepal last year from which 176 male recruits were selected at our Recruiting Depot in Pokhara. We recently briefed your Government that this is a slightly reduced intake from the 230 of recent years, as we wish to ensure we maintain a balanced manning structure within the Brigade. The recruits have started their training in the UK.



British Gurkhas on operations in Afghanistan – where the Gurkhas' language and cultural affinity enables them to engage actively with the local population



A Gurkha Infantry Patrol in Afghanistan in February 2009

Our aim is to continue to maintain parity of opportunity by recruiting in both east and west of Nepal.

Further work has been conducted to consider the feasibility of recruiting Nepalese females into the Brigade. We are still considering this issue in depth, alongside a similar study that examines the employment of females in the wider British Army. Naturally, should we decide to proceed with this initiative we would need to ensure that Gurkha recruit selection and training standards are set appropriately. We recognise that our continued recruitment is with the goodwill of your Government reflecting the long standing and proud relationship of friendship between our two countries.

In my report last year, I updated you on the Gurkha Terms and Conditions of Service (GTACOS) Review for the serving personnel in the Brigade of Gurkhas. I am delighted to inform you that the implementation programme is progressing well and is on schedule to conclude by 2012.

A significant aspect of the GTACOS implementation is to reflect the culture and customs of Nepal. We have completed the recruitment of two further Buddhist Religious Teachers (RTs) in Nepal. Our Brigade will now have six Hindu and three Buddhist RTs stationed with our units in the UK and Brunei.

The families of serving Gurkhas can now apply in their own right for Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) in the United Kingdom. Having ILR status gives Gurkha dependants full access to state provisions enjoyed by UK nationals. The ability to apply for places in UK universities and colleges as Home Students is one such provision; Gurkha dependants will now pay the same tuition fees as their British counterparts.

I reported last year that we have three Gurkha Reinforcement Companies (GRCs) serving with undermanned



Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment soldier clearing a route in Afghanistan in November 2009.



GWS Team handing out the welfare pension to Ex Gurkha soldiers

British Infantry units. I am pleased to report that because the Army's recruiting and retention has improved recently, we shall be able to return those Gurkhas serving in GRCs back to their own Gurkha units over the next two years

Your Government was notified on 11 January 2010 that the recent Judicial Review on Gurkha pensions has found in favour of the UK Ministry of Defence. The UK Government remains clear in its view that Gurkhas who left the service before 1 July 1997 have been fairly treated in respect of their pension provision. The Gurkha Pension Scheme (GPS) is a very fair scheme. For most Gurkhas, it provides a pension at least as good, and in many cases better, than that given to their British counterparts with identical periods of service. The GPS was part of an attractive package of reward and recognition which attracted large numbers of high calibre Gurkha recruits over many years. It provides a comfortable pension for retirement in Nepal, and it is increased every year in line with inflation there, and in accordance with arrangements within the Tri-Partite Agreement.

I previously reported that we were planning to complete the enhanced Gurkha Married Accompanied Service (GMAS) scheme, which came into effect in April 2006. I am pleased to report that the allocation of service accommodation in the UK

is now complete as per the forecast. Similarly, there has been substantial progress made for our Infantry Battalion stationed in Brunei. The Brunei Garrison Estate Development Plan is a major project involving the building of new barracks and married quarters and, on current projection, GMAS delivery is likely to be achieved by 2010, two years ahead of schedule.

The UK Government continues to remain engaged in discussions with your officials on a new Memorandum of Understanding as a supplement to the Tri-Partite Agreement to reflect the positive changes arising from the GTACOS Review. I have every confidence that this vital work will soon come to fruition.

The UK Government announced a new immigration policy last May. It allows all Gurkhas who served in the British Army between 1948 and 1997 for more than four years to settle in the UK. As we have previously informed your Government, much work has been undertaken on a UK cross Government basis to ensure ex-Servicemen who wish to settle in the UK receive appropriate advice and assistance, firstly in making an informed decision before leaving Nepal, and secondly in securing welfare support if they require it in UK.

As Chairman of the Gurkha Welfare Trust, I am also pleased to report that the Trust, through its field arm in Nepal, the Gurkha Welfare Scheme, continues to provide essential welfare support to all ex-members of the Brigade of Gurkhas and their dependants who are in need. In Financial Year 2008/09 the cost of this support exceeded £8,400,000, almost all of which was raised by public donation. The UK Government continues to provide funds in support of the Trust's administrative costs in Nepal and in support of the Trust's Rural Water and Sanitation Programme.

The Trust's priority remains the provision of a monthly welfare pension to the 10,000 or so ex-members of the Brigade and their widows who have no alternative form of income. With an average age of 86 years, their needs are increasing, specifically in the area of medical support. The Trust has responded by the recruitment of additional local doctors and nursing staff, not just to provide immediate medical support via our network of Area Welfare Centres, but also to enable medical staff to visit those in need in their villages. In the past year the Trust provided over 115,000 primary care appointments at our Area Welfare Centres. For those needing more complex or longer term care we continue to use local hospitals. Over

10,000 individuals received secondary medical care. We also continue to conduct a series of medical camps in support of hill communities which last year treated over 14,500 individuals.

We continue to provide other areas of support, namely the construction of schools, the provision of student grants in support of education, and financial assistance for those ex-members of the Brigade who have to rebuild their lives after natural or other disaster.

The provision of water to isolated hill communities across Nepal remains a priority for the Trust. During the year 63 new projects were started, ranging from the drilling of water in rural and remote areas, to the installation of tap stands and latrines in village communities. In excess of 19,000 people have benefited from this programme which remains a cornerstone of the Trust's activities.

The Trust reported last year that it intends to construct a residential home in Kaski to provide residential facilities for up to 25 individuals who are in circumstances of very real distress. Work has progressed well and the home should be complete by April 2010. Trustees see this as an essential response to a new and emerging need. The home will provide a dignified environment centred on a culture of respect and care for the elderly.

The Trust has also had to respond to the welfare needs of the increasing number of ex-members of the Brigade and their families who choose to settle in the UK and who find themselves in difficulties. We have therefore established, with Headquarters Brigade of Gurkhas, a joint Gurkha Welfare Centre in the UK (on the foundations of the Brigade's existing Gurkha Welfare Support Office) to act as an initial point of contact and to assist with coordination. However, it is not the

intention to engage in the direct delivery of welfare support in the UK – that will be carried out by existing Service and other charities who have already given much devoted help to Gurkhas in need. This will enable the Trust to retain its focus firmly on providing welfare support in Nepal.

The Trust's extensive activities in Nepal reflect the British Government's continued commitment to the welfare of all ex-Gurkha servicemen and their dependants and the British public's very high regard for the Gurkha soldier. The Trust remains extremely grateful for the support of the Government of Nepal, through the Brigade of Gurkhas Welfare Coordination Committee, to enable it to carry out its wide range of welfare activities.

In conclusion, Britain's Brigade of Gurkhas continues to make a vital and valued contribution to our military operations around the world. In return we are doing our utmost to ensure the well-being of Gurkha soldiers, their families and communities and trust that there are associated benefits for Nepal. The British Government and people are acutely aware of, and grateful for, the generations of Gurkhas who have served the United Kingdom with great courage, sacrifice and distinction and thank you and your government for the continual support that makes this possible.

Sir David Richards
General
Colonel Commandant Brigade of Gurkhas
5 February 2010



General Sir David Richards presenting Afghanistan Medals to soldiers of the 2nd Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles
18 June 2009



A Gurkha Welfare Scheme Rural Water and Sanitation Project in Nepal.

Honours and Awards 2009/2010

Queen's Birthday Honours List

MBE

Maj Guptaman Gurung MVO RGR

MVO

Capt Yambahadur Rana RGR

Capt Prembahadur Ale QGE

New Year's Honours List

CB

Lt Gen PT C Pearson CBE

MBE

Maj J P Davies RGR

Maj W R Kefford RGR

MSM

21168114 Sgt Kesharbahadur Gurung

Operational Honours & Awards List

MC

21170368 LCpl Gajendra Rai RGR

MiD

Maj R J Daines RGR

(Afghanistan)

Capt R T Anderson RGR

Capt T W Rose RGR

21169234 Sgt Bikash Rai RGR

21169983 Cpl Basanta Rai RGR

21170464 Cpl Bishwahang Rai RGR

21170305 LCpl Buddhibahadur Gurung RGR

21170727 LCpl Tilakkumar Rai RGR

21171609 Rfn Prakash Pun RGR

21171544 Rfn Darshan Chamling Rai RGR

21171454 Rfn Manju Gurung RGR

21170990 Rfn Gopal Rai RGR

Operations

Ist Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles

Op HERRICK 12, Afghanistan - Overview

QCVS

(Afghanistan)

Lt Col C B Darby RGR

Maj A G Alexander-Cooper RGR

Lt A C Connolly RGR

21169511 Sgt Pritabhadur Gurung QOGLR

21170108 Cpl Mohan Thapa QGE

JT COMD Commendations

(Afghanistan)

Lt ST Meadows RGR

21169002 CSgt Lilaram Rai RGR

QCVS

(Iraq)

Col IA Rigden OBE RGR

Following a busy and successful pre-deployment package 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles deployed to the Nar-e-Saraj district of Helmand Province in April 2010. The Battlegroup took over from the Coldstream Guards who had made great progress bringing security to an area only recently cleared of insurgent occupation. Before the Battlegroup had taken over we had suffered our first casualty. Cpl Haribhadur Budha Magar was grievously wounded when he initiated a pressure plate IED on a familiarization patrol. It was a stark reminder that we would be operating in a complex, multi-layered counter-insurgency against a tenacious and wily enemy.

The initial force lay-down saw A, B, and Malta (Mercian) Companies and an Estonian company employed in a ground holding capacity with C Company as an operations company. With the end of the poppy harvest and the beginning of summer, the insurgent activity picked up considerably, threatening the protected communities that had been established by previous Battlegroups. We chose to take the fight to the enemy and surged into the areas where he was strongest. Our first major operation involved pushing three companies up into an area that had not been visited by our predecessors. Intelligence suggested that it was effectively under insurgent control, and that it contained two critical choke points that they used to transit through, using tunnels under the major canal towards our northern boundary. We began the operation by pushing A and B Companies north to draw the insurgents forward, and then we inserted C Company on the choke points by helicopter. It rapidly became apparent that the enemy was going to contest this area strongly. All companies were engaged by small arms fire and RPGs by an enemy who constantly sought to out-manoeuvre us. C Company took two early casualties, Cpl Agnish Thapa MC and Rfn Purnabhadur Gurung caught by RPG shrapnel, but their blocking actions were highly effective. A and B Company's were under constant attack, but still managed to push forward. We had aimed to overmatch the enemy to enable us to discuss issues with the local elders uninterrupted, but the enemy resistance reduced these opportunities. However, our partnered Afghan forces were able to detain two fighters who provided a wealth of information.

We then moved into a short period of consolidation in which patrolling activity around the static locations continued. The routine business of counter-insurgency occupied much time, involving engagement with local leaders, initiation of low level development projects, and the provision of security to the villages in the area. A pattern formed and most patrols

were engaged by small arms fire and/or RPGs, particularly if we pushed out into contested areas that often lay quite close to our base locations. We soon resumed the offensive and mounted a second major operation to another part of the area involving A and C Companies from 1 RGR and Malta Company 1 MERCIAN. This time we were successful in overmatching the enemy, and despite some sporadic shoots on to platoons moving through the area, we managed to reach our target villages and conduct some very good meetings with the locals who were too afraid to come to us in our patrol bases. The Afghan National Army again played a major role in this operation, with their acting Kandak commander deploying forward with BG Tac to conduct the shuras. Subsequent reports suggested that the insurgents' confidence took a hit as a result of this operation.

Following our early surges in strength into the insurgents' heartlands, we mixed up our pattern of activity. In some areas we consolidated our position, and in others we continued to push the Taliban away. We needed to make it too uncomfortable for them to stick around, whilst at the same time ensuring that people felt secure in their villages. Throughout the tour the matter of where to commit our manpower and resources was always a balancing act.

B Company were located in the west of Nar-e-Saraj, centered on Patrol Base 4 and were concentrating on the road that was being built that would join up Lashkar Gah and Gereshk. It was a task that we expected to take three months with the Royal Engineers overseeing it, the Counter-IED Task Force clearing the route, contractors building it, and B Company providing the security and coordinating all the activity. However inevitable frictions ensued and the insurgents themselves, understanding the importance of this road to establishing security, came at B Company with real gusto. Progress was initially good through the village of Walizi but then we hit a wall of IEDs; small arms contacts were frequent and the company suffered numerous casualties but responded remarkably well.

By June C Company had effectively given up their role as operations company (A Company now filling that role) and had been allocated their own area. This was a necessary move due to the deteriorating security situation in the village of Paid Kalay where the insurgents were making concerted efforts to gain inroads and apply pressure on the population. C Company built three checkpoints, which they manned alongside their ANA partners. During the initial construction, these came

under heavy attack, but the situation calmed down, and the atmosphere in and around this key village improved markedly. With the population in and around Paind Kalay gradually coming on-side, the opportunity was seized to develop governance in the area. Appointing village committees allowed the local elders to have a say in security and development issues. Another key area that made genuine progress was the recruitment of local males for the police force. These recruits were trained in the recently established training facility in Laskah Gar and returned to police their own communities; this had a positive and tangible effect on the security situation in Paind Kalay and proved the effectiveness of the policy.

Whilst C Company was surging ahead in Paind Kalay, just a few kilometres away around the village of Char Coucha Malta Company, I MERCIAN had been bearing the brunt of the displacement of the enemy in other parts of the area. By June they had lost four soldiers, with many more wounded. Their ground was difficult, much like the bocage where the enemy is able to fall back along covered lines to a series of natural firing positions. They kept pushing hard against a determined enemy, exacting a heavy toll, but paying a heavy price.

On one such occasion Malta Company had been surging out of their normal area and had come under extremely effective fire that caused the deaths of LCpl Cochran and Cpl Webster. It was clear that the enemy felt far too confident in the area, so we made our move, and pulled together a hasty Battlegroup surge into the area to move in before dawn the next day. C and Malta Companies moved on foot into flank protection positions before dawn, and A Company then flew into the enemy's depth. As they began to clear through a series of villages the enemy reoriented themselves and focused their attention on A Company, starting what was to become an eight hour battle. The Company crept forward, coming under effective and accurate fire from several positions. A Company were unable to engage with air support or artillery due to the risk of civilian casualties. Every fifteen minutes or so the CO would listen on the enemy radio to a call to re-attack, followed seconds later by a ripple of machine gun and RPG fire as they did so. Capt Pete Houlton Hart led the ANA platoon that he was mentoring on a charge to gain a foothold in the village from where the fire was coming, and the Company then steadily pushed forwards, suppressing and clearing each firing point as they went. This was an infantry battle through and through, with the added complexity of there being limited air or attack helicopter support, and the fact that the enemy were employing tactics such as moving away from firing points surrounded by groups of children. Miraculously, A Company sustained no casualties that day, and then two days later they went and repeated it all again about five kilometres to the west. The pressure that this put on the insurgents was enormous.

It was the midpoint of the tour when the Battlegroup suffered what was possibly its darkest hour. At Patrol Base 3, on the night of 12-13 July, an ANA sergeant who shared the base with us walked across to the ISAF end of the camp and opened fire on the ops room and accommodation tents, killing Major Josh Bowman, Lt Neil Turkington and Cpl Arjun Pun. He then returned to the Afghan Army area claiming that

the Taliban were attacking the camp and that they should all stand to, before escaping over the wall of the base. It was a shocking event that none of us had anticipated. We had built up a good rapport with our Afghan partners, and there had been no indications that anything like this might happen. The only consolation is that all of our soldiers accepted that partnering must go on, and they continued to act in a highly professional manner. They might have been forgiven for doing otherwise, but to their credit they showed not only restraint, but also understanding. The tragedy of 13 July was heightened when Lt John Sanderson of Malta Company was caught in an IED explosion a few hours after the attack on A Company. He was terribly wounded, and finally succumbed to his injuries and passed away in Birmingham a month later.

Shortly afterwards, we were joined by Arnhem Company of the 2nd Battalion The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment who took over A Company's patrol base, freeing them up to move into a new phase of the operation. Now under Major Shaun Chandler's leadership, A Company continued their impressive work. Only ten days after the ANA sergeant's attack, they mounted a major operation to secure the village of Rahim Kalay, an area in which they had had many fire fights over the preceding months. They moved in a well-coordinated operation that saw them occupying positions that dominated all the major approaches to the village. Unsurprisingly this was hotly contested by the Taliban who tried hard to force them out. Instead of hunkering down, the Company took the fight to the enemy, and drove them away in a series of close-quarter battles and ambushes. It was a real feat and the tempo that the Company managed to generate completely overwhelmed their opponents. Just days later the villagers were welcoming the Company, pleased at the prospect of lasting security. It was not plain sailing, of course, and a ruthlessly high tempo of operations was maintained by the Company keeping the insurgent on the back foot and allowing A Company to establish itself in the eyes of the locals as the preferred providers of security.

Once that operation was done, we switched our attention back to the other end of the area. We are clearly no experts, but building a road, which was the next project, is tricky enough without having someone shooting at you on a regular basis as you attempt to do so. Already we were seeing the benefits as we extended our permanent presence some two kilometres west, gaining easy access to locations that until recently had to be resupplied by helicopter or bergan. However, the Taliban had realised that the civilian contractors working on the road were the soft target, and they had become bolder in their attacks, causing a couple of casualties and the refusal of the contractors to continue work. Arnhem Company of 2 LANCS was therefore launched into an operation to hold the enemy away from the road. They pushed deep into the enemy area and had two hard days' fighting as they attracted all the Taliban's attention. For much of the time, they were under direct attack, and fought off a bold and committed opponent. They succeeded in getting the road project moving again, but it came at a dreadfully high price. Kingsman Deady sustained a gunshot wound, and Captain Andy Griffiths was caught by an IED. Tragically, both were to succumb to their injuries and passed away after they had been evacuated to Birmingham. Their loss was a bitter blow.

An incident that aptly demonstrates the fickle nature of the relations between the Afghan Army and Police took place between them at the local market. Within seconds a dispute had escalated and weapons were drawn and fired. Four died almost immediately, and the remainder lined up behind cover and started a battle that raged for 45 minutes. We moved our armoured vehicles up to try to separate them and break off the fight, but there were still RPGs and machine gun fire being traded, much of which came dangerously close to our crews. Eventually we managed to get each side to withdraw in different directions with their dead and wounded, and then began the process of investigation and reconciliation.

The main thrust of our operations over August and September had been the consolidation of the protected communities that we had striven to build. In particular, we conducted a major operation in the village of Char Coucha, where Malta Company of I MERCIAN was based. We deployed our operations company, Arnhem Company of 2 LANCS, to the area to hold the insurgents away whilst Malta Company invested in the village, building a short road to their most vulnerable checkpoint as they did so. We cleared extra routes through the village and also some of the compounds that were suspected of having IEDs in them, and people started to return to their homes and were soon out in their fields with little sense of impending threat. Most promisingly, however, they started to talk, and we gradually built up a dialogue with the principal elders who are the key to stability. It was not all plain sailing though and Arnhem Company had a number of scrapes with the Taliban as they dominated the known routes through the area.

Whilst the enemy often opted for classic guerrilla tactics, seeking to exploit our weaknesses and targeting us with IEDs and opportunistic shoots, he also chose on occasion to launch determined and audacious attacks in an attempt to overrun static locations. The first such attack came at Checkpoint Lamar in Malta Company's Area of Operations. About half an hour before dusk, one of our police checkpoints in the centre of the area came under attack. It was to transpire that this was just a diversion, although the local police performed magnificently and within half an hour had returned fire, deployed a quick reaction force, assaulted the enemy position, conducted a casualty evacuation, and killed two of the enemy. Just as they were wrapping up, a grenade was lobbed into Checkpoint Lamar. The grenade landed in amongst a group of Afghan soldiers who

had sat down to start their meal, and caused ten casualties, one of whom was a Mercian soldier who was walking past. Many of these were extremely serious. As soon as the grenade detonated, the enemy opened up from many different positions around the checkpoint, raking it with machine gun and RPG fire. A battle began which was to last about two hours. With the absence of air support, we could not evacuate the casualties, and had to rely on mortars and artillery to provide the close support. As this was being teed-up, Sgt Moitt spotted two men clambering over the wall, and shot them. The enemy did not give up though, and it took a determined effort of firing from the rooftops and coordinating indirect fire to beat them off. A daring casualty evacuation was then led by the Company Commander, Maj Rich Grover, using quad bikes to break through to the position.

A second attempt to overrun one of our positions came on the eve of the elections at 3 Platoon (A Company's) Checkpoint which at the time was only very lightly manned as they had a patrol out. A/Sgt Dipprasad Pun, a Mortar Fire Controller, was on sentry duty at the time, and went forward to the edge of his position to investigate a suspicious noise. When there, he spotted some armed enemy in the field to his front and then opened up on them. As he did so, he himself was engaged by a heavy weight of fire from several directions. For the next fifteen minutes he calmly moved around his position beating off the attackers who attempted to scale the walls and pour fire onto his rooftop. He single-handedly fought off the attack, resorting to throwing a GPMG tripod at an enemy who was immediately beneath his rooftop position. We are intensely proud of what he achieved that night – it was very special. General Petraeus visited some days later and was able to personally thank Sgt Dip for his efforts.

As our deployment drew to a close the dynamics in the area were changing. Contacts were becoming less frequent, the protected communities established, often at great cost, and were largely free of insurgent influence and intimidation. As we handed over to 2 PARA we felt confident that we had carried on what others before us had started and that we are gradually inching towards a more stable and secure Central Helmand.

On arrival back in the UK the Battalion dispersed for well-earned leave with the Medals Parade to look forward to in January with our Colonel in Chief, HRH the Prince of Wales, as the guest of honour.

Commanding Officer's Final SITREP from Afghanistan – November 2010

By Lieutenant Colonel G M Strickland MBE

We have now handed over to 2 PARA. Since I last wrote we have seen a marked improvement in Nar e Saraj South, marred of course by the loss of Rfn Suraj Gurung who was killed by a suicide bomber who lay in wait for his patrol as they moved through a small village near our main patrol base.

A few days ago I presented commendations to C Company as they prepared to board their plane home. I was struck by their

pride and confidence. They are lean, hardened and disciplined, and they know they have done a good job. But as you would expect they retain the humility that is the hallmark of our Gurkhas.

The main thrust of our operations over the last six weeks has been the consolidation of the protected communities that we have striven to build. In particular, we have conducted a major operation in the village of Char Coucha, where Malta Company

of 1 MERCIAN was based. We deployed our operations company, Arnhem Coy of 2 LANCS, to the area to hold the insurgents away whilst Malta Company invested in the village, building a short road to their most vulnerable checkpoint as they did so. I patrolled down that route with a small team about two weeks ago and the difference in atmosphere was tangible. People were out in their fields and there was little sense of impending threat. We have cleared extra routes through the village and also some of the compounds that were suspected of having IEDs in them, and people are starting to return to their homes. Most promisingly however, they are starting to talk, and we are gradually building up a dialogue with the key elders who are the key to stability. It was not all plain sailing though and Arnhem Company had a number of scrapes with the Taliban as they dominated the known routes through the area.

One of the most encouraging developments has been the establishment of Village Development Committees. We have been working on these for a couple of months now and they are starting to bear fruit. In each of our four protected communities (one for each of the Companies) we have identified the elders who have the most influence and we are empowering them by channelling our development and security efforts through them. For the first time in our tour we managed to bring representatives from across the AO together in one place and we have started to see a nascent sense of civic responsibility emerging. I believe that this 'bottom-up delivery' of local governance is the key to bringing stability to the area, and this was borne out when we had a visit from the District Governor on our final day in which the locals again convened to make their case for the improvement of the road network in the area. It may seem like a small step from afar, but it feels like a major one from here.

A Company have continued their impressive work in the village of Rahim Kalay. There have been no attacks in the village for some time now, and the Company have taken advantage of this and pushed out into the neighbouring villages to spread the word. They have been able to get much further than previously before they have come up against enemy resistance, and when they have met it, they have responded decisively. Our reports all suggest that the enemy is demoralised and their influence is waning. Conversely we now enjoy greater support amongst the local population. It is by no means a done deal though, and there are still many challenges that lie ahead for 2 PARA, particularly as they spread the security bubble further and further out from where it sits now.

The road project that runs through B Company's area has finally reached our boundary, and will now become a 2 SCOTS responsibility. I have been constantly struck throughout this

tour by how much difference a road makes. Almost overnight it transforms the security environment, and in this case, it has allowed us to bring another complete village into the fold. B Company have also taken advantage of the insurgents' hesitation, and have pushed out further than they have been able to for much of the tour. This has enabled them to establish a dialogue with influential people who until now have avoided us. It has also allowed us to put further pressure on the insurgents who now find their safe areas coming under threat. A good traditional left flanking platoon attack onto some troublesome insurgents by B Company certainly achieved what it set out to do.

The ongoing Seed Distribution programme has also helped to bring people together. It is an Afghan Government programme, sponsored by DFID to provide people with an incentive to grow crops other than poppy. For a nominal fee, each farmer receives bags of wheat and vegetable seed and fertiliser. The lists of recipients were drawn up by the newly formed Village Development Committees, who then also assisted with the distribution. The response has been extremely positive, and it was particularly good that the government was seen to be delivering at the point of need rather than in the Gereshk bazaar.

I notice that there is a marked change in my tone in this SITREP, reflecting the changing dynamics in the area. Yes, there is still fighting, but it is happening less often, and something is definitely changing in the AO. Whether that is down to what we have done, or other external factors, it is too early to say. However I am confident that we have carried on what others before us started, and we are gradually inching towards a more stable and secure Central Helmand.

In this last SITREP I must again pay tribute to the men and women of the Battlegroup who have endured great hardship and suffering, but have maintained their fighting spirit right up to the end. They have constantly walked the tightrope of counter-insurgency operations, trying to find the balance between the use of force and the engagement with people through dialogue and development. They have shown remarkable restraint. We have had incredible lethal force at our disposal, but not one civilian has lost their life at the hands of the Battlegroup. The farewells given to our people by the local Afghans have been remarkable. In one case a group of forty turned up to see Sgt Govinda Gurung off as he left his checkpoint for the last time.

We leave with mixed feelings; sadness at the tragedy of the losses that we have suffered, anticipation of the homecoming, and satisfaction that we have done what we were sent here to do. For me, it has been an immense privilege to command such a fine group of people. I am deeply humbled by it.

2nd Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles

The 2 RGR Battlegroup at Musa Qal'eh – A Review of its Operations (October 2008 – April 2009)

By Lt Col C B Darby, Commanding Officer, 2nd Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles

This will be my final article from Afghanistan (on this tour at least) so I thought I would use it to take stock and to try and summarize what the Battlegroup has achieved in Musa Qal'eh over the past six months (October 2008 – April 2009).

The Area of Operations (AO) inherited by Battlegroup (North West) on Op HERRICK 9 was not secure. To the north of the Musa Qal'eh (MSQ) District Centre (DC) there was an obvious gap in the Patrol Base ring and the lack of a permanent coalition presence in the Green Zone between Satellite Station (North) and Roshan Tower gave the insurgents freedom of movement between MSQ and Kats Sharbat - an insurgent stronghold 9 km north of Musa Qal'eh. The result was an enduring direct fire threat to the DC, significant intimidation of Local Nationals in the Green Zone and Desert Compounds, and a durable and evolving IED threat in the south. A separate group of insurgents fought along more traditional military lines and had established a strong defensive belt along the 76 Northing. This belt, comprising bunkers and trench systems supported by IED concentrations and long-range heavy automatic weapon fire, fixed Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) in place and caused significant attrition to ISAF armoured forces when they maneuvered. In essence, between the 765 and 83 Northings the insurgents had significant influence, intimidated Local Nationals, and manoeuvred with fire and IEDs almost at will. North and south of these lines, lines of their own choosing, the insurgents had total control. Insurgents throughout the AO were well equipped, aggressive, well trained and determined. They had access to heavy weapons and complex IEDs, and they had the initiative.

Our approach to this threat manifested itself in a short Battlegroup phase that set the conditions for enduring sub-unit operations. Op MAR NONU 1 and 2 adjusted the inherited security envelope so that it lay along recognised civil and military lines and plugged obvious holes in the ANSF Patrol Base ring. These operations also wrested the initiative from the insurgents and produced a Front Line of Own Troops (FLOT) that was defined on Battlegroup rather than insurgent terms. But the decisive phase deployed dismounted infantry to the new austere and isolated Patrol Bases on the FLOT, and this simple expedient, living amongst the people, proved to be our most effective step. By occupying Patrol Bases and keeping them small, Local Nationals were not intimidated by a large foreign presence in their midst; they associated permanence with security, and a certain amount of mutual empathy developed (both shared the same living conditions and threat) The result was an

exponential increase in our understanding. The new Patrol Bases also allowed us to demarcate the district's contested and security zones. Correctly sighted PBs gained almost iconic status the moment their function became apparent and, as a result, insurgent activity coalesced around them. The result was a series of contested zones where fighting took place and a corresponding number of security zones where it did not. This enduring dynamic allowed us to link the security zones to produce an envelope around the DC. Between 4 November 2008 and 30 Mar 2009 the insurgents mounted 206 separate attacks outside security zone; they failed to mount a single successful attack inside it with the exception of a suicide IED on 1 December 2008. Finally and probably most importantly, the new Patrol Bases convinced Local Nationals that security was an enduring rather than a transitory effect.

Supporting Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition & Reconnaissance (ISTAR) and strike operations across the FLOT by reconnaissance, mechanized and armoured forces targeted insurgent Command and Control nodes and safe havens. This activity compelled Enemy Forces (EF) to retain force elements in depth to counter the threat and ensured coalition forces retained the initiative. Both approaches were enhanced from time to time by 'deception' that included unexplained fires, manoeuvre and novel activity that kept the insurgents off balance and confused, deploying 105 mm Light Gun in the direct fire role at Roshan Tower for example. But the key to the success of both these approaches was the involvement of Afghan National Security forces at every stage - a fundamental tenet of all the activity conducted by BG (NW) throughout Op HERRICK 9. The Battlegroup's most potent tool once Local Nationals had decided that security was no longer their primary concern was the Influence Group. Commanded by the ISTAR Officer (Major Toby Jackman - Officer Commanding Fire Support Company) the Group combined Psyops, media, all-source intelligence and liaison cells, Reconstruction & Development, the Military Stabilization and Support Team (MSST) and the ISTAR Group. This eclectic organisation worked to a set of guiding principles that tied it to the endorsed civil/military plan and offered a comprehensive suite of capabilities optimized for and focused on the delivery of influence in the Battlegroup's AO. Output was managed to ensure both coherency with a dynamic plan and acceptance by the area's primary Afghan actor, and this capability was mirrored throughout the command structure. It had greatest impact in sub-unit AOs where MSST specialists were embedded in the rifle companies. The paragraphs that follow give you an indication of what was achieved.

Security

In October the security envelope was ill-defined and the Patrol Base ring incomplete. The Front Line of Enemy Troops was established on ground of the enemy's choosing; insurgents had free passage to the DC from their strongholds in the north; security force operations were planned and conducted independently; and Local Nationals would not approach ISAF. By April the security envelope had been defined and the Patrol Base ring was better structured; front lines had been established on ground of our choosing, joint operations were planned and conducted by all elements of the security forces (ISAF and ANSF); and combined Afghan National Army /Afghan National Police operations within the PB ring were the norm. Local Nationals would share tea with us, exchange information and offer intelligence but, most importantly, security was no longer the primary concern of those living within the security envelope.

Justice

In October MSQ had a gaol and the Justice Shura sat, but detainees were locked up indefinitely and information on their plight was not available. The Taliban used this system as an example of the Afghan Government's inability to dispense transparent justice quickly and offered a viable alternative that was 'Afghan good enough'. By April the magisterial system introduced during the first weeks of our tour had been accepted as the norm and dispensed visible justice quickly. Local hoods were processed by the District Governor and punished or released back into the community. Those arrested by the Afghan National Police were dispatched to Lashkar Gah for processing accompanied by embryonic case files. We had received Provincial-level endorsement for these District level accommodations, and the improved security situation had enabled the Battlegroup to re-engage with the Provincial capital over the provision for MSQ. Local Nationals were content with the justice system and had begun to develop trust in their police.

Governance

In October MSQ had a Governor and a nascent Secretariat; both left in early November and returned in mid-March. The intervening period was invaluable; it allowed us to engineer links between the District and Provincial level of governance without interference from the District Governor. We were able to test and adjust the mechanisms that were introduced; and concepts that took root were visited by Provincial Line Ministry representatives and endorsed. The upshot was a working, robust and transparent system of governance for MSQ that was able to withstand the return of the District Governor. When Salaam was eventually coaxed back to work, the processes and mechanisms we had developed while he was away allowed us to concentrate the Governor's considerable talents on conducting outreach shuras throughout the AO; agreeing the District Development Plan designed and set up by us in conjunction with the PRT during his absence; delivering a District Shura for MSQ; and beginning the process of developing the sub-district level structures that will be required if Provincial plans for a Community Council and the Afghan Social Outreach Programme are to be realised.

Education

In October the DC school was open, Vocational Training for the adults was being provided at dispersed sites around the District Centre and a Thematic Head for Education (Said Aga) had been appointed, but by December those teaching vocational skills had stopped and the district's Thematic Head had been confirmed as an insurgent activist and Taliban spy. In removing Said Aga from post we cleared a significant obstacle to educational progress in MSQ and within a month provincial funding for District schools and an associated resource line had been established. The Afghan National Army opened the first school outside the District Centre in January and an adult literacy programme was established at the same time. By March Vocational Training had resumed; planning to expand the existing programme had begun; and it had been agreed that all elements of the curriculum would be taught at a single site to decrease the threat of intimidation. By the time we left the provincial Head for Education had visited MSQ and endorsed proposed development plans; he had agreed to make quarterly visits thereafter to demonstrate continued support for emerging initiatives; and funding for the ANA sponsored school had been put on a long-term, sustainable footing. The Battlegroup had mapped and surveyed all the schools operating within the security envelope and had developed mechanisms to ensure delivery of critical resources to them. We were providing funding for additional adult educational training and had renewed programmes for teaching carpentry, tailoring and adult literacy. Finally, we organized for all of these initiatives to be advertised widely throughout the MSQ Valley.

Reconstruction & Development

When we arrived in MSQ the projects that had been initiated as a result of Op MAR KARADAD, the re-taking of MSQ from the Taliban, were concluding; those funded and initiated by the Ministry for Rural Reconstruction and Development (MRRD) had stalled; and Cash for Works activity was conducted unilaterally at the whim of the Military Stabilization and Support Team. Of greatest concern however was the significant depth of feeling amongst Local Nationals about 'outside' resources being used for District projects - specifically, contractors, manpower, resources and materials from Lashkar Gah. As a result we spent the majority of Op HERRICK 9 trying to understand what was needed where and by whom; how projects should be resourced and implemented; and which sources of supply, manpower and oversight offered the best chance of success. Consequently, we built very little and as a result the anger we discovered in October dissipated. This allowed us to put Cash for Works on a sustainable, long-term footing restructured around task-focused teams paid by task rather than salary, and it meant that the projects we did carry out used local resources in response to local needs. Improvements in security enabled us to entice provincial MRRD representatives to MSQ, which resulted in permanent representation. This in turn led to increased understanding at the provincial level of district level frustrations and a re-energizing of stalled major projects; the district mosque and police headquarters being two notable examples.

Agriculture

The agricultural geography of the MSQ Valley was a significant irritant to 5th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland, our predecessors. We took steps to rectify this. Engagement with farmers on the edge of the security zone allowed us to identify where they planned to grow maize and subsequent negotiation enabled us to influence their plans; a comprehensive survey mapped this activity. It is hoped that this will show 2nd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers (2 RRF) how to counter the threat posed by the maize (the primary cover used by insurgents throughout the summer) and allow further manipulation of the agricultural landscape should it be required.

Messaging

Messaging (media) provides the critical link to perception, rumour and the whispered word. For this reason we invested considerable time throughout Op HERRICK 9 developing our capabilities and by the time we left, the Battlegroup's messaging was proactive, pre-emptive and multi-source. Radio in a Box, pamphlets, posters, shuras, tea stops, postcards and casual meetings were all invaluable tools and linked us successfully with the locals, but they were also used to promote the Afghan Government and to explain our activities. We used these and other means to broadcast news; advertise initiatives; promote leaders and key local issues; and to expose local concerns. Reaction to events, both positive and negative, was as immediate as we could make it and by the end of the tour our reaction was faster and better than the insurgents could achieve.

The Battlegroup met with some success. The following were key factors:

- **Understanding.** Understanding everything the Battlegroup did, and the majority of the Battlegroup's output was designed to enhance and develop understanding.
- **Influence.** The importance of Influence to the Battlegroup has been highlighted but generating a coherent capable and dynamic all-sources Influence Cell commanded by

an experienced, committed senior major paid significant dividends.

- **Agility.** Operations in north-west Helmand throughout HERRICK 9 were an economy of force operation with finite windows in which non-organic assets were available for support. The Battlegroup had to develop an agile mindset and matching CONOPS to buy out some of the concomitant risk.
- **Adequate Combat Power.** Forming sub-unit groups' infantry, Javelin, Snipers, HMG/GMG/GPMG, MFC, MSST and allowing them to operate in these groups with as little 'churn' as possible lay at the core of the Battlegroup's tactical success. Fire Support Teams were a critical element of this group. The Armoured Recce Squadron operating suitable, dual-capable platforms (Mastiff) was the force multiplier in MSQ.
- **Relationship.** A good relationship between us and the Afghans was critical - CO to Kandak Commander, District Governor with STABAD; Influence Officer with all elements of the ANSF and key Afghan actors in the AO; Sub-unit commanders with shura members and Mullahs; rifleman with farmers in the fields etc. Without these links and the understanding that flowed from them the Battlegroup would have failed.
- **Patience.** Putting a plan into play and then giving it sufficient time to flourish was difficult but paid dividends.

In conclusion, I identified the following end state for Battlegroup (North West) well before deployment.

An AO that is tangibly safer for the Afghans than it was when we arrived and which uses Afghan resources to deliver Afghan solutions in accordance with plans that have been endorsed by legitimate Afghan leaders.

On reflection, I think we have achieved what we set out to do.

Counter Insurgency Operations in a Complex Environment – D Company Group, 2 RGR, Garmsir, Op HERRICK 9

Garmsir is the southern district in the province of Helmand, and runs from South of the Afghan Development Zone around the provincial capital, all the way to the border with Pakistan. It is centred on the rural town of Darvishan. Conventional British forces have operated from an old agricultural college, known as Forward Operating Base (FOB) Delhi, since winter 2006. After heavy fighting from B Company 1 RGR on Op HERRICK 7 and subsequently A Company 5 SCOTS and the US Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), we inherited an area that had seen considerable damage to local infrastructure, with a slowly returning market, and one that was marked with enemy infiltration through the outer

ring of patrol bases to within 2 km of the FOB and the district centre. D Company Group 2 RGR deployed as part of Battlegroup South (BG(S)) which was commanded by The Queen's Dragoon Guards for the duration of Op HERRICK 9. Consisting of 130 men, D Company Group was made up of three rifle platoons, a fire support group and a headquarters and support element. The pervading concerns at the start of the tour were that the enemy would push to reassert their control and influence after the extraction of the combat power the MEU had brought to bear, and that there would be a real fight. The variety of operations and tasks that were conducted were far greater than anyone had thought.



Overview of Framework Tasks

Patrol, guard, quick reaction force and manning joint outstations with the Afghan Police, on a ten-day rotation, made up our baseline tasks from FOB Delhi. The outstations, PVCP Balaclava and OP Hamburger Hill, provide overwatch of the town and are also very useful comms nodes. Vehicle platforms used by patrols and QRF were Land Rover WMIK, quad bikes and occasionally Mastiff, which enabled us to dominate our 144 km² area of operations. Of the two patrol call signs, one was focused daily on the District Centre (DC) security and working with the ANSF and police mentor team. The other often forward mounted for 3 - 4 day periods from deserted local compounds or from police check points in order to disrupt the enemy forces' freedom of movement. All this was designed to support the Government of Afghanistan by providing the security to allow good governance, reconstruction and development.

Counter improvised explosive device (C-IED) operations were our main focus, as this method of attack by the enemy was most prevalent. The tasks of finding, observing and preventing their laying kept minds and bodies busy. Using our own special equipment and tactics, and with an increasingly large number of tip-offs from locals, we found several pressure plates with home made explosive attached. We built the surveillance and target acquisition plan of major routes and vulnerable areas, using observation from isolated areas of natural relief and from the new check points that were built. This involved considerable use of engineer assets and a plentiful supply of Hesco Bastion. Another key to the surveillance plan was the Revivor balloon and air assets that provided us a greater reach and accuracy. Removal of IEDs was achieved through cordon and search operations

using arms and explosive-search dogs, Royal Engineer high risk search specialists and IED-D. These operations were based on a developed intelligence picture from our company intelligence cell, augmented with observation and electronic intercepts from Battlegroup HQ. We learnt some useful lessons working alongside a different part of the army, their armoured experience complimenting our light role dismounted infantry skills.

With much of Helmand still in a situation of security turmoil, the relatively good security, both actual and perceived, within the immediate vicinity of the district centre, allowed us considerable freedom of movement in which to facilitate reconstruction and development. The destruction of unexploded ordnance nature's left from previous fighting gave locals a tangible improvement to their immediate security. Similarly the destruction of compounds and infrastructure has required considerable surveying and assessment to enable compensation, again a key undertaking for the Company. On the ground this often involved a large crowd of local nationals waving papers and shouting; for the patrol commander a deep breath, a firm handshake and a lot of patience. More enjoyable for the soldiers were the consent-winning quick impact projects, providing immediate aid which were rewarding for everyone. Giving Korans, prayer mats and wind-up radios and receiving genuine thanks from people who have very little, brought emotions which few of us believed we would experience during the operation. On a macro scale for the district centre itself, the routine framework security patrols have enabled significant improvements. The school was refurbished and reopened, the road through the bazaar finally received its tarmac surface and there has been a 45% increase in bazaar trading since our arrival.

Targeted Surge Operations

From FOB Dehli we launched several deliberate strike ops onto known enemy locations to the south of ISAF-dominated territory. Each rifle platoon was, in turn, attached to B Company I Rifles to conduct advances to contact. They were given a lot of freedom of action and, although a rather nerve-racking experience at times, the operations were successful and good opportunities to fight alongside the Mastiff and Jackal vehicles manned by the QDG. They also proved a great opportunity to work with our British counterparts at close hand. At company level, Op KAPCHA SALAAM was a very long and hot 22 km advance to contact, conducted over two days, with an overnight stay in disused compounds for some much needed rest. The company successfully pushed further south than any conventional troops had done before and were well resourced with Viking, the fast and mobile protected mobility vehicles, in support. The operation successfully identified enemy command nodes which were then prosecuted by attack helicopter and close air support. Op KAPCHA BAZ saw D Company, as part of a sequenced BG operation, strike even further south, in order to seize a known enemy co-ordination point. After a simultaneous three Chinook helicopter insertion on to the fringe of the green zone, the

advance with two platoons up, and four Jackals in close support, was swift and decisive. Heavy resistance was met, with the enemy engaging using RPGs and small arms from a berm line and a series of compounds. Joint fires were used to complement the small arms that were carried and, with the use of the heavier machine guns on the Jackal, the company retained the initiative and seized the objective. After clearing the area, what followed was a rather cold night in shell scrapes in the desert and a welcome helicopter extraction the following morning.

Summary

Op HERRICK 9 has given a really wide range of operational experience. The tour encompassed all aspects of counter-insurgency operations. We saw first hand real and tangible improvements within our AO for the people of Afghanistan, testament to what can be enabled by good security. At the same time we also observed the kind of destruction and devastation that exists where there is insecurity. From police mentoring and handing out Korans, to air assault operations, Op HERRICK 9 was an extremely varied and thoroughly rewarding tour for D Company Group.

Foxtrot (Tavoletto) Company RGR

Staff List

Major C P L Conroy	- OC
Capt Pratapsing Rai (Sep 08 – July 09)	- 2IC
Capt Kamal Rana (July 09 – present)	
Lt A Connolly	- PC 14
Capt Prem Gurung	- PC 15
Lt ST Meadows	- PC 16
Capt T Barry (RMP)	- OC Rear Ops Group

Foxtrot Company on Op HERRICK 10

Foxtrot Company (GRC1) deployed on Op HERRICK 10 with 19 Light Brigade on 1 April 2009 as the Afghan National Police (ANP) Police Mentoring Team (PMT). The Company was divided into six multiples (half platoons) that operated ordinarily independently throughout Helmand Province, but could be surged together for specific company-level operations. They worked daily with the ANP partnering, mentoring and training them in basic policing and more commonly in the military skills required to allow them to 'survive to police'. The Company also planned and conducted numerous deliberate and reactive 'kinetic' operations alongside the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). These spanned the full spectrum of operations, from the defensive to the offensive in the rural, desert, green zone and urban areas. They included cordon and search, clearance, strike, Combat Logistic Patrols, and detention operations all alongside the ANSF. Reactive operations would almost always be going to the assistance of the ANP or Afghan National Army (ANA) when they were in trouble. This was normally when a check point was being attacked and they were under threat of being overrun or they had taken casualties and they needed assistance.

Throughout the tour we had 20 Royal Military Policemen attached to us from 173 Provost Company. They not only provided the police-specific training to the ANP but acted as the MP Close Support providing the Company with a host of additional skills.

The Police Mentoring Teams were spread between numerous locations. SILICON 13 with Lt Meadows (SILICON is the fixed call sign for the PMT Company, abbreviated S13) and S14 with Sgt Hem Rai and then A/Sgt Shiva were based in Lashkar Gah (LKG). As the 'capital' of Helmand they had the largest Area of Operations (AO) and the most check points to patrol. The two multiples were also used routinely for company ops as they were unlucky (for them) located with CHQ.

S12 with Capt Prem Gurung was initially located in NAWA an isolated outpost halfway between LKG and Garmsir (GMR). Here he fought daily engagements with the enemy from his base location and on patrol alongside the ANSF. With the arrival of the US Marine Corps to take over his AO he moved north firstly to LKG then onto Gereshk (GSK) to assist with the election and Op PANCHE PALANG (Panther's Claw). Their final location was in CP 9 in the Babuji AO (BJI) for the final two months having taken over from S13. Here they worked with the ANSF and to the Light Dragoons Battlegroup who were the BJI BG at the time.

S11 with SSgt Lilaram Rai was initially in Nad-e-Ali (NDA) working with the Welsh Guards BG. He was then moved to Chare-Ajar and then finally back to LKG for the final two months. Heavily involved in the election security they too were used in numerous company operations and holding together the ANP in NDA.

S16 under command of Sgt Gunner Rai spent their whole tour in Sangin (SGN) alongside the 2nd Battalion Rifles BG. They patrolled and mentored the ANP in the Bazaar area, the crucial economic hub of the town. They had a very successful tour and had an excellent reputation with the Rifles.

S15 with Lt Lou Connolly were based in GSK throughout, working with the Danish BG. They lived in the OCC-D building in the town centre alongside the ANA and operated in and around GSK. They had an excellent relationship with the ANP and took part in numerous company operations. Over the summer they effectively held GSK as BG(C) was occupied elsewhere. The town was attacked more than three times a week and it was S15 alongside the ANP QRF who were always there to assist.

The PMT Company was one of the few units in Helmand that was not tied to ground-holding and as such we had the



Elements of Foxtrot (Tavoletto) Company in Lashkar Gar

freedom to roam with the ANSF as we wished. Operations saw the Company work in every BG AO in Task Force Helmand from Musa Qal'eh (MSQ) in the north to NAWA in the USMC AO in the south, at both the multiple and company level, always with the ANP and sometimes with the ANA. The Company conducted over ten deliberate Company Ops and many smaller operations and took part in every major operation the Brigade conducted.

Having taken over from A Company 2 RGR on 15 April we immediately embarked on our first task of moving 100 militia

to a desert rendezvous 20 km to the south of MSQ. This was a good operation for the boys to kick off with and stretch their legs. This was shortly followed by Op ZAFAR I, an ANSF-led clearance op to the north of LKG. Considerable contact was made with the enemy and the Company was involved in stiff fighting alongside the ANP.

May saw the first casualties of the tour with the tragic deaths of Cpl Kumar Pun and Sgt Ben Ross, (RMP), when they were killed by a suicide bomber on a foot patrol in the bazaar area of GSK. The blast also killed the interpreter, 17 civilians



Counter Sniping on Op TORGAHLAW



ADOW Briefs Rfn Prakash Gurung and Cpl Sachendra Thapa on Op ZAFAR

and injured some of the multiple and a further 30 civilians. It was a severe blow to the Company, but the boys stoically pressed on, and after a time recovered, and continued to produce excellent results.

May also saw the Company conduct Op TOR GAH LAW, a PMT-led clearance of 10 Km of green zone to the west of LKG with the aim of setting up another checkpoint at the end. With two multiples and 120 ANP the clearance went well with a number of IEDs found. Once the checkpoint was established a week of heavy fighting ensued with the Company having to call in artillery fire missions, attack helicopters, Close Air Support and the GMLRS to fight off the enemy.

June saw a period of preparation for Op PANCHE PALANG (Op PP) and re-adjustment of the Company in reaction to the USMC inflow. S12 was moved from NAWA to LKG with the Company having to fight its way through several ambushes alongside the USMC during the move. The end of the month saw us set up a new series of Check Points along the River Helmand to act as a block for the upcoming Op PP.

Throughout the whole of July the Company was fully committed to Op PP, with six multiples and 250 ANP under command. S11 to the south saw some heavy fighting alongside the Welsh Guards BG around CJR, with S12 and S15 operating in GSK and to its south. S13, S14 and S19 moved to the west

side of the River Helmand to follow up the advancing forward elements of the Light Dragoons BG in the main thrust into the BJI Green Zone accompanied by 60 ANP. The fighting was bitter in the opening days and although the Company was behind the lead elements we still took a number of casualties. The end of the month saw S13 and S19 operating in the BJI AO alongside the ANP and ANA with a large area to patrol and dominate.

The elections followed shortly in the middle of August with the Company involved at the very centre of the polling being the only ISAF troops allowed near the polling stations on Election Day. The day was not without incident and all multiples were involved in numerous contacts across Helmand.

In September there were reactive operations around LKG in support of the ANP and ANA. It also saw a number of joint ANSF/ISAF operations with often over 150 men on the ground under command of the PMT Company. These had varied results, but crucially made the ANA and ANP work together and drew the other ANP agencies into the operational fold. Dashain was celebrated with the provision of free goats to all multiples and a Puja being conducted in LKG for the Company under the expert guidance of Capt Kamal the Company 2IC.

The end of the month saw the Company escort the Wheat Seed Convoy to Sangin. This was a Provincial Reconstruction Team initiative that involved the ANSF and the Company escorting

53 local trucks loaded with wheat and fertiliser behind the Sangin Combat Logistics Patrol (CLP). The operation attracted considerable attention from the enemy as we presented the best target in Helmand Province. The Company was subject to three IED strikes and numerous direct and indirect fire attacks and ambushes. After nine days' fighting, IED strikes and pulling out vehicles the convoy arrived back in LKG, mission accomplished.

October only saw one significant operation before the handover - another CLP, this time moving 15 ANP vehicles to MSQ. The patrol was amazingly uneventful and was achieved in record time - a refreshing change! The final two operations were conducted alongside our sister regiment the Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment. It was a fitting finale to the tour.

Following a good handover to the Coldstream Guards, the Company moved back to Camp Bastion in time for Tihar with the QOGLR. The boys made a considerable profit and were described by the 'Loggies' as being too good for them! After a very good decompression in Cyprus, the Company arrived

in Shornecliffe on 25 October to an excellent reception with IRGR and the families arranged by Capt Tim Barry. Three weeks at work saw the Company complete the Inter-Platoon sports competition, numerous parties and 'messings', the medals parade with GOC 4 Div and a Company visit to Cpl Kumar's grave. The Company then headed off for eight weeks well-deserved leave until the New Year.

It would be difficult to summarise Foxtrot Company's tour on Op HERRICK 10 in a few words. Busy, varied, challenging, dangerous would all be the stock answers. However it is described, the boys produced consistently excellent results winning the praises of all whom they worked with, both Afghan and Coalition alike. They proved the utility of the Gurkha soldier on Counter Insurgency operations in Afghanistan and upheld the high reputation of the Brigade of Gurkhas. They will be remembered for setting the conditions and foundations for the current 'Embedded Partnering' methodology and acquitting themselves excellently over a summer of unprecedented fighting, violence and sacrifice. Jai Foxtrot Company!



WO2 Chhabindra Chongbang manning the HMG in PB PARANGTAPA

The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment

Close Support Logistic Regiment – 10 QOGLR in Afghanistan

The Close Support Logistic Regiment (CSLR) on Op HERRICK II (Sep 2009 – March 2010) was commanded by 10 Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment, and supported by elements from 4 Regiment Royal Logistic Corps, 9 Regiment RLC, 27 Regiment RLC and 155 (V) Regiment RLC. Preparation began in early 2009 with a three-month deployment to Kenya. The heat and austerity of Africa was essential to honing the skills to plan and conduct our key task - Combat Logistic Patrols (CLPs). Mission Specific Training in the UK continued at pace, qualifying on a new Support Vehicle and conducting Live Fire Support Weapon shoots.

The Regiment assumed the role of CSLR on 23 September 2009. Launching operations from Camp Bastion, its mission was two-fold. Firstly, to plan and execute CLPs: the delivery of vital logistic supplies and equipment. Secondly, to provide enduring Close Support: the onward delivery capability, to Battlegroups, by Immediate Replenishment Groups (IRGs). CLPs are classic All Arms-Integrated operations and success hinges on thorough planning. The synergy of Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition, and Reconnaissance (ISTAR), Aviation (Chinook Helicopter, Apache Helicopters), Armour and Battlegroup assets, in addition to partnering with Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), was planned at Regimental level. The J2 Intelligence Cell, uplifted with a Battlegroup Engineer (BGE), utilised every resource to mitigate against a ruthless and determined insurgent who, like the ground, was unforgiving.

In all, the Regiment conducted 20 Combat Logistic Patrols and Immediate Replenishment Group patrols, deployed almost daily on the ground in some of the most high-threat and hostile areas of Afghanistan. A typical CLP would consist of upwards of 100 vehicles, 200 men and be deployed on the ground for four days. Engagements with the enemy were a regular occurrence. They ranged from protracted small arms fire and Rocket Propelled Grenade (RPG) ambushes, to accurate mortar fire and the lethal IED. Often extremely 'kinetic', these engagements had to be dealt with by the CLP and its depth force protection. The responsibility of finding devices along the CLPs route fell to the internally-trained Force Protection Troop alongside its Armed Explosive Search Dog and Handler. Highly attuned to reading the ground, they saved many lives. One soldier alone found 18 IEDs. Over 20 vehicles were immobilised by victim-operated or command-initiated devices during CLPs. Casualties were light, with three soldiers requiring evacuation to the UK.

The pace of operations was demanding and fell within a period of major operational gains in Afghanistan. Op RITA, a 180 km CLP from Kandahar to Camp Bastion, enabled the movement of 'Trojan', by Heavy Equipment Transporter (HET), on its first ever operational deployment. (The Trojan armoured engineer tank is used to clear routes of IEDs by using the Python Rocket that is a trailer-mounted, rocket-propelled mine-clearing system which is pulled behind the Trojan. The Python system fires a snake of high explosives to destroy any IEDs encountered on route clearance patrols.)



Combat Logistic Patrol 2



Combat Logistic Patrol 1

Op MOSHTARAK, the Clear, Hold and Build of the Northern Nad-e-Ali region of Helmand, saw the Regiment launching six Op CLAY CLPs, to rapidly deliver 'hot stabilisation' stores to assist with the rapid reconstruction of population areas within Northern Nad-e-Ali (Op CLAY was a Royal Marines operation to move equipment to the Hydroelectric Dam in Kajaki from Kandahar Air Force Base.)

CLPs patrolled frequently to areas not visited before by ISAF Deliberate Influence Patrols were conducted to engage with the locals. Providing essential reassurance, reparation and medical attention, they also gleaned information and intelligence which led to the disposal of insurgent devices designed to maim and kill. The final CLPs combined with Afghanistan National Army (ANA), United States Army and United States Marine Corps allies, comprising over 200 vehicles, 560 men and stretching up to 12 km long, nose to tail.

The following quotations will give readers a feel for what was involved:

- **Combat Logistic Patrol Commander**

"This has been the most physically and mentally demanding tour I, and for that matter my soldiers, have ever completed. It is hands down the most exciting and rewarding. CLPs are large and complex operations. The timely and accurate flow of intelligence is vital - the CLP revolves around J2. The ever-increasing sophistication and employment of IEDs must be understood and countered. Every man must be prepared for when the enemy attacks, and not if. I have trusted my gut instinct out here. A sense of perspective and patience is the key. I always prepared for things not going my way. Timings slip. Equipment fails. We

are fixed by the insurgent. On patrol, Simplicity and Protection are important but the principle of Momentum has been the critical factor. It is the cunning, initiative and decisiveness of the Young Officer and Junior Non Commissioned Officer that has allowed us to prevail and which must be encouraged. It is the confidence and drills of the Private Soldier that won the day. Looking back, the single most rewarding aspect has been playing our part in 'Fighting Logistics Through'."

- **Force Protection Troop Commander**

"It is important the people you speak to see you as approachable, friendly, on their side, and a deterrent to the Taliban. Success was down to understanding the human terrain, having the key people in the right place, and a degree of self-made luck."

- **Logistic Element Commander**

"My role as the Log Commander was to coordinate the collection of loads as per the Priority Load List (PLL), assure fast and effective in-load of all FOB locations and to coordinate issues regarding vehicle recovery and loads throughout. The importance of remaining flexible became increasingly apparent. Appreciating I cannot possibly pre-empt every occurrence, having sound awareness of the bigger picture and giving careful consideration to the less kinetic issues frequently faced by a CLP must not be overlooked."

Op HERRICK II will be recorded in the QOGLR Regimental History as a period marked by the combination of tremendous courage, determination and the highest professional standards to achieve mission success. Jai Gurkha! Jai QOGLR!

Theatre Logistic Group – 94 Squadron QOGLR

The Theatre Logistic Group (TLG) for Op HERRICK II was commanded by 9 Regiment RLC, of which 94 Squadron QOGLR is a part. Training commenced at their base in Hullavington, Wiltshire, with the development of the Supplier Virtual Training Environment (SVTE). This facility, created in a disused hangar on the former RAF base's airfield, included the assembly of 8500 items of stock, all held on a training account and stocked by locations in a large warehouse, to enable the volume and velocity of logistic transactions in Theatre to be

re-created for training purposes. The airfield was wireless-enabled for logistic information systems, allowing the stock to be tracked and recorded in the same way as in Afghanistan. The Confirmatory Exercise (CFX) in July 2009 saw the whole Regiment involved to facilitate the completion of taxing and realistic technical supply training for the 94 Squadron Group.

Upon arrival in Theatre, the TLG's role was to manage elements of the joint supply chain and provide the force with

all the logistic support it required, from bullets, body armour and medical supplies to fuel, rations, and water and welfare facilities. The TLG encompasses a wide range of areas, from postal and courier services to labour support, passenger and freight movements to education and all real life support for UK troops based in Kandahar. With nodes scattered throughout Theatre, the TLG also provides an interface with the Battlegroups to enable their resupply requirements to be communicated on a daily basis, ensuring that they are rapidly transmitted up the chain.

Beginning the tour based predominantly out of Kandahar, the major TLG operation for Op HERRICK 11 was the realignment from Kandahar Airfield to a single strategic support hub in Camp Bastion in Helmand province. This had to be achieved at the same time as providing seamless support to the Battlegroups as there would be no lull in their operations. The move took three months to complete and involved a 100% stock-take being conducted at both ends of the journey – a mammoth undertaking. Over 620 ISO containers, filled with 143,000 individual items, later, the TLG is now located much nearer the majority of its customers, enabling an increased level of support, more intuitive stocking of the account and much more timely delivery of materiel forward.

Improvements were not limited to the logistic supply chain; the Joint Movements Unit in Camp Bastion cooperated with the Americans in the development of a new Joint Interim Passenger Handling Facility, improving the facilities available to the myriad of passengers who pass through Camp Bastion by air each month. Critical to the facilitation of embedded partnering, the Labour Support Unit expanded its operations to provide interpreters to each of the newly restructured Combined (Afghan and British) Forces operating throughout Helmand Province. As the profile of operations in Afghanistan increased, the Postal and Courier Squadron processed unprecedented levels of mail sent to troops over Christmas by well-wishers in the UK. In December 2009 alone, 250,000 kg of mail was sorted in Theatre.

Op HERRICK 11 represented a time of great change for the TLG. Working within taut timelines and despite considerable frictions, the realignment effected during the tour has improved the level of support to the force. The stringent framework of logistic governance applied has increased customer confidence and set the conditions for the enduring success of logistic operations in Afghanistan.

Here are some 'snapshots' of the operations:

- **Re-Focus the Logistic Centre of Gravity – A Private Soldier's View**
"To re-focus the logistic centre of gravity, or move the GS Sqn from Kandahar to Camp Bastion, took three months,

working 16 hrs plus a day. It involved counting and packing about 143,000 bits of kit. On arrival in Camp Bastion we counted it all again. There were 620 ISOs in all." Pte Danbahadur Yonjan.

- **The "First Line Trial"**
Op HERRICK 11 saw the conduct of a trial to improve logistic support to units at first line. Directed by HQ LAND, the TLG embedded a small team of RLC personnel within Battlegroup North (BG (N)). Their role was to rotate through all the BG (N) locations, assisting the QM and BG LO whilst spreading best practice across the Battlegroup and Task Force Helmand. Concurrently, a TLG 'fly away team', centred on Camp Bastion, also deployed to all Task Force Helmand Battlegroup Areas of Operations to ascertain what assistance could be delivered within each location. They were then able to surge the appropriately skilled manpower to each location to deliver the effect required. The success of these initiatives has resulted in the establishment of a number of Logistic Support Teams (LSTs) to support the Battlegroups on Op HERRICK 12.
- **Op MOSHTARAK**
To ensure the fighting troops were correctly supplied, pre-packed loads were constructed to be delivered by either road, support helicopter or air despatch. These ranged from ammo, rations and water to equipment for building FOBs.
- **Op MAR MOSHTARAK**
To assist in the handover of Musa Qal'eh, TLG dispatched a small team forward to help the HCR QM consign his stores and equipment back to Camp Bastion. It was based on an LST, with a particular focus on Consignment Tracking skills.
- **A Word Paints A Thousand Pictures**
9 Regt RLC consists of soldiers from 19 different nationalities, which proved to be very useful when communicating with the local population and the Pakistani contract drivers. Most of the Gurkha soldiers speak Hindi and many speak Urdu (the language of the majority of the contract drivers). In addition, most of the Regiment's Fijian soldiers speak Hindi and the handful from the Indian sub-continent speak Pashtu, Urdu and Hindi.
- **It's all in the "Stats"**
The performance of the GS Sqn account is measured in the likelihood of a Quartermaster's walking into the Logistics Park and walking out with what he wants (immediate availability), and the account routinely holding the right range of stock (scaled availability). With a rapidly changing operational picture, keeping these two "stats" high is everything. During Op HERRICK 11 the TLG raised both metrics by over 50%, achieving over 94% immediate availability in April 2010.



Trojan

A Bridge too Light?

By Major P S Reehal, OC 28 Sqn QOGLR

In December 2009 Task Force Helmand (TFH) began to develop its plan for operations in the Nad-e-Ali District of Helmand Province. Insurgent group fighters, both local area and foreign, had begun to adversely affect security and freedom of movement in the region. Previously a vibrant and prosperous region of Helmand, the return of commerce through security and restored infrastructure to Nad-e-Ali was to be a major goal of the District Government in Helmand.

The plan, Op MOSHTARAK (meaning 'together'), was straightforward: shape the aspirations of the local population and disrupt enemy freedom of movement by the rapid establishment of Patrol Bases along key routes and amongst the people. It would be led by the Afghan National Security Forces and assisted by ISAF. In order to ensure freedom of manoeuvre through the Areas of Operations, a large, warren-like network of roads, littered with Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), would have to be cleared. The specialist equipment for this, never before deployed on operations, was – Trojan.

Trojan, as well as its recovery variant CRARRV, is based on a Challenger Tank chassis and equipped with an upgraded engine. It is a formidable asset. Its mine clearing plough and VIPER ground explosive projectile would be critical to clearing the IED-ridden plains and roads of northern Nad-e-Ali. In December 2009, plans were in place to deliver three Trojans and two CRARRV to Camp Bastion to take part in Op MOSHTARAK. Due to its weight and size the only method of transporting Trojan would be by Antonov 124 into Kandahar Airfield. Thereafter it would be moved by

Heavy Equipment Transporters (HET) to Camp Bastion. The 174 km all-road route between the two locations was well known from the last Combat Logistic Patrol (CLP), Op RITA 17, that had been conducted in November 2009. From the outset, the constraints were significant: Trojan had to arrive on time from the UK; it had to be prepared and up-armoured on time; and the CLP had to reach Kandahar with its limited HET assets intact in order to load. The CLP had to return to Bastion with their cargo intact, transiting areas assessed by ISAF as amongst the most dangerous and high threat in Afghanistan. There was one other challenge. On the eastern edge of Gereshk was Bridge TOM, the crucial traverse for the Highway 1 across the fast flowing River Helmand. Bridge TOM, an ageing Soviet era built flat pack, had recently been upgraded, but the combined weight of the HET and Trojan would be formidable. Would Bridge TOM be a 'bridge too light'?

The ground, in particular the bridges, and the enemy's activity would determine the timings and operation specific training. Intelligence is central to the successful CLP. In the three months since Op RITA 17, the corridor along which the CLP was to travel had experienced 160 incidents – from small arms to IEDs. A four-man specialist engineer team would deploy to TOM and conducted an engineer survey to measure the deflection of the bridge as each laden HET passed. Bridges are designed to deflect but only to a maximum tolerance. It be would the Engineers' call whether TOM could tolerate the HETs together with their loads.



Confirmatory Orders



Trojan on a Heavy Equipment Transporter



Unloading from the Aircraft



Loaded up

Orders were issued to the 145-man CLP on 24 January. The weather was deteriorating. With the greatest amount of rainfall in Afghanistan normally in February and March, 2010 was to be no exception. Electrical thunderstorms and heavy showers were forecast. The CLP departed Bastion on 25 January 2010 and arrived at Kandahar without incident. This was the easy part, and on arrival at Kandahar the pace became fast and furious. Deliberately so. The Trojans were not complete. The final Trojan was late; the disaster relief effort in Haiti had seen the main effort for Antanov 124 shift to humanitarian support. Fingers remained crossed that the last Trojan would arrive as planned on the 30th and be prepared in the allotted 11 hours before the CLP had to depart on the evening of the same day. On the evening of the 29th the plan was set. All being well and with no interference from the enemy, it would take exactly 30 minutes from the FP securing the bridge to the fifth HET's rear wheels rolling off TOM. The last Trojan arrived on the morning of the 30th. Taking three and a half hours to unload, the race was on to prepare the vehicle for the CLP to depart on time. At 2100 hours, it departed.

A threat warning was issued to the CLP Commander. 20-50 insurgents were reported to have occupied a mosque in Gereshk. Armed with mines and long-barrelled weapons they had orders to attack the CLP. Furthermore, a three-man suicide team was also on the prowl. As the CLP passed the boundary into TF Helmand, the tension in the air was palpable, but calm and measured. Every soldier was focussed on the task.

As the CLP made its final halt on Highway 1 to clear an IED-damaged culvert every top cover observed his arcs. In the Vanguard Ridgebacks, the Engineer team and their dismounts used the final moments to conduct a last check of their survey equipment and radios. The culvert was cleared. The CLP was off and approaching the obstacle. At the eastern suburb of Gereshk, the first of many Danish Battlegroup Depth Force Protection assets were encountered. The high ground of ANP Hill marking the checkpoint entry to Gereshk was dominated by ISAF and ANA.

The bridge was secured. The Engineers had taken only four minutes to run half the length of the bridge to spray mark the

points at which the Sappers would sprint from to conduct their measurements. All was set. The first HET left the eastern holding lane. Lights off and at slow speed, they approached the TOM. The risk was high. The Engineers had calculated that the bridge must be crossed at exactly four mph, in first gear, and take exactly three minutes ten seconds to cover the length. Any more, or any less, could be lethal and place undue stress at a single point. The radio net was calm - only the pilot-like adjustments and commands of the engineer dismounts, exposed on the bridge, could be heard: "Wheels on." "Wheels off." "25mm deflection". The tolerance was 40mm and no more. Soon, HET 1 was across - three minutes ten seconds exactly. HET 2 could move. As it made its approach the night was deadly quiet. Dogs barked. The streets empty. The hum of the Mastiffs and the silent rolling HET the only sound. The two Scout helicopters continued their circling overhead, on occasion at 1000 ft, then down low over the River, letting the insurgent know aviation was looking for them. HET 2 was across. The Engineers were back on the net: "30mm deflection." Would the bridge hold? As HET 2 moved into the secure holding lane HET 3 was on the bridge. The Engineers were on task again, moving rapidly from post to post armed with a long measuring rule and torch. For the HETs, manoeuvring along the seven metre wide road required the focus of threading a needle - precision control. The bridge, not making a sound, was now starting to physically move. HETs 4 and 5 bang on three minutes and ten seconds. "Wheels off. Obstacle crossed. Re-org." 30 minutes on the button.

The last 40km were tense. 50 culverts lay in the CLPs path. They had to deliver. The early February morning wind was biting. Fatigue was evident on the net and in the faces of all personnel. Nine days of intensive planning and a week deployed on the patrol had tested the professional limits. Five kilometres from the turn south to Camp Bastion the lights of the compounds could be seen. As the CLP turned onto the home straight, a glance back was an impressive sight to behold. The last FP vehicle reported all call signs in Bastion. After 400 km of high threat travel delivering a strategically important cargo that would without doubt save lives, everyone was in safe. The QOGLR piper, the traditional welcome siren for the returning CLP, resounded across the camp, sending a tingle down the spine.

Fighting Logistics through for Operation MOSHTARAK

Coalition Forces in Helmand Province, Afghanistan mounted Operation MOSHTARAK in February 2010. Meaning 'Together' in the Dari dialect, the task for the British during the operation was to remove the Taliban from the agricultural areas or Green Zone of the Nad-e-Ali District. The offensive was very much an ISAF and Afghan Security Force (ANSF) Combined endeavour and started with the largest helicopter-borne aviation assault in British military history. Over 1,400 soldiers landed overnight by helicopter to secure key population centres. Having met little resistance, their focus was turned immediately to providing the vital security and permanent presence President Karzai and Coalition Partners had promised

the local people. With the Infantry and Engineers travelling light and without the logistic capacity to move the multitude of engineer resources, equipment and combat supplies needed to build Patrol Bases and Check Points, the men of the Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment (QOGLR) were tasked with doing what they do best; sustaining the fight.

The threat facing QOGLR was no different to that they have endured during five months of patrolling through the deserts of Western Afghanistan. Deadly IEDs, RPG and heavy small arms ambush alongside the ever-present suicide bomber lay in their path. The Taliban had been surprised and ousted from



Combat Logistic Patrol 3



Combat Logistic Patrol 3



EPLS



Combat Logistic Patrol 3



Mastiff and Mine Roller

Nad-e-Ali Any success in delaying or halting ISAF's progress, in what was once their turf, would surely set the mission back. On 18 February the first of the Combat Logistic Patrols (CLP) in support of Op MOSHTARAK, known as 'Op Clays', left Camp Bastion, destined for the small village of Shaheed. The rolling, open desert surrounding the Regiment's base location, allowing clever and tactical use of the ground, gave way in no time to the Green Zone. Tight roads, canalised by dense mud wall compounds and thousands of acres of sodden fields kept the senses, commanders' and drivers' alike, highly attuned. The boys were keen not to ride over flourishing crops; this operation was about the people and their prosperity. The farmers' livelihoods depend on a good yield. The enemy scouted the patrol relentlessly, moving up and down the flanks of the patrol they sent messages by radio to their insurgent colleagues that the 'Tigers' were coming. Helicopters above signalled to the patrol commander that three men had been seen digging in the middle of a track about a mile ahead of the CLP. It could be an IED team or a bunch of local farmers repairing a road. The patrol crept forward before taking a sharp diversion through a Wadi. Better to outwit than to pick a fight today - the priority for QOGLR was to deliver the stores on the back of their MAN EPLS.

The CLP drove on, pushing through the narrow streets, busting with young children excited to see so much security, and old men who doubtless saw the years repeating themselves. Every nerve and sinew was tested as the boys drove along the thin road edge of the Nari Bugra Canal and into the first compound where the stores would be delivered. The CLP met up with a patrol from 1st Battalion, The Royal Welsh, who were delighted to see their defensive engineers stores arrive;

all within an hour of the planned time. There was no time to waste. A Light Wheel Tractor was unloaded and driven directly in to the side of the compound wall; the existing door was simply not wide enough. The boys carefully, one by one, moved inside. Seasoned veterans with the MAN EPLS, they dumped their containers, shoring up the defences by creating a chicane effect. The Taliban were close by and already discussing how they might attack the patrol on its return leg. Speed was of the essence, and in less than four hours 30 ISO containers had been offloaded and the patrol was on its way back.

Over the next eight days QOGLR conducted five more 'Op Clays'. Transiting through some of the most dangerous and heavily insurgent-populated areas of Helmand Province, at times where no logistic re-supply had ever travelled. Engagement with the local people, who were delighted to see them, was touching and highly successful. The CLP was able to repair farmers' culverts, critical to irrigating their crops, and conduct medical clinics for children using their team medics. They delivered 180 containers, equivalent to nearly 2,000 tonnes, of engineer stores, plant and essential combat supplies. The pace was unforgiving, but the trucks' reliability was superb. Averaging four hours sleep per day, the patrol experienced only one IED strike on a vehicle, without any casualties, and found many more buried and intended for them. At close range the enemy tried, but failed, to deter them with a double RPG shoot which missed a vehicle by two metres. Throughout, the boys showed incredible courage, tenacity and the resolve to get the job done. Their legacy will be the walls and infrastructure of the patrol bases that, now constructed in areas the Taliban once controlled, provide the people with the security and prosperity they richly deserve.

From Kenya to Afghanistan to Winchester – 18 Months with 10 QOGLR

By Lt Danny Young – Troop Commander

Marching through Winchester as part of the 11 Light Brigade homecoming parade drew a neat line under 10 The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment's 18 month period of Mission Support Training and subsequent deployment to Afghanistan on Operation HERRICK II. This has been probably the most demanding and challenging period in the Regiment's history and one which has been a great success. Throughout, the Gurkha spirit and the tenacity of the QOGLR soldiers have overcome insurgent interdiction and the hostile terrain of Helmand Province to deliver essential combat supplies to the numerous Battlegroup Forward Operating Bases in Sangin, Musa Qal'eh, Nad-e-Ali and Kandahar.

Mission Support Training reached real tempo when 10 QOGLR was the first ever logistic regiment to deploy on Ex GRAND PRIX (VIPER) in Kenya in January 2009. This exercise was an excellent opportunity that allowed our soldiers and commanders to hone their mission-specific skills in an environment more similar to Afghanistan than any UK training area. Working to support 11 Light Brigade by delivering vital Combat Supplies to the Battlegroups through Combat Logistic Patrols (CLPs) really bought home the enormity of the task of being the Close Support Logistic Regiment (CSLR). The Regiment, bolstered by 94 Stores Squadron QOGLR, constructed a temporary operating base in the wilderness which was to become home for the soldiers and officers for three months. It was aptly named Log Base KATHMANDU.

Despite the intensity of CLP operations and the austere environment, soldiers were also able to provide assistance to the rebuilding of a local orphanage school before finally enjoying some well earned R&R at the Sosian Lodge Resort. Kayaking and rafting on the rapids of the River Tana proved to be as physically demanding as it was enjoyable.

Having returned from Kenya, the Regiment surged into a comprehensive and busy mission-specific training period. The soldiers had to adapt to the raft of Urgent Operational Requirement vehicles and equipment that would be used in theatre. Intensive training on Mastiff, Ridgeback, Jackal and Panther Force Protection vehicles saw most of the task squadron manpower squeezing courses in between other training exercise commitments. 10 QOGLR needed to provide its own Force Protection assets, and 60 soldiers were chosen to form two separate Troops for this role. The Force Protection Troops focused on convoy security drills, 'Op BARMA' IED search and confirmation, and support weapon training. Soldiers from the Transport Troops focused on familiarization on the new Enhanced Pallet Load System (EPLS) logistic vehicle, GPMG and medical training. Both the Confirmatory and Mission Rehearsal Exercises were a success. Our soldiers took confidence in seeing 10 QOGLR plan, prepare and execute consistently professional, all arms, Combat Logistic Patrols in an exercise environment, but how would that transfer to theatre?

Despite the quality, diversity and realism of our mission-specific training, there was inevitable trepidation before deploying on the Regiment's first CLP operation in Afghanistan. In October 2009, 10 QOGLR deployed into theatre and after a period of handover and shadowing, the Regiment formally became the Close Support Logistic Regiment for Task Force Helmand. Our first CLP was meticulously and diligently planned, and every department within the Regiment was firing on all cylinders to ensure it went without a hitch. External supporting assets including: a Viking light armoured squadron, Counter IED assets, Fast Air and Attack Helicopters were tasked to support the operations. From our own resources 70 vehicles and nearly 200 soldiers were to deploy. Each CLP was similar in nature (if not larger) and was a true behemoth to prepare and execute; the largest comprised 207 vehicles, 600 soldiers and four nationalities, all commanded by a QOGLR squadron commander. In total, 10 QOGLR executed 20 CLPs and numerous other resupply missions with 40% of the Regiment's capability deployed in Forward Operating Bases to directly support Battlegroup resupply to isolated Patrol Bases in Immediate Replenishment Groups (IRGs).

The Regiment was to have a key involvement with the widely publicised Op MOSHTARAK. Primarily, the Regiment was rapidly to re-supply the Royal Welsh Battlegroup as it swept through the insurgent region of Northern Nad-e-Ali with a series of six, high-readiness and nimble CLPs to facilitate the 'build' phase of the operation. In addition, 10 QOGLR supported the operations by providing a bespoke Force Protection Platoon to PB PIMON, releasing a Platoon from the Grenadier Guards to become the Brigade reserve. The PB

PIMON Platoon (led by Lt Danny Young) took responsibility for the protection of the Patrol Base within Nad-e-Ali. This platoon of Gurkha Logisticians had a short period to retrain for this new role before deploying by two Chinook helicopters at night to their new home for two months. The Gurkhas were a great help to the Grenadier Guards with their ability to complete the mission, build a rapport with local nationals and provide regular, spectacular curries!

By the end of March 2010, 10 QOGLR had completed its mission in Afghanistan and all soldiers returned home to New Normandy Barracks. After a couple of weeks in work, the Regiment dispersed on a well deserved 'Post Operational Tour Leave' (POTL) period of five weeks. POTL was an immeasurably important period for our separated families to reunite and exchange over six months' worth of stories and experiences.

The tour did not come without cost and four soldiers from the Regiment were seriously injured. Thankfully they are making a swift recovery. All were present at the Regimental Medals Parade and were able to receive their operational service medals from the Parade Reviewing Officer, Colonel Commandant Brigade of Gurkhas General Sir David Richards. It was a great honour for the Regiment to host the Colonel Commandant. We were also honoured by the rapturous welcome home we received in parades through both Aldershot and Winchester.

Already Afghanistan is looming in the future with the Regiment due to deploy again in 2012, but 10 QOGLR is more than ready to take up the gauntlet of another demanding operational tour. Jai 10 QOGLR.



Medal Parade

The Queen's Gurkha Engineers

Editor's Note

The deployment of The Queen's Gurkha Engineers on Op HERRICK is covered in the Regimental Newsletter and squadron articles later in this journal.

Queen's Gurkha Signals

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The Disbandment of the Associations of the Gurkha Regiments which remained in Independent India

Preamble

The disbandment of five of the six regimental associations of the Gurkha regiments which remained in the Indian Army in 1947 was covered in the 2007 and 2008 editions of The Kukri – the 4th Prince of Wales's Own Gurkha Rifles Officers' Association in the former; and the 3rd Queen Alexandra's Own Gurkha Rifles Officers' Association, 5th Royal Gurkha Rifles (Frontier Force) Regimental Association, 8th Gurkha Rifles Regimental Association and 9th Gurkha Rifles Regimental Association in the latter. The last association to go was the 1st

King George V's Own Gurkha Rifles (The Malaun Regiment) Regimental Association, on 9 May 2009. Their Chairman's poignant and evocative speech is reproduced below. We also have a follow-up article on 9 GRRA and the commemorative painting they have produced of the action at Hangman's Hill, and an account of a visit to India by the son of a 9 GR officer, together with a piece on the presentation of the medals of Major General Manners Nightingale to the 1/5th Gurkha Rifles (Frontier Force).

1st King George V's Own Gurkha Rifles (The Malaun Regiment) Regimental Association – Speech by the Chairman, Lt Col E Gopsill DSO OBE MC, at the Final Reunion, 9 May 2009



Before we drink a toast to the Regiment I should like to say a few words.

In 1947, on our last night in the 2/1st, after the 2nd and 3rd Battalions had amalgamated, the new Indian Officers under Colonel Korla suggested that the British Officers dined alone together. We were sad and subdued. As we drank the Loyal Toast, Colonel Dodkins – Dodders, on his last dinner night before going home - noticed the Gurkha Officers looking in through the Mess windows. The Mess Sergeant informed the Mess President that the Subedar Major had brought his Gurkha Officers to see the British Officers having their last dinner together. They were immediately invited in and sat between us around the table. The atmosphere changed to happiness - no divisions of rank, just friends who had experienced so much together.

And so we sit in this room, no ranks, no separate battalions, one Regiment, the 1st Gurkha Rifles in which we were privileged to serve all those years ago. Then as now we were expressing our thanks for the happiness given to us by the soldiers of the Regiment and the comradeship they inspired which gave rise to this Association.

It is such a long history. When the 1st World War started the Malaun Regiment was nearly 100 years old. Generation after generation of soldiers have given service to our Army and Country and set standards of bravery, discipline, honour and unswerving loyalty which it is impossible to quantify but which have inspired us all.

Succeeding generations of British families served too; and it is so good to have the Bellers family here today with their long family record of service and to have Colonel Keith Robinson as a guest whose great, great grandfather was a 1st Gurkha.

In whatever theatre the Gurkhas fought they were admired by the British soldiers and feared by their enemies. They took their Oath of Allegiance by 'Eating the Salt' (Kassam Khana) – and never broke it. Their motto 'Kaphar hunnu bhandha, marnu ramro chha' - 'It is better to die than to be a coward' - typifies their approach to danger.

In all they did they brought a tremendous spirit of fun with them. They loved to laugh. They had tremendous sympathy for their comrades and indeed for the wounded whichever side they were on and immense trust in their officers. None of this is gone or changed. It is the same today.

We owe a debt of gratitude today too to all those who have formed this Association and kept the memory going since 1947. Among them Derek Horsford - of course - Jimmy Coleman, Mike Kelleher, John Twells, Charles Wylie, Tony Hart and many others you will be remembering today. I should particularly like to thank, on your behalf, the present officers of the Association: John Burges, Bill Bickers, David MacDonald and Charles McCalla.

We should also appreciate the work that has gone on over many years by our Government in providing more schools, hospitals and welfare facilities in Nepal for soldiers and their

dependants and improving the service pensions. It is never enough of course, but it should not be forgotten.

Let us pledge ourselves to support the work of the current Brigade of Gurkhas staff, the Gurkha Welfare Trust and the Gurkha Museum.

History teaches us that change is inevitable - neither particularly good nor bad, just inevitable. We are now old men and the Association must end, but things do not end with us. The 1st Gurkhas thrive in India with splendid officers. The 2nd, 6th, 7th, and 10th have now become The Royal Gurkha Rifles.

In the past few weeks we have all seen Jimmy Lumley's daughter, Joanna, lead an eruption of support for and pride in the Gurkha soldier from the grass roots of the nation: in effect the country has put its collective foot down over this. Their reputation is as high as ever and there is hope for the future.

Presentation of the Medals and Decorations of Major General MRW Nightingale CB, CMG, CIE, DSO, late First Battalion 5th Royal Gurkha Rifles (Frontier Force) to First Five Gurkha Rifles (Frontier Force)

By Christopher Nightingale

My Grandfather, Major General Manners Nightingale, was born to Percy Nightingale, Inspecting Commissioner to the Cape Civil Service (South Africa), was educated at Bishops, near Cape Town, went to the RMC Sandhurst and joined the 5th Gurkha Rifles (Frontier Force) as they then were, in 1892. He fought in the Tirah Campaign (1897), China (1900) and on the North West Frontier. He was with the First Battalion at the Third Battle of Krithia during the Dardanelles Campaign in 1915. At this battle he was severely wounded, and awarded the DSO for outstanding courage and leadership. He commanded the Battalion in Mesopotamia, against the Turks, and later the 54th, 5th Indian, and Sind Independent Brigades. During his career he was awarded the Order of the Bath, Order of St Michael and St George, and Order of the Indian Empire. He retired in 1929, thereafter becoming Colonel of the Regiment.

The ethos of the 5th had always been one of Regiment first. This was the only Gurkha Infantry Regiment at the time to be conferred with the title of 'Royal' for outstanding performance in World War One and on the North West Frontier. Field Marshal Lord Roberts thought so highly of the Regiment during the Afghan Campaign that he became their first Colonel. In 1923 the First Battalion was declared the best Infantry Battalion in the British Empire.

My Father also followed in my Grandfather's footsteps, joining the 1st/5th in 1933, serving with the First Battalion during the 2nd World War right through until 1947. For many years after he was Chairman of the Regimental Association in the UK.

So let us celebrate our past and enjoy our last lunch together and remind ourselves of the words of Professor Turner.

"As I write these last words, my thoughts return to you who were my comrades, the stubborn and indomitable peasants of Nepal. Once more I hear the laughter with which you greeted every hardship. Once more I see you in your bivouacs and about your camp fires, on forced marches or in the trenches, now shivering with wet and cold, now scorched by a pitiless and burning sun. Uncomplaining you endure hunger and thirst and wounds; and at the last your unwavering lines disappear into the smoke and wrath of battle. Bravest of the brave, most generous of the generous, never had country more faithful friends than you".

I ask you to stand and drink with gratitude and joy to THE REGIMENT.



I, for my part, had reached that certain age when it becomes necessary to decide what to do with the family mementos of this bygone period. Should I pass them on to my heirs, knowing full well that, with the passage of time, they would become less and less meaningful to them, hand them to a Regimental Museum, already full, thanks to disbandments and amalgamations, or present them to the still existing Indian Army Regiment

Would the current First Five Gurkha Rifles be interested? What did they make of their pre-1947 history? Would they really want these medals? How would they be displayed?

I did have some idea as I had met some of their Officers at Regimental Association Luncheons in Winchester, and also



attended the 150th anniversary celebration of the raising of the Regiment at Sandhurst in 2008, hosted by Lord Bilimoria of Chelsea, a friend of the 5th. I was put in touch with General Ian Cardozo in Delhi, who had not only commanded the Battalion, but had also written a book about First Five. I already knew that the First Five was held in as high esteem in the Modern Indian Army as had been the old First Fifth in days gone by, but it was interesting to read about their exploits and importantly to me to see that about a third of the book was given over to the pre-1947 history. The General convinced me that the medals would be well received, and after family discussions, I, my Partner, Gini, and Brother, Jerry, left for India in early May 2009 to attend the 151st Raising Day Celebrations in Dehra Dun. This for us was a poignant location, as our Father's last job in the Indian Army had been to move the 5th/6th Training Regiment from Abbotabad to Dehra Dun.

We were received as very honoured guests of the Regiment. Colonel Bhagiana, CO, and his Officers and their wives went out of their way to make us feel welcome. We were included in all of their two days of celebrations, and

9th Gurkha Rifles on Hangman's Hill, Cassino, March 1944

By Bruce Roberts, latterly Chairman 9 GRR

The members of the 9th Gurkha Rifles Regimental Association decided, when the Association closed in December 2008, to commission Jason Askew to paint a picture for the Gurkha Museum in Winchester. The intention was to depict a famous battle of the Regiment to help generate interest in its long and glorious history and in the Gurkhas generally and the 1/9th at Cassino was chosen. The painting was generously over-subscribed by members and there was no recourse to the Association funds which all passed to the Gurkha Welfare Trust on closure.

The capture of the monastery on the top of Monte Cassino in March 1944 was a pre-requisite for further advances up the spine of Italy and the eventual defeat of the German occupation in World War Two.

The First Battalion of the 9th Gurkha Rifles clinging to the side of Hangman's Hill, barely 100 yards from the Monastery, was an epic battle, where 'D' Company under the command of Captain Drinkall was ordered to hold the Hill (Point 435) at all costs and did so for nine days under severe counter attacks and atrocious conditions, with minimum supply of food and ammunition and attention to the wounded.

This unique and outstanding episode won the First Battalion a place in military history. The General Officer Commanding the 8th Army, General Sir Oliver Leese, signalled: "Please congratulate your Battalion on a magnificent fighting

we met many of the men and their families at the Barakhana. The evening of the second day culminated with a Dinner at the Officers' Mess with many high-ranking Officers from the Dehra Dun Garrison as well as retired officers of First Five and their wives being present. During this Dinner my brother and I presented the medals of our Grandfather.

On entering the Officers' Mess, we noticed photos on the walls of every CO since the Regiment's Raising. We were shown medals, including the Victoria Cross of Rfn Thaman Gurung, and the Indian Order of Merit (with gold bar) won four times by Subedar Kishanbir Nagarkoti in the 1880s, of which the Battalion is particularly proud. It was quite clear that they valued the history and traditions of the Battalion in exactly the same way that the old First Fifth did.

When we finally left India, we felt that we had done the right thing for our Grandfather, and that we had met new friends with whom a relationship would be continued. In any way these medals helped to keep the link between past and present alive, then it was a job worth doing.



performance – worthy of the highest traditions of your Regiment. Your fighting on Hangman's Hill was superb and I was delighted that you got back safely when the order to do so was reluctantly given".

A limited edition of 100 prints has been created and the price of further prints will include a donation to the Gurkha Welfare Trust. A copy has been gifted to the Colonel Commandant of the 9th Gurkha Rifles in the Indian Army, Major General Kishan Singh VSM.



The Bonds of the Regiment – A Visit to 9 GR

By Roger Massie

"It will be a matter of great pride to host a son of a 9 Gurkha Rifles Officer, Lt Col T A Massie ... I very much look forward to Mr Roger Massie and Mrs Massie allocating time to visit... Pune (old Poona), where my wife and I look forward to host them".

Such was the astonishing message transmitted by the Colonel Commandant of the Regiment, appointed in 2008, Major General Kishan Singh VSM, to Bruce Roberts, the last Chairman and Treasurer of the 9 GR Association. Forwarding this invitation to us, Bruce explained that its warmth sprang from a keenness to maintain the link with British pre-partition officers "and all the glorious history".

(In clearing this article with the Regiment, I was asked to make it clear, for the record, that the views I express are personal and do not have any official endorsement.)

Dehra Dun – Cradle of the Regiment

Gurkha hospitality began on our arrival in Dehra Dun; a five-hour train ride north from Delhi, newly arrived from Heathrow. An impeccably turned-out Gurkha, armed with name placard, was on the platform to steer us to our jeep. History and equally thrilling geography jostle for priority in a place which had been 9 GR's regimental centre in my father's time before post-independence amalgamation with 3 GR and transfer in 1976 to Varanasi. In the early 19th Century, the Nepalese Gurkhas had controlled this area before being pushed back by the expanding mercantile, imperialist power ('the Company' at the time). Shortly after the turn of the 20th century, Kitchener recognised the strategic importance of what had been a bare stony plateau and its potential to become a railhead for rapid force deployment on the very edge of the Hill country. The elegant cantonment (Birpur Estate, one of whose bungalows, General Kishan Singh remembers as a young boy) is today the home of an Infantry Brigade, still complete with the original polo ground. Above it looms the mountain, topped by Mussoorie, where a certain Sir George Everest worked as a surveyor in the employ of the Queen-Empress.

Major Samir Lamba was our designated guide, collecting us from tea with the Headmaster of the Doon School, Dr Peter McLaughlin, an introduction we owed to Tim Hatton, OBE, who, as a very young 9 GR Company Commander was able to ensure the safety of many thousands of Muslim refugees on their terrible northward trek to the newly-drawn border in the most chaotic period of partition. I also received an eyewitness briefing before departure for India from Lieutenant Colonel Ralph Reynolds, 19 years old at the time, together with a typescript modestly entitled "a worm's eye view". His name appears in the Regimental History under the heading 'Terrorism in the Dun' (his men "ambushed hooligans on the prowl and taught them a sharp lesson"). Tim Hatton later became a Governor of the elite group, including the Doon,

of 'Round-Square' schools, associated with Dr Kurt Hahn, of Gordonstoun fame, a refugee from Nazism, with his vision of "an aristocracy of service inspired by the ideals of unselfishness, not one of privilege, wealth or position", a theme on which Tim enlarges in his autobiography 'The Tock Tock Birds'.

We were warmly received by the Acting Brigade Commander, in the Birpur Brigade Officers Mess, under Gainsborough-style portraits, and among silverware and military mementos creating an atmosphere which can have changed little since my father's time. The following morning, we were able to visit the Indian Military Academy, under the guidance of Captain Sameer Chatterjee. There, newly-commissioned officers, having graduated from the National Defence Academy in Pune, undergo intensive one-year courses devoted to the more specialist skills of their chosen Regiments. Students of post colonialism might be surprised to find at the foot of the steps leading up to a colonnaded Sandhurst-style entrance, the foundation stone "laid by His Excellency General Sir Robert Cassells, Commander in Chief in India on 28th November 1937". More important still is another C in C, Sir Phillip Chetwode, after whom the main Hall is named, and where the "Chetwode Code" is prominently displayed: "The safety, honour and welfare of your country come first, always and every time. The honour, welfare and comfort of the men you command come next. Your own ease, comfort and safety come last, always and every time".

The last we saw of the athletic Captain Chatterjee (a champion golfer) was his disappearing in a cloud of dust on his Royal Enfield Thunderbird. He had just escorted us back to our civilian companions, a small group led by Puran Bhardwaj, the Guildford-based Director of treksindia.com. Thanks to his dynamism and expert local knowledge (employing Nepalese drivers!), he proved the ideal guide to the Hill country around Simla, former summer seat of government of the British Raj whose twilight - so much better than bombs and blackouts - I was lucky enough to witness even if only as a toddler.

Southern Command - Pune

Nearly two weeks were to elapse before we took up the invitation of the 'Burho' (as a Regiment's Colonel Commandant is affectionately known) with a two hour flight south to Southern Command's HQ from Delhi's Domestic Airport, where we caught a glimpse of the national cricket team and the Aussie tourists, this sport acting as a further strong bond between our countries. Once again we were met by our host's envoys, this time in the shape of Major Shiwain Kaul, 5th Battalion, decorated for gallantry on "the highest battlefield in the world", and the placard-carrying Krishna Bahadur GC, of the 1st Battalion, which was also that of my father and my uncle (Lt. Col George Nangle DSO).

Accommodated in the Ajanta suite of the Inspection Bungalow, under the personal care of Rifleman Dal Bahadur

Chhetri (how appropriate that Gurkhas so often bear the name Bahadur or 'Brave'), our printed programme, illustrated in colour with a magnificent piper, indicated that we were invited to a dinner in our honour by the General and his delightful wife, Sandhya, at 2000 hours, with dress code thoughtfully foreseen as "Open collar". We were also grateful for a seven page booklet, with notes on guests, including two other retired Major Generals and Maureen, the widow of Lieutenant General Eric Vas, former President of the Gorkha Brigade and Colonel of 9 GR.

We will never forget the dinner, following drinks in a moonlit garden with pipers in attendance. The date, 1 November, was appropriately the day when we, in the West, remember and honour past generations, and our parents in particular, thanks to whom we have lived in comparative peace and prosperity. We were much moved by our host's speech, subsequently confirmed in a letter, referring to what he was kind enough to call our "9 GR spirit" and the high value we give to "History" and "Regimental Bonding". In addition to my father, my uncle George was honoured in the speech for his DSO-winning leadership of 1/9 GR at Hangman's Hill (Monte Cassino). I was proud to learn that this battle's anniversary is still commemorated every March as Cassino Day, as is the posthumous award of a VC to Rifleman Sherbahadur Thapa, for his valour in the action at San Marino later in 1944. I received from the hands of Major General (Retd) AG Minwalla, our host's magnificent gift of a silver-mounted (and inscribed) kukri, amongst other gifts which my wife, Claire, was given. Among much else, we learned that the Regimental March, 'Highland Laddie', precedes the thoughtfully compiled regimental song in Nepali which travels through times right from the First World War to the present day and contains lines such as "Major Wheeler ra Blaker pani" (VCs both), symbolising an unbroken tradition. We could only reciprocate modestly, but I was proud, after somewhat presumptuously (but from the heart) toasting "The Bravest of the Brave", to hand over the two above-mentioned 1947 eye-witness accounts by Tim Hatton and Ralph Reynolds of 9 GR's heroic protection of refugees

(foreshadowing subsequent Gurkha contributions to UN peace-keeping missions in Lebanon, Rwanda and elsewhere), as well as my father's frogged, midnight-blue mess-jacket waistcoat which our host is kindly arranging for suitable mounting and display at the Regimental Centre at Varanasi.

Afterwards, our host wrote to inform us that he had handed over for proud display there, in the presence of all the Commanding Officers, the enlarged and framed reproduction of the painting of the battle of Hangman's Hill by Jason Askew, sent by Bruce Roberts and the 9 GR Association, and two opening table-frames containing photographs and material sent by Captain Harry Powell.

The following day - a holiday in honour of the Sikhs' Holy Man, Guru Nanak - our programme continued most pleasantly and instructively with a visit, in the company of Major Kaul, our host's son, Hanut (MBA, Bremen), and Krishna Bahadur, to the magnificently laid-out (by the architect Makharenas) inter-service National Defence Academy, which has inspired the similar establishment in another Commonwealth country, Australia. We learnt for example of the high cost (10-15 killed every week) incurred by India's young servicemen in fighting 'low-intensity' insurgency and protecting the country's long frontier and of how the comradeship and competitive spirit cultivated in the British public school house system is transferred to a 'Squadron system' over three intensive (six semester) years. For our final evening, our kind guides showed us restaurants and handicraft emporia, typifying today's vibrant Pune, far removed from any caricatured, blimpish image that might linger, at least in the former colonial power.

It was interesting to learn from Tim Hatton, referring to the 1947 handover, that "the orderly arrival of Indian officers into the British-led Gurkha units proved a dream" (contrasting with the nightmare of Partition) "for operational, administrative and personal reasons". Our own experience in November 2009 suggests that this handover and its aftermath may indeed be unique in history, or at the very least, a most happy exception.



Staff List

Military Staff

Col D G Hayes CBE late RGR
Maj D J Robinson RGR
Maj Hemchandra Rai BEM RGR
Capt Karamprasad Gurung RGR
Maj Dhyansprasad Rai RGR
WO2 Nareshkumar Khawas RGR
CSgt Anil Thapa RGR
CSgt Lalit Dewan RGR
Sgt Santoshkumar Gurung RGR
Cpl Nabin Rai RGR
Cpl Hombahadur Wonem RGR
LCpl Lokbahadur Gurung QOGLR

Civilian Staff

Maj (Retd) P H Gay late RGR
Mr S L Lord ED
Mrs J Patterson
Mr P Davies
Mrs S Hewer
Mrs D Ewart

Gurkha Welfare Centre (Aldershot):

Capt (Retd) Mahendrakumar Limbu late QG SIGNALS
Hon Lt (QGO) Tulbahadur Gurung late RGR
CSgt Dineshkumar Limbu RGR
Sgt Hariprasad Gurung RGR

Headquarters Brigade Of Gurkhas

Col BG
COS
DCOS/SO2 GTACOS Imp
SO3 G1/MS
SO3 G3 O&D Plans/QGOO
Supt Clk
G3/Estb/Budget Clk
Chief Clerk G1/G4
Project SNCO
G1/G4 Clk
Asst Editor Parbate
Col BG's Driver

Regtl Sec
Bde Sec
EO Bde Secrt
Fin Offr
PS to Col BG
AO Bde Secrt

Brigade Welfare Officer
Assistant BWO
Gurkha Settlement Project SNCO
Gurkha Settlement Project SNCO

Newsletter

2009 saw no let up in pace on Gurkha issues with countless new responsibilities to complete such as formation of a further Gurkha Reinforcement Company, the Gurkha Terms and Conditions of Service (GTACOS) implementation plan, the Brigade trawl for Op SOLOMON, huge changes in immigration rules and the establishment of the Gurkha Settlement Project – all this while BG units continued to deploy on operational tours.

At the same time, HQBG continued to bid farewell and welcome new members to the small team, starting in early January when we welcomed CSgt Anil Thapa as G3/Establishment/ Budget Clerk. We bade farewell to CSgt Khadak who departed in Acting Rank to be WO2 Chief Clerk UKLTT, Afghanistan. In April we then bade farewell to Capt Surya who

was posted to 1 RGR as the Det Comd and welcomed Capt Karam into the SO3 G1/MS post. At the same time Cpl Ajay Dewan departed on transfer to the Dental Corps and was replaced by Cpl Hombahadur Wonem as the Assistant Editor Parbate.

As spring gave way to summer the BG workload and programme intensified and included Brigade Week which was held in New Normandy Barracks in Aldershot. A highly successful week was rounded off with a Dinner Night at the QOGLR's Officers' Mess with the Colonel Commandant as the principal guest. The Nepal Cup Final was held the next day and QGE emerged victorious with an outstanding win. The Brigade events were then aptly finished off with a very

well-supported Brigade Bhela which saw old and new friends enjoying a few kuras and bhat whilst being entertained superbly by the Pipes and Drums. Immediately afterwards the HQ bade farewell to Maj Ceri Morton QOGLR on posting to HQ Land and welcomed Maj David Robinson RGR as the COS after his successful operational tour with 2 RGR.

The QGOO Medal Ceremony in June saw Capt Yambahadur Rana and Captain Prembahadur Ale QGE presented with their MVOs by HM The Queen in the presence of their families. The customary QGOO handover saw the HQ bid farewell to Capt Yambahadur departing on promotion as Gurkha Major 2 RGR with Capt Dhyansprasad Rai 2 RGR, fresh from Afghanistan, taking on the appointment of SO3 Plans and the QGOO duties.

More farewells followed with WO2 Bijayhang Subba leaving for his Det Comd course in July followed by posting, on commissioning to Captain, as a Det Comd with his new AGC(PS) cap badge to 36 Engineer Regiment. He was replaced by WO2 Nareshkumar Khawas as Superintendent Clerk. Before summer leave, HQBG also entered a team in Ex Trailwalker led by Sgt Santosh who completed the gruelling course in good order.

The issue of the Gurkha excess manpower was never far away and was exacerbated by an increase in the strength of

the wider Army. Some respite from the spotlight occurred with the endorsed creation of GRC 3 with 1 YORKS and further authorised substitution of UKTAP posts especially within the BG Corps units. The Gurkha Settlement Project got underway and the role of HQBG's Gurkha Welfare Support Office in Aldershot (now the joint Gurkha Welfare Trust/HQBG Gurkha Welfare Centre's 'forward operating base') became all the more important, assisting in the coordination of benevolence and welfare for retired Gurkhas in the UK (see following article). To assist with this high profile project, CSgt Dineshkumar Limbu and Sgt Hariprasad Gurung were assigned to provide much needed assistance to the Brigade Welfare Officer. The 2009 HQBG Dashain Party with the Gurkha welfare office staff and Brigade Training Team was then celebrated in Netheravon and was a very enjoyable evening.

As winter set in, the COS with DMA support conducted an Excess Manpower Update Roadshow to all BG units in order to highlight and discuss the key issues relating to the growing numbers in the Brigade. Christmas leave finally arrived and the HQ paused for breath and reflected on a year of intense productivity that had seen major changes for both the serving and retired Brigade. The HQ returned to work ready for the challenges of 2010 – another heavy deployment year for the BG with all the associated challenges for the HQ.

Helping retired Gurkhas in the UK – The work of the Gurkha Welfare Centre

By S L Lord, Brigade Secretary

Following the Home Office announcement in May 2009 that all retired Gurkhas who had served for four years or more between 1 January 1948 and 30 June 1997 would be eligible to settle in the United Kingdom, with their eligible dependants, a major effort has been mounted by government departments and service charities to advise and assist them with their settlement arrangements and to provide a welfare safety net for those who get into difficulties. This effort is known as the Gurkha Settlement Project and is led and coordinated by the Land Forces Secretariat (Foreign and Commonwealth) in the Ministry of Defence.

The Gurkha Settlement Project (GSP) has many facets and vital work is being done by all departments and charities involved. The article in the British Gurkhas Nepal chapter covers the crucial role of the Gurkha Settlement Office in Kathmandu which provides free advice on the practicalities of settling in the UK and assistance with visa applications. This article concentrates on what is being done in the UK – and, in particular, on the part being played by the Gurkha Welfare Centre, set up by the Gurkha Welfare Trust and Headquarters Brigade of Gurkhas.

The mission of the Gurkha Welfare Centre (GWC) is to assist in the coordination of benevolence and welfare for retired Gurkhas in the UK, working closely with Government

departments, service charities and other agencies, in order to support those in need. It has four core tasks:

- To act as a focus for all retired Gurkhas in the UK who seek welfare support – and to provide a ready source of authoritative advice.
- To ensure individuals arriving in the UK under the new settlement arrangements are able to claim their statutory entitlements.
- To complement and support the service charities in the delivery of welfare support and, when necessary, to assist in the coordination of their work.
- To provide the capacity to reach out nationally to Gurkha communities and to those agencies and organizations supporting Gurkhas in need.

The GWC has a main office in Salisbury which became operational in January 2010, co-located with the GWT headquarters, and a 'forward operating base' in Aldershot, based on HQBG's former Gurkha Welfare Support Office (see Kukri 2008). GWT have recruited three new staff to man the centre – Captain (Retd) Gary Ghale late 6 GR (Gurkha Welfare Officer), Captain (Retd) Nirmal Gurung late QG SIGNALS (Assistant



The then Minister for Veterans, Mr Kevan Jones MP, with GWO Capt Gary Ghale, BWO Capt Mahendra Limbu, retired Gurkhas and Director GWT at GWC (Aldershot). The Minister and GWO are holding a copy of the 'Cost of Living in the UK' booklet



Hon Lt (QGO) Tulbahadur Pun VC and Hav Lachhiman Gurung VC with Joanna Lumley and the staff of GWC Salisbury



Mr Gerald Howarth MP's visit to GWC (A). (L/R Margaret Gilmour (Asst Hd LF Sec), Bde Sec, BWO, ABWO, and Colonel BG.)

Gurkha Welfare Officer) and retired WO2 Hambahadur Gurung late QG SIGNALS (Gurkha Welfare Adviser). The HQBG staff have also been reinforced. To join Captain (Retd) Mahendra Limbu and Hon Lieutenant (QGO) Tulbahadur Gurung (Brigade Welfare Officer and Assistant Brigade Welfare Officer respectively), have come two serving Senior NCOs as Brigade Welfare Advisers – Colour Sergeant Dineshkumar Limbu RGR and Sergeant Hariprasad Gurung RGR.

These are timely and essential reinforcements and the involvement of GWT alongside HQBG is of great significance, underlining GWT's position as the lead Gurkha charity. While Nepal remains the principal focus for the Trust's welfare activities, it now has a central role advising on the provision of welfare in the UK. Since 2006, the Trust has also been making annual grants to the ABF The Soldiers' Charity, in recognition of the substantial financial assistance which the ABF provides for Gurkhas in Britain.

The notice on the adjoining page summarizes the way the GWC operates (and gives its contact details). The key element of this is close cooperation with the wide range of organizations which are working devotedly to help Gurkhas who run into difficulties. On the government side, in addition to the Land Forces Secretariat in MOD, the UK Borders Agency are tackling the surge of settlement applications and the staff of the Department for Work and Pensions (including the National Insurance Number Delivery Centre, the Benefit Delivery Centre, the Pensions Service and Job Centre Plus) are 'fast-tracking' NI Numbers and applications for state benefits. The Department for Communities and Local Government (and the local authorities in the main areas where Gurkhas have settled) and the Department of Health are all closely involved.



The ABWO, Hon Lt (QGO) Tulbahadur Gurung, briefing newly-arrived retired Gurkhas.



An elderly retired Gurkha outside GWC Aldershot

The Veterans Welfare Service of the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency is also doing vital work. Meanwhile, the service charities continue to provide wonderful support to Gurkhas all over the country. The GWC relies especially on the caseworkers of SSAFA Forces Help and The Royal British Legion and the grants and welfare staff of ABF The Soldiers' Charity. The Citizens Advice Bureau and other charities including Haig Homes and Veterans Aid are giving very important assistance. By no means least, mutual support in the Gurkha communities themselves is a critical factor, as it has been since the earliest days of Gurkha settlement in Britain – without it, far more welfare cases would be presented to the GWC.

But, largely as a result of the Gurkha Settlement Project, there has still been a very substantial increase in the number of welfare cases. At the beginning of May 2009, the total number of cases handled by the Gurkha Welfare Support Office since 2005 stood at 270. By January 2010, when the Salisbury Office became operational, it had risen to 433. The total reached 1139 in December 2010. Of these, 682 were GSP cases, many of which involve elderly Gurkhas who have arrived in the UK with completely false expectations and no family or friends here to help them. Some had paid money to unofficial agencies and were utterly bewildered when confronted with the complexities of daily life here – and the cost of living. Had they gone to the Gurkha Settlement Office, they would have been much better prepared. As it is, the GWC, DWP and the service charities are doing their utmost to set them on their feet.

The then Minister for Veterans, Mr Kevan Jones MP, visited GWC (Aldershot) on 18 March 2010 to see this painstaking and time-consuming work at first hand. He was briefed by Colonel David Hayes (Colonel BG) and Colonel William Shuttlewood (Director GWT), talked to the staff of the office and officers from DWP and SSAFA, and took tea with retired Gurkhas who were attending interviews. A further important visitor, on 25 March, was Mr Gerald Howarth, MP for Aldershot and now Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Ministry of Defence. The Rushmoor (Aldershot and Farnborough) area has seen a large influx of retired Gurkhas. The GWC is working closely with Rushmoor Borough Council and other agencies to assist them, and the Council has provided new premises for the GWC after it had to move out of New Normandy Barracks with the Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment in November 2010. (QOGLR had been the Centre's very helpful hosts since early 2007.)

The Gurkha Welfare Centre aims to provide assistance for all retired Gurkhas in need – not only those coming to UK under the Gurkha Settlement Project. With its predecessor the Gurkha Welfare Support Office, it has handled numerous very serious cases involving grave illness and bereavement, as well as many more concerning Gurkhas struggling to get a footing in UK and in need of a 'hand-up'. The Centre deals in advice, and does not itself make financial grants, but its close links with government departments and service charities enable it to respond to complex problems – and to give some reassurance to those facing acute difficulties.

Gurkha Welfare Centre (Salisbury and Aldershot)



Mission

To assist in the coordination of benevolence and welfare for retired Gurkhas in the UK, working closely with government departments, service charities and other agencies, in order to support those in need.

Role & Responsibilities

The role of the Gurkha Welfare Centre, jointly operated by the Gurkha Welfare Trust and Headquarters Brigade of Gurkhas, is to provide advice and assistance both direct to retired Gurkhas and to the organizations and individuals helping them. In particular, it is responsible for:

- Handling welfare-related enquiries - including providing advice, conducting interviews/visits and coordinating assistance.
- Liaising with service charities, employment associations, government departments, local authorities and other agencies.
- Developing/coordinating the Brigade's network of 'informal support' and comradeship, working with regimental associations, Gurkha Welfare Trust branches and Gurkha community groups.
- Providing guidance on prudent planning to avoid welfare problems.
- Disseminating information on the Brigade's UK welfare arrangements.

The Gurkha Welfare Centre has two offices - an HQ in Salisbury and a 'Forward Operating Base' in Aldershot. Enquiries should generally be directed to the former in the first instance.

Background

With the introduction of the new HM Forces Immigration Rule in October 2004, applying to those retiring on or after 1 July 1997, significant numbers of retired Gurkhas became entitled to live and work in the UK. This created the need for a welfare structure for those who might fall on hard times. The Army Benevolent Fund, The Royal British Legion, SSAFA-Forces Help and other service charities all pledged to assist Gurkhas in the same way as they support British ex-servicemen. The Brigade Secretariat in HQ Brigade of Gurkhas took on a coordinating role and, in April 2007, opened the Gurkha Welfare Support Office in Aldershot as a forward operating base.

On 21 May 2009 the Home Office announced that Gurkhas who served between 1948 and 1997 would also be allowed

to settle in the UK. The Ministry of Defence is coordinating cross-government action to assist those who wish to come here and has established the Gurkha Settlement Office in Kathmandu to provide advice. Meanwhile, the Gurkha Welfare Trust, which since 2006 has been making annual grants to the Army Benevolent Fund, has become more directly involved in coordinating welfare work in Britain, although its priority remains the alleviation of hardship and distress for Gurkha veterans and widows in Nepal. The Trust, the leading Gurkha charity, has combined with HQ Brigade of Gurkhas to establish the Gurkha Welfare Centre at Salisbury, with a reinforced office in Aldershot (based on the former Gurkha Welfare Support Office). The joint centre aims to assist both Gurkhas already settled in Britain and those newly-arrived, if they run into difficulties.

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Crossing the Larkya La

By General Sir Sam Cowan KCB CBE
President GBA

The Lonely Planet guide *Trekking in the Nepal Himalaya* is unequivocal in saying that “the Larkya La is one of the most dramatic pass crossings in the Himalaya”. In every sense, the pass is the high point of the Manaslu circuit. To get into position to tackle it entails following the Buri Gandaki to its origin in the Himalayan glaciers. The trail, starting from Arughat or Gorkha, is rated as arduous but the rewards of experiencing Nepal’s rich cultural diversity at first hand are hugely satisfying.

The first six days leads through one of the longest of the Himalayan gorges and a series of small hamlets mainly inhabited by Gurungs. One emerges north of the main Himalayan range with the trail still following the Buri Gandaki as it turns from flowing north-south to west-east. At this point one enters the region of Kutang inhabited by people of mixed Ghale and Tibetan origin who speak their own distinctive language and practice an amalgam of shamanistic and Buddhist ritual. For complex reasons, people who live north of Kutang regard it as a land of sorcerers and poisoners, and are always extremely nervous about travelling through it. I must in fairness record that I suffered no ill effects from drinking many cups of tea in the teahouses along this part of the trail! I also found the people charming, helpful and very good-humoured.

After eight days the trail emerges from dense forests and deep valleys into the region of Nubri, a land of entirely Tibetan culture dominated by bright chortens, snapping prayer flags, small gompas, long mani walls, yak caravans, spectacular Himalayan peaks and very tough people. Sama, the largest village, is a fascinating place to spend a necessary acclimatisation day. This applies with equal force to Samdo, the last village before the pass, built from scratch by people from the village of Ru, just a few miles away across the nearby border with Tibet, when they moved lock, stock and barrel to Nepal in the 1960s. They claimed and were granted Nepali citizenship, partly by being able to produce two engraved copper plates from the 14th

century that showed that the kings of Jumla had given them in perpetuity grazing rights in the area.

Because they live close to the border, the people of Nubri can apply for a special permit which enables them to go into Tibet when they please - except, of course, when the passes are closed by snow or when the Chinese close the border, usually on a whim. Large numbers take advantage of these permits. They need to do so to generate income from cross border trading to survive. This Trans Himalayan trade has been going on for thousands of years, and because they have the yaks and the physiology to cope with the high altitude, the people who live in areas such as Nubri have always been key middlemen. With roads opening up on both sides of the border, the nature of the trade has changed dramatically but somehow these people have adapted and are still driving their yaks across the passes as their ancestors have done before them. It is a living that is as vital as ever to their existence but also one which gets more and more precarious by the year. On a single day I saw 14 caravans, each of about 12 yaks coming back from Tibet, and earlier that morning I saw a similar number heading in the other direction.

Eventually, on about Day 12 on the Manaslu trail, one sets off from the last camp, about a four hour walk up from Samdo, to cross the Larkya La. At 5200m it is not one of the highest of the trekking passes but it carries its own challenges and dangers, not least because of the need to commit to a ten-hour day, including four or five hours at altitude on rough and exposed terrain. The pass is also notorious for sudden storms developing quickly. Snow the day before our crossing had wiped out the trails but on the day the weather was glorious. The pass is not sharp edged. It is one of those where the trail just seems to go on and on. I could see the prayer flags for a long time before I got to them. As I ground it out, large Himalayan peaks started to appear to the left and right and, from the top, I was



Prayer Flags, Larkya La



Prayer Flags, Braga Gompa

completely surrounded and indeed emotionally overwhelmed by them. A long 1700-metre descent leads to the campsite at Bhimtang, a sublime high Alpine valley, which itself is surrounded by Himalayan peaks.

Bhimtang is of great historical interest because in the days when the salt-for-grain trade was at its height this was where Tibetans brought their yaks and dzos with the salt. From here it was carried on the backs of people to the middle hills. The Marysangdi Khola trail was notoriously treacherous and was not made suitable for animal transport until the trail was improved 30 years ago to facilitate trekkers going to Manang. Tilman who visited the place in 1950 describes [in *Nepal Himalaya*] a great hive of activity with, during the short season, more than 3000 animal loads being traded.

For good measure, the spectacle of great peaks continues most of the next day, as one drops down from Bhimtang to follow the valley of the Dudh khola which, after two further days, meets the Annapurna Circuit trail at Dharapani on the banks of the Marsyangdi khola. Here the trekker must decide whether to turn left to the road head two and half days away or take his courage in his hands and turn right to enjoy the

delights of Manang, the Thorung La, Mukhinath, Jomsom and beyond. For the record, your correspondent did turn right. Despite all the trekkers on the Annapurna circuit, the walk up to Manang was well worth the extra effort. Indeed walking the high route from Upper Pisang to Braga through the fascinating villages of Ghyaru and Ngawal in glorious weather with the Annapurna peaks in full view is now very high on my list of great days of trekking.

The village of Manang, however, was my limit of exploitation. I had previously been up to Mukhinath from the Mustang side and had assessed that 21 days on the trail would be more than enough. So, early on the morning of 31 October 2010, I left the airport lodge at Hongde [readers should disregard the notion of all places they have ever known with the same or approximate name] to walk the 15 minutes to the airstrip. In contrast to the brilliant weather of the previous eight days, the sky was overcast and the Himal was shrouded in clouds with snow falling up high. I was concerned at the prospect of the weather closing in but on reaching the strip a very cheery young man shouted from the tower that the Pilatus Porter aircraft I had chartered was just about to leave Pokhara where it and the crew had spent the night to get into position to pick



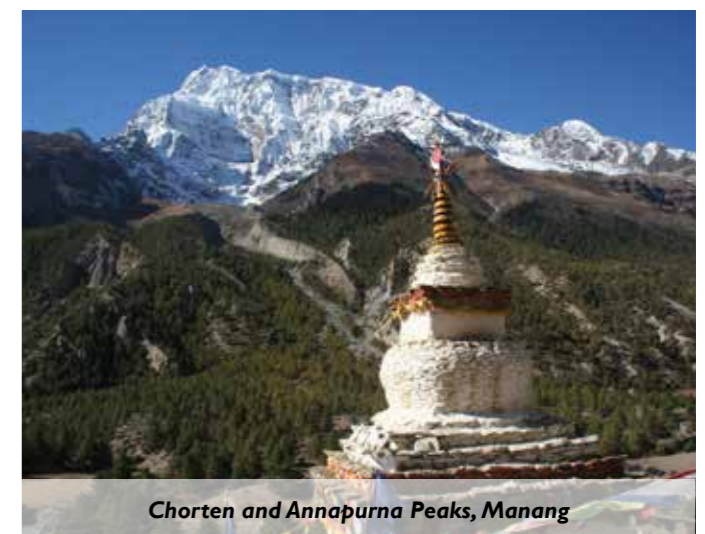
The author on the Larkya La



Start of the long descent from the pass. Nemjung Himal (7140m) is on the right



The sublime alpine meadow of Bhimtang; site of the historic Nepal-Tibet mart.



Chorten and Annapurna Peaks, Manang

my party up. We had dismissed the camping crew and taken to lodges from Dharapani so we were now down to me, Kit Spencer, the sirdar and one porter.

The young man in the tower explained that Hongde was Nepal's highest working airport. It emerged that the working was extremely rare. No flight had landed or taken off for four months until two days previously when a Pilatus Porter had done so to test the strip to see if it was safe to fly us out after some recent work aimed at extending the length of the strip. Fifteen minutes later we saw the aircraft with its lights on approaching very slowly. It landed and pulled up in about 75 metres. I was reassured to see from its gleaming paintwork that it was a relatively new aircraft. Some goods were unloaded for the people of the small village of Hongde and to feed the passing trekking trade. After boarding, the pilot took the aircraft to the end of the strip, turned up the engine revs until the whole

plane shook, released the brakes and in less than a 100 metres we were airborne. Forty minutes later we were in the very different world of Kathmandu. At 08.30 we were demanding breakfast in the Summit Hotel. It was a huge and very rapid cultural jump, and a memorable way to finish a great trek

So, how do I rate the crossing of the Larkya La? Quite simply, dramatic in no way overstates it. The whole experience was sharpened by my knowledge of its historic importance to Trans Himalayan trade and of the tens of thousands of Tibetans and Nepalis who had risked their lives over centuries to bring salt to the middle hills of Nepal and grain to those who lived on the Tibetan plateau. The fact that the trade still continues today, albeit in a much modified form, simply added to the rich emotional experience of tackling one of Nepal's great trekking trails; and, yes, of crossing the Larkya La!

I should be so lucky...

By Brigadier John Anderson, Chairman GBA

One of the great advantages about retirement is that one has time to do those things you want to do, not necessarily what someone else insists that you do (wife, of course, excepted). I am fortunate to be involved in several Gurkha charities and as Chairman of the Gurkha Brigade Association was invited to attend the annual Gurkha Welfare Scheme (GWS) Conference in Pokhara in October 2010. At the last minute I had to metaphorically change hats and attend as a Trustee of the Gurkha Welfare Trust (GWT) as William Shuttlewood, Trust Director, was unable to travel.

As most readers will know, the GWS is the 'field arm' of the GWT and is responsible for the delivery of the charitable services in Nepal: it employs over 300 staff, runs all the 20 Area Welfare Centres (AWCs) and pays some 9,600 Welfare Pensions as well as delivering emergency aid, water and educational and medical services to our old soldiers and their communities. The AWCs also provide a service for the Ministry of Defence which includes looking after service pensioners and dealing with compassionate cases (including NOTICAS): in the case of the latter alone, investigations were carried out for 18% of the serving Brigade last year.

When Louise and I visited Nepal in 2009 we were able to visit eight AWCs and, more importantly, renew old friendships and see at first hand the results of GWS's work. As a result this year I was able to look more critically at what we do and how we do it, but also to revel in our successes.

Two aspects are worth special mention. I visited Pumdi Bhumdi with SSgt Tejman (AAWO Kaski) to see two schools and a water project with which GWS had been involved, and I was immediately struck by the fact that this little village, only an hour outside Pokhara, had escaped the worst depredations of modern Nepal: no pot-holed muddy road led to the village, but a traditional and solid paved path: there were not half-completed



The author with Cpl Balman Gurung MM and his wife

breeze-block monstrosities with the insidious rusty corrugated iron roofs, and no lethal power cables slung precariously between houses, but there was running water in every house and a safe electricity supply – essential for the computer classes in both schools! There was a palpable sense of contentment and confidence among all I met, even although, like many hill villages, most of the young men and women had left to try their luck overseas or in the major towns. In this village everything worked: the schools were well organised, ambitious and obviously filling a real need, and there were no requests (or, as is often unfortunately the case, demands) for further GWS funding, but rather real gratitude for what we had done for them. The reason for much of this was swiftly apparent: Corporal Balman Gurung MM, 2/6 GR. [21138535 Balman enlisted at Lehra on 27 October 1952, and retired on 21 September 1968. He won his MM on the Indonesian Border on 22 Aug 63.]

Many years ago the GWS had adopted the policy of ex-soldiers acting as 'sponsors' for projects in their villages, and the wisdom of this approach was very apparent here. Balman was obviously much respected, full of energy and ruled the village with a firm but benign hand. It helped that most of the villagers appeared to be close relatives! He also had a most practical approach: when another villager pointed out that a tap in the water system was not working, and asked me if GWS would repair it, he was put firmly in his place by Balman and told to check the pipe for a leak: an hour later the tap was working!

Over a long lunch Balman regaled us with stories of the Regiment when he was younger, and lots of names were batted between us: alas, many of the Officers whom he remembered with affection are no longer with us. He also recited the number, rank and name of every MM holder in the Regiment, together with the date of their awards – an incredible feat of memory! I left Pumdi Bhumdi with my affection for our old soldiers, and my pride in the work of GWS, invigorated.

The second point worthy of mention, and the highlight of my trip, was undoubtedly my visit to the Residential Home in Kaski. When I saw it last year it was a building site, but it now has 20 residents, balanced between the East and West, and it

VC and PVC Holders' Reunion

By Lt Col J P Cross OBE

On 5 February 1994 there was a grand reunion – a Felicitation Ceremony, as it was quaintly billed – for all holders of the Victoria Cross and the Indian Army equivalent, Param Vir Chakra, in the Royal Nepal Academy in Kathmandu. This may not sound much but it was the very first time that such an event had been staged on Nepalese soil. It will also be the last of its kind. It was organized by the ex-servicemen of both armies, chiefly the British.

I was asked to be a Special Adviser. Initially I was not particularly interested in the scheme as, when it was announced, it had a marked ethnic bias pro the Mongoloid hill men. 'Who are Gurkhas?' was to be publicly aired by our ex-servicemen – an especially tactless question in a milieu where Aryan Nepalis had both a numerical and a 'command' superiority. I was also

was formally opened in mid-November. The building is smart and functional, but the real success is in what the Residential Home represents: a major statement by us, an example to other organisations and, above all, a life changing adventure for the most under-privileged of all our old soldiers and widows. The residents once lived in absolute poverty and often in appalling squalor and they simply do not know what has hit them. As one 90-year old said, "I think I have died and gone to Heaven". I will be honest in admitting that I have frequently expressed doubts over the Residential Home concept for cold and logical financial reasons, and concerns that it could become a hospice, but I will also confess that these have now been swept away by illogical emotional arguments! This is actually what charity is all about – changing peoples' lives. This may be a somewhat hackneyed phrase, but as Narbahadur Saheb, the Head of the Home, said "For them it has been a life transforming change – and also for me" I can but concur.

We have been fortunate in that most of the costs of this first Residential Home have been met by a few incredibly generous supporters, and once sufficient funds are secured we plan to build a second home in Dharan. This will allow us to provide more of that extra care and support some of our pensioners need, and will enable them to live out their final days with dignity.

Adrian and Anne Griffith, my hosts, leave Nepal in January 2011. Adrian has had an extraordinarily successful tour as the Field Director of the GWS and he will be sorely missed: but my point is not to laud Adrian, but to note that, each time I visit Nepal, I better understand how and why he has happily spent ten years of his service there. Watching the way in which the GWS and GWT have affected our old soldiers' lives and shaped their environment for the better is profoundly gratifying, inspiring but also humbling. There is no question that our Brigade charity continues to deserve all the support we can give it and you should all feel great pride in what it has achieved.

(This article appears by kind permission of the Editor of the Journal of the 6th Queen Elizabeth's Own Gurkha Rifles Regimental Association.)

worried about the absurd question of [British] Palace pays [Nepalese] Palace 'hidden royalties'. I had to put the record straight on both points, especially the latter. Here I requested authentic denials that I had had published in Kathmandu in a university journal the previous year, as well as told the organizers that the origin of the 'royalty' rumour must only have come from the fact that the currency crisis at the end of the war resulted in a grave loss of personal savings for returning soldiers. This I had learnt from my visit to Kathmandu in 1947.

It must have been my initial disquiet about the whole exercise that prevented my asking about the one remaining holder of the George Cross, Nandalal Thapa of 2/8 GR, who was awarded the Empire Gallantry Medal after the Quetta Earthquake of 1934. I produced him for the Prince of Wales on

10 December 1980 when the latter visited us at Pokhara - as Colonel-in-Chief of 2 GR - explaining how EGM holders were given the option of keeping the EGM or changing it into a GC. I further explained that Nandalal had rescued ten survivors. The old man, chair bound, then told the Prince that he had, in fact, rescued twelve but that the company commander had only put ten in the citation.

The Prince turned to me and said, "Poor old man, still worrying about it nearly fifty years later."

I later rang up the committee and told them that, as there had been no mention of the two Gurkha GC holders to date, both names simply had to be included in the souvenir brochure when that was produced. I was told that both were dead, relatives had not been traced but, yes, mention would be made of them.

There were more holders present this time than there were for the Queen and the Duke on 20 February 1986 in the British Embassy. Then there were five, now there were seven, as those who were missing before, Lachhiman Gurung and Gaje Ghale, were also present. The others were Ganju Lama, Tulbahadur Pun, Agansing Rai, Bhanbhagta Gurung and Rambahadur Limbu. One most unusual aspect of the VC holders was that Brigadier Peter Myers had written citations for two of them; Lachhiman Gurung of 4/8 GR, as adjutant under Lieutenant Colonel W C Walker and Rambahadur Limbu of 2/10 GR 'in his own right'.

The one holder of the PVC was Lt Col Dhansing Thapa, 1/8 GR. It was during the 1962 Chinese war and he virtually took over the battalion single handed. He was taken by the Chinese and was reported dead. His widow was presented with her late husband's posthumous award. [I can't remember hearing of any Gorkha (IA spelling) being awarded the honour non-posthumously although there may be some.] When, six months later, the Chinese let him go back to India, they had to remarry. There was also the oldest surviving soldier, Rfn Dhané Thapa, of 2/3 GR - when Sir Ralph Turner was adjutant - now 108 years old. He would have been 28 years old in 1914. Three dead holders, Lalbahadur Thapa, Netrabahadur Thapa and Karnabahadur Rana (who won his award in April 1918) had relations there to represent them and they were on stage with the others. Subedar Lalbahadur's grandson, an ex-sergeant of 2 or 6 GR, was also on stage. He wore western dress and a civilian jungle hat that he kept on his head at all times. I somehow thought he would have allowed himself to 'look more the part', so to speak.

No trace could be found of the families of the remaining three holders of the award, Thaman Gurung, Sherbahadur Thapa and Kulbir Thapa, who thereby remained unrepresented. A mischievous thought did strike me: those being 'felicitated' were all billed as Nepalis of Nepal, and so the casual observer would have surmised, but, in fact, this was not the case as Ganju Lama was a Sikkimese national and, so I gather, always had been, while Gaje Ghale became an Indian national. On the other hand, no one could think of leaving either out.

It was only two months later that I learnt it had been the Nepal Communist Party's idea to hold this event but, so

unpopular was the party, that there were not enough members of it to organize everything. The Congress Party's adherents must have used their influence to get the PM both as Chief Guest and to host another 'tea party' type event in his own house for all the holders.

In 1986 we had all thought that that was the last time we would ever see such a show as five VC holders all in one place. 'Never' seldom happens and, when it does, it lasts a long time! Then I described it as a heart-throbbing, blood-tingling and tear-jerking occasion. Apart from Portugal, England's oldest ally, Nepal is the only non-Commonwealth country to be visited twice by a reigning British monarch. As the royal couple drove by, some of the elder women on the pavement wept with emotion while two young Limbus walked all the way from the east as they had heard that the Queen herself had come to do the recruiting as more than the usual amount of men were needed, so who better to carry out the task?

At this reunion the chief guest was the Prime Minister and Defence Minister, Girijaprasad Koirala. After the welcome address we all stood for a minute's silence as homage to known and unknown Gurkha dead. There were messages from HM the Queen and HM the Queen Mother (in connection with the VC and GC Association), read out by the British ambassador, the President of India, read out by the Indian ambassador, the King of Nepal, the head of the British, Indian and Nepal Armies, the Inspector-General of Police and others such as the VC and GC Association in its own right, the Gurkha Reserve Unit in Brunei, Sir Horace Kadoorie, CO 10 GR and Alastair Langlands. These were read out by one of Ganju Lama's daughters. The prime minister played his part with considerable aplomb and earned bonus points. His speech was a good one and it was relayed on Nepal TV.

It was a most moving ceremony and I had tears in my eyes and a lump in my throat more than once. After the Felicitation Ceremony was over and gifts of money had been given, notice was given about a memorial to the holders of the VC and PVC to be established in Nepal. I believed it would be in the nature of a museum based on a bravery theme. [My belief proved correct.]

When it was over there was a break. All the VIPs left before a most well-executed cultural show was presented, hosted by the two most popular male singers in the kingdom, with the youngest dancer one hundred years younger than the oldest guest! What a time span. At the end of that all those holders of the VC who could stand unaided went onto the stage and 'danced'. Buddhiman and I did not go to the evening meal as it was late by then and in the opposite direction from where we have our digs. Evening transport is not easy to get hold of. On the morrow, the Sunday, there was a full-blown meal at midday to which I had been invited. I would have liked to have gone to meet so many of my old friends - the previous day was too crowded and concentrated for a 'good old' gup - but I called off as on the Monday there was a by-election in Kathmandu. During such times there is no telling what will happen and we feared that the roads would be blocked so preventing our timely return to Pokhara. A week later the recipients were feted in Pokhara, publicly, in the British Gurkha and the Indian Gorkha camps.



British Gurkhas Nepal

Staff List

Headquarters British Gurkhas Nepal

Col A M Mills Late RE
Lt Col M D Vickers QOGLR
Maj R C Griffiths AGC (SPS)
Maj Nirmalkumar Bhattachan QG SIGNALS
Capt Manbahadur Gurung RGR
Capt M J Dennis R SIGNALS
Capt L P Hankins
WO1 M Turner RLC
Capt Surje Gurung QG SIGNALS
Mrs J Simonot
Hon Maj Karnasher Tamang MBE Ex QG SIGNALS
Dr K Baker
Mrs J Maynard

Comd/DA
D Comd/COS
DCOS
GM
SO3 G1/MS
SO3 G2/3/6
SO3 G4 Log Sp/SER
SO3 G4 Tpt & Mov
Tp Comd NST
Civ Sec
CLO
CMP
SSAFA

Defence Section British Embassy Kathmandu

Maj Bijayant Sherchan RGR
Capt Ashwin Rana RGR

AMA/MLO
SO Admin

British Gurkhas Kathmandu

Maj S Greenwood LANCS
Maj K C Thorpe AGC (SPS)
Capt Rajdip Gurung QOGLR
Hon Maj Hitman Gurung Ex 1 RGR
Lt (QGO) (Retd) Ravindra Sahi Ex QGE

OC
RAO
2IC/MTO
BUWO
EO (L) Transit

British Gurkhas Pokhara

Maj R G J Beven RGR
Capt Debbahadur Ghale RGR
Capt A D B Crawley RGR
Capt Tulbahadur Ale MBE QGE
Hon Maj Prembahadur Thapa Ex RGR
Capt (QGO) (Retd) Gangabahadur Gurung Ex RGR
Hon Capt Mansing Gurung Ex QG SIGNALS
Capt (QGO) (Retd) Bhojraj Gurung Ex 2 RGR
Capt (QGO) (Retd) Aitabahadur Limbu Ex 2 RGR

OC
2IC
Ops/Co-ord Offr
QM
Records Offr
EO(L) Pay
SARO
ARO (Coord)
ARO (E)

Defence Estate (Nepal)

Capt C B Smith RE

Head of Delivery

British Gurkhas Itahari

Mr Bhupal Darlami

OC

Headquarters Gurkha Welfare Scheme

Lt Col A P M Griffith RGR

Hon Maj Krishnabhadur Gurung MVO MBE Ex QOGLR

Capt R D Grant RE

Capt (QGO) (Retd) Bhaktabhadur Rai Ex QGE

Capt (QGO) (Retd) Mekbahadur Gurung Ex 1 RGR

Hon Maj Govinde Gurung MVO MBE Ex QG SIGNALS

Capt (QGO) (Retd) Tankabhadur Limbu Ex 2 RGR

Capt (QGO) (Retd) Hikmatbahadur Gurung Ex 1 RGR

Hon Capt Narbahadur Gurung MVO BEM Ex 1 RGR

Capt (QGO) (Retd) Khembahadur Thapa Ex QG SIGNALS

Hon Lt (QGO) Thakursing Gurung Ex 2 RGR

Fd Dir

Dep Fd Dir

Proj Engr

Prog Dir RWSP

SO Coord

SO Med

SO Ops

SO IA

SO Log

SO RH

LO GSO

Area Welfare Centres

Lt (QGO) (Retd) Mahendrakumar Gurung Ex QG SIGNALS

Hon Lt (QGO) (Retd) Haribahadur Rana Ex 1 RGR

Hon Maj Chandrabhadur Gurung MVO Ex 1 RGR

Lt (QGO) (Retd) Amarbahadur Gurung Ex 6 GR

Lt (QGO) (Retd) Senbahadur Gurung Ex 6 GR

Maj (Retd) Krishna Gurung BEM Ex QG SIGNALS

Lt (QGO) (Retd) Purnabahadur Gurung Ex 1 RGR

Lt (QGO) (Retd) Uddimbahadur Gurung Ex 2 GR

Capt (QGO) (Retd) Jitbahadur Thapa Ex 1 RGR

Hon Maj Lalitbahadur Gurung Ex RGR

Insp II (Retd) Subharaj Thamsuhang Ex GCSPF

Lt (QGO) (Retd) Yambahadur Limbu Ex QOGLR

Capt (QGO) (Retd) Purnaparsad Limbu Ex 2 RGR

Hon Lt (QGO) Tikaram Rai Ex 10 GR

Hon Lt (QGO) Bhimprasad Rai Ex 10 GR

Hon Lt (QGO) Punendraprasad Limbu Ex 2 RGR

Hon Lt (QGO) Chhatrabhadur Rai Ex QG SIGNALS

Hon Maj Chandraprasad Limbu MBE Ex 3 RGR

Hon Lt (QGO) Premkumar Tamang Ex QG SIGNALS

Capt (QGO) (Retd) Damberkumar Pradhan Ex 6 GR

AWO Bheri

AWO Gulmi

SAWO Kaski

AWO Lamjung

AWO Gorkha

AWO Syangja

AWO Tanahun

AWO Chitwan

SAWO Butwal

SAWO Bagmati

AWO Rumjatar

AWO Diktel

AWO Bhojpur

AWO Khandbari

AWO Tehrathum

AWO Taplejung

AWO Phidim

SAWO Dharan

AWO Damak

AWO Darjeeling

Area Welfare Officers (Medical)

Capt (QGO) (Retd) Rukumbahadur Rana Ex 1 RGR

Hon Lt (QGO) Deobahadur Rana Ex QOGLR

Hon Lt (QGO) Tirthabahadur Thapa Ex 2 RGR

Capt (QGO) (Retd) Rajbahadur Rai Ex QG SIGNALS

AWO (Med) Kaski

AWO (Med) Butwal

AWO (Med) Bagmati

AWO (Med) Dharan

Honorary Area Welfare Officer

WO2 (Retd) Satyasagar Ghale Ex 6 GR

HAWO Dehradun/ Dharmasala

The Gurkha Settlement Office, Kathmandu

The Gurkha Settlement Office (GSO) has been set up in Kathmandu by the Ministry of Defence to advise ex-Gurkhas on the practical issues concerning settlement in the United Kingdom and then assist with applications for visas.

The staff conduct centralised briefings on life in the United Kingdom and then provide one-on-one interviews where ex-Gurkhas can register themselves and their dependants as applicants. They are then guided through the requirements of the visa application process, for example ensuring that applicants have all the necessary documents to support their application. What the GSO does not do is give advice on whether or not an ex-Gurkha should make an application for settlement. That is the decision of the individual concerned and no one else.

The service is open to all ex-Gurkhas who served in the British Army for more than four years, and their dependants. It is important to note that the help provided by the GSO is completely free; there are no charges or fees for the assistance given.

The GSO also provides access to a fast track National Insurance Number allocation process when an individual reaches the United Kingdom, so that they are capable of either applying for jobs as soon as possible after arrival, or alternatively applying for benefits where they cannot work. The GSO liaises closely with the joint GWT/HQBG Gurkha Welfare Centre in UK (Salisbury and Aldershot) and seeks to ensure a high quality of service to all ex-Gurkhas.

Contact Details:

Gurkha Settlement Office

British Gurkhas Nepal

Manbhawan

Lalitpur

Kathmandu

Tel: 977 - 1 - 5533521 Ext: 326, 327 & 329

Fax: 977-1-5547561

Email: gso@bgn.com.np

Everest - The World's Highest Marathon 2009

In the early part of 2009 Maj Thorpe, Regimental Admin Officer BGN, suggested that a team should be put together to compete in the 2009 Everest Marathon. A seed was planted and interest sparked, but what did it entail? Running 26 miles with some ten months' training couldn't be that difficult, could it? After all, we are all fit soldiers, that is except the Padre! Fit but not yet a soldier.

Before signing up more information was required, such as, what was expected of us? It was then discovered that the race would start at Gorak Shep, close to Everest Base camp at an altitude of 5164 metres above sea level and would end in Namche Bazaar, a mere 3446 metres above sea level. So a downhill race. No Problem then!

Training started in earnest before Easter, sponsorship, funding, financial and moral support were sourced. It should be noted here that the fee to enter the race for UK based applicants is £2500 per runner! As Nepal based personnel we were able to bring in the costs at under £1000 per person.

The five male team members (Major Rowena Griffiths was unable to run), completed the Kathmandu Marathon on 12 September 2009 as part of the final preparation and knew then that they would be ready to depart Kathmandu for the Everest region on 19 November and attempt the world's highest marathon.

Two days before departure a team brief and initial medicals were held at the Shanker Hotel in Kathmandu. This was

followed on Wednesday by a short fun run! This was to be a mere 11km "race" in Nagarjun Forest with the finish at the end of a very rough track.

The team departed Kathmandu airport courtesy of complimentary travel provided by Yeti Airlines for the 30 minute flight to Lukla Airport (2860m). A two-day trek then took the team to what would be the finish line in Namche Bazaar (3446m). During the two-day acclimatisation period the team carried out a short, 10km, training run, this was to be the final leg of the marathon. What a tough 10k, allegedly flat, a mere 500m of hills, but we still had almost two weeks of

**BGN team at Base Camp**



Running Downhill



acclimatisation. It had to get easier! And after all, ninety minutes for 10k is not that slow!

The following week was spent gaining height and getting the body used to operating in the cold and with reduced oxygen levels. A couple of the team suffered some minor ailments but all safely reached Gokyo (4791m) on Friday, 27 November. Still one week to go. The next day saw us move back down to 3600m and prepare to move to the start line.

Saturday through to Thursday the team progressed towards Gorak Shep (5184m). Again we all arrived safely by mid afternoon on the day before the race. Pre-race medicals were carried out and passed, final kit checks completed. A minimum kit list was required to be carried by all runners. A practice start, the final meal and an early night and we were ready!

All competitors had to be on the start line at 0615 hrs, temperature around -10c. A final roll call and then the off! Not a good time to sprint for the first corner and be the first

to the glacier! Reduced oxygen, frozen limbs and lungs, and the final confirmation of being mad were just some of the difficulties we faced.

Eight check points, 26 miles and a decrease in altitude of 1800m, later, at least the oxygen levels improved. Each runner had their own tactics, either publicly or privately, and set out to achieve their goal. We all progressed through the first check point at Lobuche (4930m) where Sean Naile was waiting with a warm drink, a cheery smile, exuberant encouragement and a kiss for DCOS! When would we see him again? Progress over the first eight miles was slow; the cold and difficult terrain were significant factors. The RAO fell in the river at Pheriche (4252m), DCOS badly twisted her ankle and should have retired, but as was reported earlier, complete madness had set in due to lack of oxygen, and she continued! Onwards and downwards we walked, jogged, ran, fell and stumbled towards the halfway point by the Buddhist Monastery at Tengboche (3867m). This last 30 minutes involved a distance of less than 2km with a 200m gain in altitude; somebody told me it was a downhill race! Much needed refreshment was taken in preparation for the next phase to Sarnassa (3600m), downhill less than 300 metres.

What was in store was a loss in altitude of 700 metres and then back up for another 400 metres. This was the slowest part of the course with the three miles averaging well over one hour for all members of the team. Once through Sarnassa there was less than ten miles to go of what had been described as 'undulating' terrain, but still involved a height gain of 800m and loss of 1000m. Then the checkpoint at Chorkhung (3520m) and then into the 10km Thamo loop, memories kicked in of two weeks ago, surely it could not be any harder. As we entered the loop we could see the bazaar in Namche down the hill, but knowing we still had almost two hours to go we merely glanced and moved on relentlessly.



The Team at the Finish Line

It was now into the afternoon and the team started to arrive at the finish line in Namche (3446m). The RAO crossed the line just before 1pm and waited patiently for the rest of his team having crossed paths around the Thamo loop. Next across the line was the RAWO, closely chased by the two operators, next DCOS limped in and 15 minutes later we all cheered as our last team member, Padre John, joined us at the finish line. Some two hours later the last of the 80+ runners completed the race.

Special thanks must be offered to our team marshal, Sean Naile for his continuous support and encouragement; to Jeannie Jamieson who trekked in to meet us all and cheer us in at the

finish line; to our numerous and generous sponsors - the Army Sports Lottery, AGC Association, QG Signals, RGR, Berlin Memorial Fund, BGN, Standard Chartered Bank, Yeti Airlines and Abacus, and all who contributed greatly to ensure that this event could take place.

In addition to the physical commitment the team were also able to raise in the region of £2500 to be distributed to the Everest Marathon Charity Fund, and local and service charities.

This event takes place every two years. If this article has sparked an interest look up the race at everestmarathon.org.uk. Maybe you could give it a go!

The Team and Their Results

Major Kevin Thorpe AGC (SPS)	RAO BGN	25th	6:26:17 (1st over 50!)
Major Rowena Griffiths AGC (SPS)	DCOS BGN	51st	8:18:08
WO2 Bishan Rai RGR (Clerk)	RAWO BGN	32nd	6:50:26
Cpl Beshroj Chemjong Q G Signals	NST Operator	38th	7:09:03
Cpl Mekhman Tamang Q G Signals	NST Operator	40th	7:09:58
Padre John Jamieson	OCM BGN	55th	8:31:02
Lt Col (Retd) Sean Naile	(Marshall, Guide and Supporter)		
Distance: 26 miles 385 yards (42.2km)		Elevation Gain: 1200 metres Elevation Loss: 3000 metres	

Where have all the Hill Boys Gone?

By Capt A D B Crawley, 2 RGR Ops Coord BGP

As chukkus Gora Sahibs we are introduced to the hill boy versus city boy debate as our bags hit the floor in our new mess accommodation. People talk with sadness of how the son of toil with calloused hands, Bhimbahadur from the hills is no longer being recruited, being replaced instead with the chalak Rocky Gurung from Pokhara.

Posted to Pokhara for a year as the Ops Coord I was lucky enough to travel accompanied by some of the local Gurung NCOs through the traditional villages of Bhimbahadur, but it was not the stunning Himalayas or the beautiful Gurung villages that struck me, but rather the question of what had happened to Bhim and the rest of the Hill Boys?

Rural Nepal seems to me as a Gora to be in massive flux. My Gurujis pointed out the unkempt fields returning to jungle, the boarded-up houses, and that the village youth were all being educated down in the valley towns. They seemed concerned that their villages would disappear within a few generations unless they could pull people back from migrating to the valleys.

Improvements in standards of living including rough jeep tracks to within four hours walk of the village, 24 hour hydro powered electricity instead of load shedding, and schools that

could teach up to School Leaving Certificate, were still not enough to stop people flooding out of the hills.

Whilst Gurujis talked with misty eyes about retiring to their villages, a slightly deeper scratch under the surface revealed their own massive personal investments in Pokhara, Dharan and Kathmandu where they could educate their children to degree level, shop in supermarkets, use the internet and, provide health care for their parents; a factor which (for some, along with the availability of golf facilities!), was particularly important.

This is not just the attitude of our well-paid Gurkha soldiers. All across the Parbat, families are scratching together whatever they can to spare their sons a life of hard toil in the fields, carrying dokos up the hills and ploughing with oxen. No longer do we find Bhim tending herds of sheep in high pastures, fighting off wolves and leopards; instead Rocky Gurung is fighting off zombies on computer games in internet cafes. No longer is Bhim playing drums and flutes in the villages; Rocky is in the bazaar listening to his iPod. This seems to be the reality of Naya Nepal.

Having heard the stories of the legendary tough hill boys, I was surprised that they had become as elusive as the leopards in the hills. What I found instead were educated, multi-lingual

teenagers with an excellent grasp of technology, who know about as much about ploughing with oxen as I do, coming from a commuter village near London.

It seems the time has come to accept that the tough, unquestioning, stoical Bhimbahadur is in short supply. Instead, we now have a wealth of savvy bazaar-educated talent to choose from. Is this the death knell of the Brigade as many would have us believe?

As a professional fighting force, the Brigade should be focused on operations. The last decade has taken us from Pristina to Basra, on to Kabul, then Mazar-i-Sharif to Musa Qal'eh and into Lashkar Gah, and Gereshk. Our operations have been peacekeeping and counter-insurgency, securing the bulk of the population in its built up areas, in the bazaars and cities. Who is better suited to patrol the towns and bazaars of recently urbanized poor but developing countries: Rocky

Gurung from Pokhara who can operate the satellite radio set and understands the rhythms of urban life in a developing country, who can sense the presence of the abnormal and the absence of the normal? Or Bhim who can plough a hal of land in just six hours, but has no concept of what an overloaded car bomb parked out of place would look like?

The coming of the era of the city boy is not just in Nepal but across the globe, and the chances are high that the next decade of operations will also be fought amongst the populations of developing, urbanizing countries. Who is there better in the British Army to understand this new terrain, this new human battlefield than a modern Gurkha soldier from a developing urbanized background?

The time has come to look to the future and embrace the strengths that our soldiers bring to operations that will keep the Brigade at the forefront of the British Army.

Communication System in Nepal

By SSgt Prabin Thapa, Nepal Signal Troop

Readers are well aware of the existence of British Gurkhas Nepal (BGN). It has long been established, with its Headquarters in Kathmandu. But some may not be aware of its roles and purpose. By its nature it is a non-deployable HQ. However, it plays a key role in the delivery of support to the Brigade. As ever, BGN keeps on providing its services throughout the year mainly focusing on its 'core functions' of Gurkha recruitment, facilitating transit, welfare support to all Gurkha units and the payment of pensions to nearly 25,000 pensioners.

Accomplishing these functions without an extensive communication infrastructure in place would not be possible. Thus, in order to help BGN achieve its aims, Nepal Signal Troop (NST), an element of Queen's Gurkha Signals, is embedded within HQ BGN for the provision of communications. In this context, NST is responsible for providing uninterrupted, robust and reliable Communication Information System (CIS) support, whilst sustaining the CIS capabilities around-the-clock. NST is primarily responsible for enabling Commander BGN and his Staff to carry out their missions and tasks. In addition NST also supports the Area Welfare Centre's (AWCs) on behalf of HQ Gurkha Welfare Scheme (GWS). Currently, NST can offer a range of communication services from Satellite phones to Very Small Aperture Terminals (VSAT). NST deals with a diversity of CIS equipment and capabilities that are available to support HQ BGN. The communication equipment currently being used is highlighted below:

- **VSAT** – The VSAT technology is a synchronous satellite ground station with allocated bandwidth of 960k. It has the capacity to transport both voice and data to and from UK terminals via satellite. The VSAT is the backbone of communications used. In technical terms, it provides a gateway for; Land Command Secure System Restricted (LCSSR), Joint Personnel Administration (JPA), Unicom, Realities (PABX) Telephone Exchange, Multi Platform

Terminal Executive (MPTE), Video Teleconferencing (VTC), fax and Defence Fixed Terminal System (DFTS) services. Unfortunately, users at BGN Pokhara and Dharan are unable to use these services due to the unavailability of VSAT terminals at their locations. BGN may be one of the last establishments using LCSS(R); however change is near with the planned migration to the Defence Information Infrastructure (DII) F, in the second quarter of 2011. The current plan is for 88 DII (F) terminals in British Gurkhas Kathmandu (BGK) which includes HQ BGN and Defence Estates Nepal (DE (N)) and 26 at British Gurkhas Pokhara (BGP) (this number also includes GWS). Additionally, two terminals will be placed within the Defence Section at the British Embassy and one terminal at British Gurkhas Dharan (BGD). This number will not cater for all users within HQ BGN and therefore a number of personnel will remain on bgn/bgp.com. The implementation of DII (F) at BGN is a step forward in the provision of CIS facilities for the staff.

- **High Frequency (HF) Radio** – In order to maintain communications routinely, or in the event of an emergency, NST on behalf of HQ GWS has established an insecure communications network by deploying HF radios to all AWCs except the AWC in Darjeeling. The main purpose of the HF radios is to establish both voice and data links between HQ GWS and AWCs. This network is monitored continuously and tested twice daily. Although the exchange of information between HQ BGN, HQ GWS and the AWCs is generally carried out by the use of email or telephone, the AWCs still remain heavily reliant upon the HF radios for daily situation reports whereas the Satellite phone is kept in reserve. Although most of the AWCs are facilitated with Dial-Up Internet and fax machines, the poor quality of telephone lines has prevented their full usage. Every year an element of NST, under Exercise PURBA/



General Dannatt inspecting the Guard of Honour



Brig NAW Pope and Maj Yamkumar Gurung being briefed

PASHCHIM SIGNAL KHUKRI, deploy to conduct annual mandatory inspections, servicing and refresher training at all AWCs in order to sustain these vital communication capabilities.

- **Satellite Phones** – NST also holds 22 Satellite phones for emergency purposes. The existence of this service has not only proved to be of critical importance in BGN's Contingency Plan, it is also an essential asset for those personnel conducting official duty treks in the remote areas of the country. Similarly each AWC has also been issued with one phone, should their primary means of communication fail.
- **Broadband Internet System** – BGN has been limited to 24 LCSS(R) terminals which are available only in BGK. Those without an LCSS(R) terminal at BGK, BGP and BGD have been totally reliant upon the Broadband Internet System provided by World Link Communications Pvt Limited, a civilian internet provider. As such, there are currently 134 Internet terminals at BGK (bgn.com.np) and 83 Internet terminals at the BGP (bgp.com.np) with a speed of 256/512 kbs at each site. Besides these, BGN Dharan has a number of stand-alone terminals connected to a Dial-up internet service. A Local Area Network (LAN) for BGD is currently being planned in order to improve the CIS capabilities at this location.
- **Contingency Operation Cell** – BGN has a number of Contingency Plans to cover catastrophies and disasters such as earthquakes, civil disorder, etc. In all scenarios, NST provides CIS services to establish communications within the BGN organization, reach back to the UK, the British Embassy (BE), the British School (TBS) and the Department for International Development (DFID). If the Operation Cell

is activated, BGN's key staff under the command of DComd/ COS deploy to the purpose built Operations Cell where they will be facilitated with the CIS support of both data and voice services. In the event that the primary Operation Cell is unavailable, NST would then build the tented alternative Operations Cell and continue to provide CIS support by setting up one of three Light Weight Recce Node (LWRN) detachments. The LWRN is used to provide data and voice capabilities both in secure and non-secure modes alongside satellite phones and HF radios.

- **Nepal Telecommunication (NT)** – NT plays a key role in the support of communications used within BGN. Should the VSAT fail, then BGN has a number of leased lines from NT for alternative means of communications. These lines are also used for national calls and are only made available to key personnel, with a number of lines dedicated to the telephone exchanges at BGK and BGP. In order to reduce both the cost and number of NT lines, both the camps have internal (military) lines provided via the telephone exchanges onto which the dedicated NT lines are connected to facilitate transfer of internal lines to and from BGK and BGP. BGD has no such facility and relies completely on NT provided lines.

In summary, without a doubt the use of CIS has become vital to HQ BGN, enabling it to accomplish its functions and assist the AWCs. Honestly, it can sometimes be quite tricky to meet the users' demands or solve a problem due to the various types of Information Technology equipment and software being used and the political/security situation within Nepal. To this end, there is currently a plan to standardize all CIS equipment where possible. The communication infrastructure at BGN has definitely improved over the last few years, and the introduction of DII (F) in 2011 will take it a step further and bring it into line.



The Royal Gurkha Rifles

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

The Great War - La Bassee 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, Tavoletto, 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, Kyaukmyaung 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 AK QSO ADC

Colonel

Lt Gen P T C Pearson CBE

Regimental Secretary

Maj (Retd) P H Gay

Staff List (as at December 2009)

Serving Late RGR Officers

Lt Gen P T C Pearson CBE psc hcsc(j)	Late RGR	Terminal Leave
Brig S D Crane OBE MA psc+	Late RGR	HQ LAND
Brig J C Lawrence MBE MSc FRGS psc+	Late RGR	COS, Force Development & Training, HQ Land
Col D G Hayes CBE jsdc sq	Late RGR	Col BG
Col MW L Theobald psc (GE)	Late RGR	Comd BMAT Team (West Africa)
Col N D J Rowe psc	Late RGR	DA Jakarta
Col G A C Hughes OBE psc	Late RGR	COS Comd Brit Contingent UN Forces Cyprus

Col I A Rigden OBE MA psc	Late RGR	Asst Head Joint Schematic Doctrine Etc. Shrivenham
Col I N A Thomas OBE MA (Oxon) psc+	Late RGR	COS DGIC London
Col C D Wombell MA MBA psc(j)	RGR	DSF London
Col A J P Bourne OBE BA(Hons) MA, MPhil (Cantab) psc j (j)+	RGR	RGR Col Plans, Army Resources & Plans

Officers of the Regiment

Lt Col B P Clesham MBE odc (lt) sq	RGR	SO1 CBRN HQ DRAC
Lt Col LA Holley MBE sq	RGR	Terminal Leave
Lt Col J C Palmer psc	RGR	SO1 Policing and Guarding, DTR P2 IPT, HQ ARTD
Lt Col A P M Griffith psc	RGR	Fd Dir GWS BG Pokhara
Lt Col Bijaykumar Rawat psc	RGR	SO1 SBLSO Brunei
Lt Col S J M Dewing psc	RGR	Terminal Leave
Lt Col S R Nias MA psc(j)	RGR	SO1 IS DCI(A) MOD
Lt Col J G Robinson psc(j)+	RGR	Comd CGS's Briefing Team
Lt Col G M O'Keeffe MA BSc psc(j)	RGR	DACOS G3 Ops HQ ARRC
Lt Col I St C Logan MA BSc(Hons) psc(j)	RGR	SO1 Plans & Doc AD Log Validation
Lt Col C B Darby MA psc(j)	RGR	CO 2 RGR
Lt Col G M Strickland MBE BA(Hons) psc(j)	RGR	CO 1 RGR
Lt Col S J P Gilderson MBE MA psc (j)	RGR	MA1 to CGS
Lt Col P R G Pitchfork BA(Hons) MA psc (j)	RGR	MA to MNF-I/SBMR-I MNF(I)

Maj G R J Glanville MBE sq	RGR	SO2Trg Dev, LWC
Maj SA Archer sq(w)+	RGR	OC GC(Sittang)
Maj A W A Forbes BA(Hons) osc (FR) (sq)	RGR	Op Kindle ,Afgghanistan
Maj A G Jones sq	RGR	SO2 DCM DIS (London)
Maj RGJ Bevan	RGR	DRO BG Pokhara (FTRS)
Maj D J Robinson MA psc(j)	RGR	COS HQBG
Maj T C M-K Jackman	RGR	OC Sp Coy, 2 RGR
Maj R J Daines ph	RGR	Bn 2IC, 2 RGR
Maj F J Rea LLB MA psc(j)	RGR	OC B Coy, 1 RGR
Maj J P Davies MBE MA(Cantab)	RGR	OC D Coy, 2 RGR
Maj J N B Birch MA MDA psc (j)	RGR	SO2 Spec CT & UK Ops
Maj D M Rex BA(Hons)	RGR	MILO
Maj S C Marcandonatos BEng	RGR	OC GRC 3
Maj Bishnukumar Pun MVO	RGR	SO2 Man Plans HQ 19 Bde
Maj M H Reedman BEng(Hons)	RGR	ACSC 13
Maj Dilkumar Rai	RGR	2IC ATR Winchester
Maj A G Alexander-Cooper BA(Hons) ph	RGR	A Block ,MOD
Maj W R Kefford	RGR	Exchange Officer Canada
Maj Guptaman Gurung MVO MBE	RGR	OC GC (Mandalay)
Maj Hemchandra Rai BEM	RGR Clerk	DCOS HQBG
Maj Shivakumar Limbu MVO MBE	RGR	SO3 G1/G4 ITC Catterick
Maj T W Pike BEng(Hons)	RGR	SO2 Land, Air Warfare Centre
Maj C R Boryer MBE BA(Hons)	RGR	SO2 G7 Light Forces HQ LWC
Maj J C Murray BLE(Hons)	RGR	OC B Coy, 2 RGR
Maj Kushiman Gurung MVO	RGR	GM, 1 RGR
Maj N J Aucott BA(Hons)	RGR	OC GRC 2
Maj C N A Crowe BA(Hons)	RGR	SO2 G5 Plans, HQ ARRC
Maj DT Pack	RGR	ICSC
Maj SW M Chandler	RGR	OC Sp Coy, 1 RGR
Maj Hitman Gurung	RGR	OC HQ Coy, 1 RGR
Maj Yambahadur Rana MVO	RGR	GM, 2 RGR
Maj Samundra Gurung	RGR Clerk	SO2 MS (Gurkha)
A/Maj H P S Stanford-Tuck	RGR	OC GC Catterick
Maj Bijayant Sherrchan	RGR Clerk	AMA, Kathmandu
Maj A M S Hellier BA(Hons)	RGR	ICSC
Maj G Chaganis BSc (Hons)	RGR	ICSC

Maj	C P L Conroy BSc(Hons)	RGR	OC GRC I	Capt	A C Colquhoun BSc(Hons)	RGR	OC Atk, 2 RGR
Maj	B R Marshall BSc(Hons)	RGR	ICSC	Capt	P A Houlton-Hart BEng(Hons)	RGR	OC Recce, 1 RGR
Maj	L M Roberts BSc(Hons)	RGR	Recovering Casualty	Capt	Nanibabu Magar	RGR	2IC D Coy, 2 RGR
A/Maj	Tekbahadur Gharti	RGR	2IC GC (Sittang)	Capt	Rambahadur Malla	RGR	PI Comd GC Catterick
A/Maj	A P Todd BSc(Hons)	RGR	OC GRC I (des)	Capt	Kulbahadur Gurung	RGR	PI Comd, GC Catterick
				Capt	EV Simpson BA(Hons)	RGR	IO, 1 RGR
Capt	Ashokkumar Rai	RGR	SO3 CIS, Warminster	Capt	Yubaraj Garbuja	RGR	PI Comd GC (Mandalay)
Capt	Umeshkumar Pun MVO	RGR	CIMIC	Capt	Raghubir Rai	RGR	FWO 2 RGR
Capt	S J Garside	RGR	GCSPP	Capt	Sherbahadur Gurung	RGR	2IC HQ Coy 1 RGR
Capt	Yambahadur Khatri MBE	RGR	SO3 O&D HQ 2 Bde	Capt	Chandrabahadur Pun	RGR	2ICA Coy 1 RGR
Capt	M J James	RGR	SO3 G7 20 Armd Bde	Capt	Rembahadur Ghale	RGR	Trg Offr (des) 1 RGR
Capt	Surendra Gurung	RGR	GLW	Capt	Prakash Gurung	RGR	PI Comd, GC (Sittang)
Capt	Dammarbahadur Shahi	RGR	RCMO 1 RGR	Capt	Pimbahadur Gurung	RGR Clerk	Det Comd, 2 RGR
Capt	E P Oldfield	RGR	British Army Rep West Point	Capt	Trilochan Gurung	RGR	PI Comd GC (Sittang)
Capt	Angphula Sherpa	RGR	Coy 2IC, 4 RIFLES	Capt	Tikbahadur Gurung	RGR Clerk	SO3 GI, HQ 3 (UK) Div
Capt	Padambahadur Gurung	RGR	Coy 2IC, 1 RIFLES	Capt	Manbahadur Gurung	RGR Clerk	SO3 GI/MS, HQ BGN
Capt	Gamarsing Gurung	RGR	GLW	Capt	Ashwin Rana	RGR Clerk	SO Admin Def Sect, Kathmandu
Capt	Suryaprakash Gurung	RGR	Resettlement	Capt	Kamarsing Rana	RGR Clerk	DCMO, APC
Capt	Dhyanprasad Rai	RGR	QGOO	Capt	Junkaji Gurung	RGR	UWO 1 RGR
Capt	Jitbahadur Gharti	RGR	OPTAG	Capt	Hemkumar Tamang	RGR	PI Comd GRC3 (1 YORKS)
Capt	J M L Cartwright BA(Hons)	RGR	OPTAG	Capt	Rajkumar Rai	RGR	RSO 2 RGR
Capt	Lachhyabahadur Gurung	RGR	Resettlement	Capt	Suryakumar Rai	RGR Clerk	Det Comd 1 RGR
Capt	Debbahadur Ghale	RGR	2IC BGP	Capt	Narendrakumar Gurung	RGR Clerk	Det Comd, 1 YORKS
Capt	Bhupjit Rai	RGR	2IC GC Catterick	Capt	Pitamamber Gurung	RGR	PI Comd GC (Mandalay)
Capt	Dhanbahadur Gurung	RGR	2IC Sp Coy, 1 RGR	Capt	Dolbahadur Gurung	RGR	PI Comd GC (Sittang)
Capt	Daniel Lama	RGR	QM DMOC	Capt	Tubendrabahadur Limbu	RGR	PI Comd GRC3 (1 YORKS)
Capt	A B D Crawley	RGR	Adjt BGP	Capt	Maniram Rai	RGR	PI Comd GRC3 (1 YORKS)
Capt	W J Hughes MSc MRPharmS	RGR	Adjt 2 RGR	Capt	Sachhinhang Limbu	RGR	IO 2 RGR
Capt	C J Kyte BA(Hons)	RGR	OC Recce, 2 RGR	Capt	Jogendrasing Limbu	RGR	PI Comd GC (Mandalay)
Capt	D D A Bould BSc(Hons)	RGR	GCSPP	Capt	Gajendra Angdembe	RGR	PI Comd GC Catterick
Capt	N R Lloyd BSc	RGR	Ops Offr 1 RGR	Capt	Gajendrakumar Angdembe	RGR	PI Comd GC Catterick
Capt	Chinbahadur Thapa	RGR	2IC GRC2 (1 MERCIAN)	Capt	Prembahadur Gurung	RGR	PI Comd GRC1
Capt	Rambahadur Pun	RGR	2IC C Coy, 1 RGR	Capt	Liljung Gurung	RGR	PI Comd GRC2 (1 MERCIAN)
Capt	Dilipkumar Thapa	RGR	Asst RCMO/UEO	Capt	Dilip Gurung	RGR	PI Comd 1 RGR
Capt	D P O'Connor	RGR	Ops Offr 2 RGR	Capt	Sarojkumar Rai	RGR	PI Comd 2 RGR
Capt	T P Tuppen BA (Hons)	RGR	Terminal Leave	Capt	Rajeshkumar Gurung	RGR	RSO 1 RGR
Capt	A R C Mathers MA	RGR	CT Cell DIS	Capt	Kishorkumar Roka	RGR	PI Comd GRC2 (1 MERCIAN)
Capt	Pratapsing Rai	RGR	Terminal Leave	Capt	Shureshkumar Thapa	RGR	PI Comd 1 RGR
Capt	Manoj Mohara	RGR	SO3 G3 G7 ITC	A/Capt	C P A E Bairsto BSc	RGR	BTT
Capt	Kamalprasad Rana	RGR	2IC GRC I				
Capt	T D Usher BA(Hons)	RGR	RGR Rep RMAS	Lt	N R Turkington	RGR	PI Comd 1 RGR
Capt	Bishnubahadur Singh	RGR	Trg Offr 1 RGR	Lt	C Hotchkiss	RGR	PI Comd 1 RGR
Capt	Subar Rai	RGR	RCMO 2 RGR	Lt	A Connolly	RGR	PI Comd GRC1
Capt	Amarjang Subba	RGR	2IC CSS Coy 2 RGR	Lt	R W A Roylance BA (Hons)	RGR	PI Comd 1 RGR
Capt	M W Brightwell BA (Hons)	RGR	OC MMG (des) 2 RGR	Lt	O C Cochrane BSc(Hons)	RGR	PI Comd 2 RGR
Capt	Ghanasyam Pun	RGR	Trg Offr GC Catterick	Lt	ST Meadows BA(Hons)	RGR	PI Comd GRC1
Capt	R T Anderson BA(Hons)	RGR	Adjt 1 RGR	Lt	R J Davies BSc(Hons)	RGR	PI Comd 1 RGR
Capt	W D Godwin BSc	RGR	OC Mor 1 RGR	Lt	A P R Hough BSc	RGR	Demo PI Comd TTB
Capt	Manbahadur Garbuja	RGR	2IC A Coy 2 RGR				
Capt	Manikumar Limbu	RGR	2IC GC (Mandalay)	2Lt	J E Arney BSc(Hons)	RGR	PI Comd, 2 RGR
Capt	Ramprasad Gurung	RGR	QM(T), 1 RGR	2Lt	R Evans	RGR	Commissioned Dec 09
Capt	N J Moran BA(Hons)	RGR	OC Everest PI	2Lt	R I Roberts BSc(Hons)	RGR	PI Comd, 2 RGR
Capt	T W Rose MA	RGR	OC Mor, 2 RGR	2Lt	J W Buckley BSc(Hons)	RGR	PI Comd, 2 RGR
Capt	Rabindrprakash Tulachan	RGR	2IC B Coy, 1 RGR	2Lt	TJA Baker BA(Hons)	RGR	PI Comd, 1 RGR
Capt	Narendrakumar Rai	RGR	2IC Sp Coy, 2 RGR	2Lt	B Norfield	RGR	Commissioned Dec 09
Capt	J A E E Jeffcoat BA(Hons)	RGR	OC MS PI, 1 RGR	2Lt	NJ Gross	RGR	PCBC
Capt	Hemkumar Rai	RGR	QM(T), 2 RGR	2Lt	G E A Norton BA(Hons)	RGR	PCBC
Capt	Gajendra Dewan	RGR	2IC B Coy, 2 RGR				

2Lt	CEF Russell	RGR	PCBC
2Lt	R E Morford	RGR	PI Comd, 2 RGR
2Lt	A S Brown	RGR	PI Comd, 1 RGR
2Lt	B Ball	RGR	Commissioned Dec 09
2Lt	BA Cork	RGR	PI Comd, 2 RGR

Attached Officers

Maj	D M Holdom	AGC(SPS)	RAO 1 RGR
Maj	K Beauman	RLC	OC CSS Coy 2 RGR
Maj	R N O Cowan	AGC(SPS)	RAO 2 RGR
Maj	N S Richardson BA(Hons)	MERCIAN	Bn 2IC 1 RGR
Maj	D R Jones BA(Hons)	MERCIAN	OC C Coy 1 RGR
Maj	P Ross	YORKS	QM 1 RGR
Maj	JC Camp	PARA	QM 2 RGR
Maj	J J Bowman	RIFLES	OCA Coy 1 RGR
Maj	S York MBBS	RAMC	RMO 1 RGR
Maj	A M Sands	RAMC	RMO 2 RGR
Capt	T Barry	AGC(RMP)	Rear Party G1/G4 Coord 1 RGR
Capt	P Kaye	KRH	OC ISTAR 1 RGR
Capt	A R Bradley	AGC(ETS)	UEO 1 RGR
Capt	R Thather	RIFLES	MTO 1RGR
Capt	D J Crimmins	R WELSH	MTO 2 RGR
Lt	R Reid BSc(Hons)	KRH	Coy Offr
Flt Lt	W E L Smyth MA	RAF Regt	Air Ops
Capt	C A Walsh	AGC(ETS)	UEO 2 RGR
2Lt	J Long	AAC	Coy Offr



First Battalion

Editor's Note

The recent news of 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles is covered in the chapter on Operations.



Second Battalion

Newsletter

With the dust still settling from the departure of the last Chinook containing 5TH Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland, dust of another kind was being stirred up in Battlegroup HQ as an army of ants began to put the 'Gurkha touch' to everything at hand. In January 2009, following the success of Operations MAR NONU 1 and 2, local nationals were able to move back into their homes, which before had been used as Taliban (TB) firing points. The establishment of Patrol Bases (PBs) WOQAB and YUBARAJ late in 2008, in the North and South respectively, continued to prevent the enemy's freedom of movement. This left B Company in WOQAB under the command of Maj Ross Daines, and B Company, Prince Wales' Royal Regiment, under command Maj Nick Charwood in the South. PB YUBARAJ grew, in terms of infrastructure, almost daily as various PWRR patrols returned with new additions to their sprawling homestead. Meanwhile B Company's Patrol Base continued to make serious inroads into sustaining the local economy by bulk-buying goats and chickens as readily as they could be supplied. Within this heightened security envelope, influence operations began to take to the fore with Military Stabilisation and Support Teams (MSST) pushing forward, and the Companies beginning to engage with local leaders in Shuras. The real job of winning hearts and minds began to be realised.

January saw the mass exodus of Battalion Headquarter Staff on R&R, and as such, A/Maj Oldfield was dragged (reluctantly) from his empire west of Musa Qal'eh (MSQ) to help bolster the HQ planning Staff. Lt Col Darby handed the reins over to a bedraggled COS, Maj David Robinson, and departed theatre having left enough direction to keep the staff busy for a number of weeks! January and February also saw a state of flux in Roshan Tower as Capt Danny O'Connor was returned to 'Colonial' Tower to provide overwatch of the Northern Area of Operations (AO). The Tower continued to be a potent OP for the remainder of the tour both in its ability to identify the TB as they crept into their firing positions and for the ability for it to inflict a 'bloody nose' on the insurgent should he stray too close to PB WOQAB.

The FIND Group, based on 2 RGR Recce with attachments, and under command of Capt Kit Kyte found themselves exceptionally busy throughout January and February, conducting a myriad of tasks including a period of time operating out of PB YUBARAJ in the Southern AO. January was also punctuated by three Indirect Fire Attacks (IDF); two on MSQ DC itself and one at PB WOQAB. These were the first IDF attacks on MSQ District Centre (DC) since its liberation in Dec 2006, and showed yet another change in tactics by the TB in the district.

With the Commanding Officer out of theatre, a rather 'scratch' BG HQ planning team embarked upon 2 RGR's third BG operation, Op KALO SHYAL. B Company and the Afghan National Army (ANA) manoeuvred north of PB WOQAB beyond the footprint of routine patrols, while at the same time Capt Kyte with the FIND Group returned to the ridge to the northwest of MSQ DC. The enemy's response to this movement was then watched by a collection of Intelligence Surveillance Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance (ISTAR) assets including the monitoring of radio and mobile transmissions and the use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UVA's). After a day to 're-cock' the friendly forces to the south, the manoeuvre was repeated with B Company PWRR and the ANA threatening Yatimchay village. Of particular note, an anti-aircraft gun and its associated supply vehicle - which had been causing significant concern in the Southern AO - were destroyed by a mixture of Apache and Warrior Armoured Fighting Vehicles. The operation was sadly marred by the death of Cpl Nield RIFLES (ANA OMLT) and a number of further casualties to both ISAF and ANSF troops.

During February, B Company operating out of PB WOQAB continued with their Op GALLIPOLI FEST series of operations, seeking to identify Mosques, Mullahs and local elders to further deepen their understanding of the local area. Throughout this period, FOB EDINBURGH (west of MSQ DC) continued to churn through the supplies, delivering them into the MSQ DC as and when the weather - and the TB - allowed them! The end of February saw B Company PWRR departing the AO and handing over to the Royal Welsh. The Hand over Take over (HOTO) was marred by bad weather and the Royal Welsh were forced into a short sabbatical at FOB EDI whilst waiting for the weather to clear.

In the northern AO, B Company having established that the TB were unwilling to engage in direct fire attacks, switched focus to Counter-IED operations. Op GALLIPOLI CHOP was a series of operations conducted at the end of February, seeking to identify the TB as they moved in to place IEDs and then catch them in the act. A number of insurgents were apprehended or killed; and numerous IEDs discovered and exploited.

March, April and May saw the BG continue to consolidate the gains made from Op KAHLO SHYAL with target packs and intelligence being further refined to inform future operations. The G4 chain, under the QM Maj Rod Gray, started to put its house in order as equipment was checked and re-checked in preparation for the HOTO. During March, the TB began to push their luck on the western flank, with OP HIMAL

under the command of Sgt Thakursingh and a number of ANSF outposts being targeted by direct fire attacks. The ever-ready FIND Group deployed and caught the TB by surprise, utilising a canny and previously unused approach. The TB were caught in their own backyard and the FIND Group's probing action proved to be extremely effective.

The lay down of A Company, from January 2009 onwards, saw elements deployed in multiple-sized groups, with attachments from the Service Police, to districts across Helmand. Teams deployed to Nad-e-Ali, Sangin, Gereshk, Lashkar Ghar, Nawa and Garmsir while command was exercised from the Brigade HQ in Lashkar Ghar by Maj Chris Boryer. The fledgling Afghan National Police (ANP) are not a police force as one would recognise; focussed more on counter terrorism than fighting crime they act as a paramilitary force drawn from the community they are working in. Generally not well-equipped and largely lacking in formal training, mentoring them in a hostile environment presented a formidable challenge. Much of what the company did was in support of a process known as Focussed District Development that saw the ANP sent away to training centres before returning trained and fully-equipped. This process was largely successful and there was a clear difference in capability post-training. In order effectively to implement police mentoring, multiples would have to live alongside the ANP, often in particularly remote and austere locations, and operate with them. This would involve guiding the ANP on routine patrols as well as carrying out deliberate cordon and search operations. The ANP were, and remain, very much at the forefront of the fight against the TB and many operations would involve direct engagements with the insurgents. The mentoring role demanded high standards of infantry work coupled with an ability to work very closely alongside Afghans. The Service Police also played a crucial role in ensuring that the ANP developed their policing skills as well as their ability to fight and it was this balance, between creating an effective fighting force but also one that could police their communities, that made the team's work challenging and interesting.

D Company, under command of Maj Jody Davies and working to the Queen's Dragoon Guards BG, were based in FOB DELHI in Garmsir. The Company Group were involved in a wide spectrum of operations, defending hill features, outposts and desert locations on a ten-day rotation in section strength which allowed the boys greater freedom of action and autonomy for section commanders. Framework operations around the District Centre despite IEDs, including human and donkey suicide bombers, allowed the Company group tangibly to improve the town, its infrastructure and economy. With a wide AO to cover, platoons regularly deployed for five days to establish hasty patrol bases giving tremendous freedom of manoeuvre for platoon commanders. Every week platoons were detached to B Company 1st Battalion The Rifles to assist in their advance-to-contact operations, giving everyone the chance to soldier at close quarters alongside their British counterparts. As a Company Group, Op KAPCHA SALAAM saw the integration of Viking Vehicles into a very long two-day 22 km advance to the South. Op KAPCHA BAZ, an air assault operation 30km in behind the front line, was a great chance to catch the enemy unawares and face a more tenacious force.

From handing out Korans and giving children stationery, to Close Air Support, ambushes and compound clearances, D Company ended the tour having made a very credible impact on the area around Garmsir.

April saw the Relief-in-Place (RIP) between 2 RGR and 2nd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, with the Pioneer Mastiff Squadron and the R WELSH Armoured Infantry Company remaining in place. In order to ensure a smooth transition between BGs, both B Company in the north and the R WELSH in the south embarked on a number of operations to engage with the TB, thus allowing the time and the space to conduct the RIP with minimal interference from insurgents. The RIP was conducted successfully, with a change of command taking place on 10 April 2009 and the last 2 RGR BG elements extracting from theatre at the end of April. On extraction, 2 RGR were flown in packets to Cyprus where all soldiers went through the British Army's 'decompression' process. This involved a 36 hour stay on the island with a variety of entertainments provided to help with the transition from Helmand to Folkestone. Arrival back in the UK was to a well-organised reception party at Sir John Moore Barracks, organised by the Rear Party and under the excellent leadership of RAO Maj Bruce McKay. With the Main Body flights arriving at Manston Airport in Kent it was only a short hop to the families and friends who had been corralled for our arrival. A week at work followed in order to conduct the essential administrative tasks before the Battalion departed on a staggered R&R that reflected the differing arrival times of the various 2 RGR elements.

This post-operational tour leave was taken during June in various countries worldwide avoiding sandy environments. Then, with the Battalion sufficiently refreshed, life in Shornecliffe resumed by settling back into a barracks routine with an ethos set by Lt Col Darby of attending courses and playing sport. Focus was then directed towards the Unit Move to Brunei led by Maj Beauman. Equipment and offices needed to be packed, inventories checked and decisions made on what needed to be left behind for the 1st Battalion and what needed to be packed into multiple MFO boxes for Brunei. Mid July until mid August saw the mass exodus of 2 RGR to Brunei.

By 7 September 2009 the Battalion was complete and went straight into company routine with a Military Annual Training Test and Workplace Induction Programme in place, coordinated by the Operations Officer, Capt O'Connor. Incorporated into the company rosters was the cleaning up of camp, the implementation of company bars and atap building. Maj Camp, the new QM, was put to work straight away in accumulating the resources and dealing with numerous requests from all directions. Toker Lines was soon spruced up with D Company earning a couple of days leave for winning the competition for having the best lines. Taking into consideration the climate, a new daily routine was established by the Commanding Officer with longer working hours in the morning to clear the afternoons for sport. This was taken up with relish with every afternoon seeing countless volleyball and basketball games taking place all over camp not to mention a new edition to the Officers' Mess of a beach volleyball court.

From 5 to 16 October 2009 Ex JUNGLE GURUJI took place. Each company deployed into the trees to undergo basic jungle training, for three days at a time. It was aimed at all those who hadn't experienced the jungle before, but for those who had it was a useful refresher. Skills learnt included hygiene, night routines in a harbour area such as the setting up of hammocks, how to use the natural habitat to eat and survive and basic patrolling and ambush skills.

Thanks to the arrival of Maj Murray, the Flying Kukris Rugby Club was resurrected and now has a healthy membership of over 30 players. On 9 October 2009 the team departed for Bali to take part in their first overseas tournament - the Bali 10s. Playing a number of International Teams and some very strong opponents, the Flying Kukris made it into the top league on the second day and unfortunately lost in the semi-finals of the plate. The weekend set precedence for future tours with a number of injuries sustained and tour virgins sufficiently embarrassed.

From 26 October to 4 November, OC D Company, Maj Davis, ran the Junior Leaders Cadre. He was assisted by Capt Kyte and Lt Morford, plus instructors from across camp all of whom ensured the soldiers underwent a gruelling mental and physical regime. The first week started off in Toker Lines with the mandatory Command Leadership and Management Part 1 training before progressing to Sittang Camp for the following five weeks. Candidates were put through a number of demanding lessons and were continuously assessed through command tasks, section attacks and a strenuous live firing

Exercise PACIFIC KUKRI 10

By Capt A C Colquhoun, OC Javelin

News of the 2010 general election was received by Support Company 2 RGR via VHF while we were deployed in the field on Exercise PACIFIC KUKRI in Australia; the ensuing fallout kept the company entertained, and radio operators utterly confused, throughout the Platoon, Company and Battalion phases of the exercise. By Election Day we had already been in the country two weeks and comfortably operating in the Australian bush. We had started the exercise by arriving at the Australian Defence Force's Lavarack Barracks, a sprawling modern Brigade camp, in Townsville on the coast of Northern Queensland. The nearby Townsville Field Training Area (TFTA) some fifty kilometres inland is a vast facility and at around three quarters of the size of Brunei provided a perfect venue to conduct the exercise; with vast tracts of land and state-of-the-art facilities we were able to employ the full spectrum of Support Company capabilities. The purpose of training in Australia was to bring these capabilities together and train as Fire Support Groups; as part of the now ubiquitous training imperative of preparing for Afghanistan.

Prior to deployment into the field a short period of time was spent in Lavarack Barracks preparing ourselves for the exercise. This period coincided with ANZAC Day and we had the privilege of being invited to join our hosts, 1st Battalion

package. The final week culminated in the end of course exercise where the concluding grades for each student were established and the top student was promoted to Lance Corporal in the field.

The Newly Trained Soldiers 2009 Intake Induction Cadre took place from 1 - 21 November culminating with the Khasam Khane parade led by Capt Brightwell. Their first week in camp was spent learning about Regimental and Battalion history and Kaida to ensure a sound understanding of the ethos and traditions. They subsequently deployed into the jungle to learn more about section and platoon level tactics. The final week was spent on the drill square with a number of long sessions honing their skills for the flawless Khasam Khane parade that took place on 20 November 2009. All recruits repeated the attestation and then marched out in threes to touch the Queen's Truncheon. Having completed the cadre the soldiers joined their new companies.

The Mess has hosted a number of events including family barbecues with bouncy castles and a few evenings spent in fancy dress. Since their arrival in Brunei, Capts Hughes, Rose and Kyte have also been on a very vigorous training programme in preparation for the Iron Man competition due to take place in February 2010 in Langkawi. The Inter-Company Sports Competition took place between 14 and 18 December, where football, basketball, volleyball, swimming and cross-country contests decided which company had been spending the most time training every afternoon. Jai 2 RGR.

The Royal Australian Regiment (1 RAR), for their ceremony. Before dawn we paraded for gunfire coffee (black coffee heavily laden with rum) and then undertook a commemoration service. During this the Gallipoli Battle Honour was read out by Rifleman Rupendra Rai (Sniper Platoon), reminding us of the heritage and sacrifice that we share with the Australians. The service concluded with a bagpipe lament played perfectly by Cpl Hemkarna Rai (P&D Platoon). Breakfast at the 1 RAR 'Boozer' followed and was vital to sustain the troops as 1 RAR prepared for the ANZAC day parade. We were all bussed into town and the Company watched as three units of the Australian Brigade and veterans groups marched past. The parade was very well-attended by the general public, with recent operations in Afghanistan engendering great support for the Armed Forces in Australia, much as they have done in the UK. The march was particularly poignant as it also included our host battalion who had just returned from Uruzgan Province, Afghanistan.

With our preparations complete, we moved into a training camp on the Townsville Field Training Area and commenced the exercise. The Fire Support Groups (FSGs) of 2 RGR consist of Machine Gun detachments, Javelin Anti-Tank/Tracking detachments, Snipers pairs, Mortar Fire Controllers and Reconnaissance Sections. Their role is to provide fire



Section attack through burning undergrowth

support and the Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition, and Reconnaissance (ISTAR) capability in support of the Rifle Companies. The success of this role is dependant upon high standards of skills on the detachment weapons and surveillance systems and relies on very close co-ordination, both within the FSG and with the troops being supported. To achieve this, the exercise began with the platoons focussing on specialist weapons handling as well as live fire training up to section level for the Recce and Javelin platoons while the Sniper, Mortars and Machine gun platoons practised on some of the best ranges available. Once the ranges were planned, live firing began in earnest by mid-week with Snipers firing inclined unknown range shoots, the machine guns practicing fire plans whilst the Recce and Javelin Platoons conducted pairs, fire team and section attacks as well as individual grenade stalking. Range Control was nearly overwhelmed with five live ranges being run using four different direct and indirect fire weapons systems concurrently, which almost immediately started three large fires. Inside the impact area the mortar platoon also discovered the vulnerability of low-lying, arid bush to white phosphorous. After the first three smoke rounds started a monumental fire, Captain Rose (OC Mortars) watched with a concerned look as the mortar line cheerfully reported on the radio: "Oh well, only 297 rounds to go Saheb!"

Once basic level live firing and platoon skills were up to speed, the company re-task organized into three Fire Support Groups and a FIND group based around the Reconnaissance Platoon. A week was then spent working in these groupings

conducting force-on-force exercises in two separate areas. The exercise was set within a counter-insurgency scenario with one FSG acting as friendly forces while another played the parts of local nationals and enemy fighters. As part of creating a normal pattern of life, the local nationals conducted regular fishing patrols, where the contents of a jungle survival tin proved lethal in the previously un-fished rivers on the training area. In addition to the dry training, a live Forward Operating Base defence was conducted with the targetry representing the enemy initiating a two-hour battle at first light. Spirited defence and heavy weights of fire co-ordinated by the Section Commanders, as Platoon Sergeants organized teams to refill magazines in the cover of the Hesco Bastion to ensure that the defence could be maintained, was the order of the rest of the day as no fewer than four attacks against the FOB were beaten off. In addition to testing the logistics of sustaining a robust defence, the Combat Medics were put through their paces by a number of casualties made up realistically with casualty simulation by the Regimental Medical Officer, Major Tredget, and his team. The scene following the first two hours of defence looked more akin to a Napoleonic battlefield with a thick band of cordite hanging about 50 metres to the front of the FOB over the cool morning dew.

With the force-on-force phase complete and the Fire Support Groups now used to working together the Company began the Company Final Exercise (CFX) - Exercise MAKARUKO JALI (Spider's Web). The exercise began with the early overnight deployment of the FIND group in a screen

dominating two villages. OC Recce suffered a number of indignities during the exercise at the hands of the complex terrain, but none graver than carrying the thoughtful gifts from his brother officers of a pile of rocks and a large butternut squash, hidden discreetly in his Bergen, for over three hours while inserting into his Observation Post at the top of a rocky, near vertical 300m slope that took three hours to ascend! The exercise was set in a Contemporary Operating Environment (COE) framework and involved securing two populated areas (Line Creek Junction and Wadi Al Ceegi) as well as the surrounding bush. During this phase the experience gained on OP HERRICK 9 was drawn upon and it served as a reminder of the complex skills necessary for counter-insurgency warfare. The exercise tested not only the 'kinetic' or fighting skills that the Company possess but also the ability to interact and engage with the local population in order to communicate the intention of the friendly force element. This involved many shuras and meetings with the 'locals', this time provided by the Australian Defence Force. This proved useful in being able to compare the methods we employ with those used by the Australians and from this we were able to learn from them and further refine our Tactics, Techniques and Procedures. With pre-deployment training for our next deployment a few short months away, the Company trialled innovative methods of countering insurgents, and in particular the Improvised Explosive Device threat, based

upon our prior experience and lessons identified over the course of the exercise.

For the final Battalion phase of the exercise, the Commanding Officer, his Tac HQ group and the Rifle Company commanders deployed to enable the Company to train within a Battlegroup context. The exercise scenario involved three large company areas of operations which the FSGs had to clear of enemy. This involved the FSGs moving dismounted and looking for sign of enemy forces within their areas. Once sign had been found the tracking capability of the Javelin Platoon was tested with a two-day track across the Australian bush, where, despite the little amount of sign left in low grass, the trackers were able to follow small teams of enemy, identifying where they had been and assessing their likely intentions and direction of travel. This phase culminated in a strike onto three separate insurgent camps by each of the three FSGs respectively. By employing tactics similar to an ambush, an FSG is able to destroy enemy positions from stand-off positions, resulting in a swift destruction of the enemy and minimal exposure of the friendly forces to risk.

With the initial clearance phase complete and evidence from ground sign pointing to the enemy moving towards a central defensive area, the FSGs came together to complete a



Bombing up for FSG Ambush



Preparing to beat 1 RAR Volleyball team

final live strike phase of the exercise. The FSGs each destroyed an enemy position in turn, on a range that tested their ability to move across difficult ground and successfully prosecute targets, using all the weapons available, from a stand-off position - a task we look forward to putting into practice next year.

After the culmination of the exercise, we recovered to Lavarack Barracks for a final week of sport and adventurous training. This included Football, Cricket and Volleyball competitions with our hosts in which, I am delighted to report, we were victorious in all events. We left Australia having developed our capabilities a great deal and having reinvigorated the ties between the RGR and the Royal Australian Regiment. As a result we move forward into our pre-deployment training in the best possible position.

Exercise BALJURI TIGER – A Mountaineering Expedition in Northern India

By Sgt Indra Kumar Gurung

Exercise BALJURI TIGER was a unit-led, level three, overseas mountaineering expedition in India. The expedition took place in the early spring of 2010, from 12 April through to 12 May. The participants of the expedition were from the British Forces Brunei Garrison, comprising an eight man team. The expedition leader was Capt Saroj Rai and, due to the requirement for another JSMEI qualified instructor, I was privileged to fill an instructor's role.

The planning and preparation began a year prior to the expedition with much research needed on procedures, obtaining visas, details on health matters, altitude sickness, equipment, and clothing. Training for the expedition was difficult with the climate and terrain being so different in Brunei. Some members of the team attended relevant mountaineering and Mountain First Aid courses to prepare themselves. The training programme was scheduled in such a way that it included physical and technical aspects of mountaineering, including various lectures and films related to mountain safety. There was also a two-day training programme during the stay at Base Camp (BC), where snow and ice safety training was carried out on the Pindari glacier.

The primary aim of the expedition was to climb the open peak Mount Baljuri which is 5992 metres above sea level, in the Uttarakhand region of India. This introduced climbers to a high-altitude climbing experience as well as building team leadership and promoting mountaineering within the RGR. An additional aim of the expedition was to get involved in a Military Aid to the Civilian Community (MACC) project, visiting a remote school on the route and distributing stationery.

Uttarakhand is a state located in the northern part of India. It became the 27th state of the Republic of India on 9 November 2000. Uttarakhand borders Tibet to the north, Nepal to the east, and the states of Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh (of which it formed a part before 2000) in the west

and south respectively. The region is traditionally referred to as Uttarakhand in Hindu scriptures and old literature, a term which derives from the Sanskrit for the Northern Country or Section. In January 2007, the name of the state was officially changed from Uttaranchal, its interim name, to Uttarakhand, according to the wishes of a large section of its people. The capital of Uttarakhand is Dehradun which is also a rail-head and the largest city in the region.

The history behind this area goes back to the beginning of the 19th Century, when the Gurkhas were expelled from Kumaon, Garhwal and Himachal Pradesh after the 1814–15 Gurkha War. Nepal and Britain signed a non-aggression pact which neither side violated. However, Nepal adopted an isolation policy, closing its doors to the rest of the world. It then became a forbidden land and this stimulated a curious fascination among outsiders. The discovery that Everest was the highest mountain in the world added to the mystique. When Nepal opened its doors again in 1950, the first visitors were captivated by this medieval kingdom that was seemingly unaffected by the 20th Century. The members of the first expeditions to Everest marvelled at the beauty of Nepal and widely advertised it. Then came the trekkers and tourism gathered momentum.

The Uttarakhand has been open since the British took it over in 1815 but it was abandoned by explorers in favour of Nepal. Various early Himalayan explorations were undertaken here. The Trisul Parbat, after it had been climbed by Dr Tom Longstaff in 1906, remained the highest mountain climbed for the next 30 years. The famous mountaineers of the 1930s like Bill Tilman, Eric Shipton and Frank Smythe marvelled at the beauty of the region. Later, climbers like Chris Bonington, Peter Boardman and Mick Tasker used alpine techniques to conquer Changabang and Dunagiri. The hill folk and pilgrims also trek over hills and dales due to the lack of roads and means of

transportation. Adi Shankaracharya trekked in the Garhwal Himalayas in the 8th Century A.D. and he was the pioneer who opened trekking routes in this part of the country.

At first, the expedition team was split into two groups with the Advance team, consisting of Capt Saroj and LCpl Biswasdip travelling on 12 April from Brunei to New Delhi via Singapore to arrange some necessary administration for the expedition. The main body consisted of Sgts Indra and Surendra, and Rfn Khim, Hari, Dipesh and Umesh, and travelled on 15 April from Brunei. After attending an Indian Mountaineering Foundation brief containing the 'dos and don'ts' of the country on 16 April, all expedition team members boarded the train to Kathgodam. The train began its journey through the northern plains of Delhi which exhibited a completely flat landscape. The train journey to Kathgodam took a total of eight hours, arriving after midnight. On arrival we were then transported to a government guest house known as Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam.

It was an early start for the team as we had a long journey of 12 – 13 hours in four-wheel drive vehicles from Kathgodam to Song, the trek start point. The area we drove through took us into some of the well known hill stations of the Kumaon region, such as Bhimtal, Nainital, Almora and Bageshwar. The road was very narrow with tight bends, requiring extra care from drivers coming from both directions. The views were breathtaking, with different species of pine and alpine trees covering the hillsides. On arrival at Song, we decided to bypass this busy campsite and move to Loharkhet at 1680 metres.

On 18 April at Loharkhet we had a pleasant start to our day with a well-prepared breakfast to kick start us into action. We then started our scheduled acclimatization walk up to a 2200 metre hill top known as Chow Rasta. We decided to stay at Loharkhet an extra night, and visited some local villages en route to the hill top. The locals were mostly from a Bhutia ethnic group and some of our staff had come from these villages. The villages mostly depend on agriculture for their daily living and they are lucky enough to have basic water supply through the springs.

On 20 April, it was time to move to Dhakuri Khal, although the weather was against us with heavy rain and thunder storms. Once the weather cleared, we managed to prepare our logistical support group which consisted of 20 mules, eight local agency staff and eight horsemen. Today was our MACC day at a school in Harkot village, from where two of our porters came. We received a warm welcome from the villagers after a 1 ½ hour trek including a steep climb. It was during our second communications check back to the unit at 1600hrs Brunei local time that we received sad compassionate news regarding a member of our team, Sgt Surendra. Circumstances were such that he had immediately to abandon the expedition and fly to Nepal from India. However, the rest of the team had to persist after losing a much valued member and we continued the MACC project at the school at Harkot village. The school and children had been expecting our arrival and received us very hospitably. We distributed all the stationery items that we had brought with us from Delhi and we all agreed that it was a very rewarding experience. After a quick packed lunch and some entertainment which had been organised by the school children, we continued our trek towards Dhakuri

pass. The route was through village paddy fields then on towards rhododendron hills all along until the pass. Like Britain in April and May, all the rhododendron flowers were blooming and it felt as though even nature was welcoming us.

The following day on 21 April, we did the longest leg of our journey which covered a total distance of 19 km over nine hours. We began our journey around 0830 hours descending towards the bank of the Pindari River before reaching a village called Khati. The village sits at the bottom of the mountain where Mt. Baljuri lies. The actual route toward the Pindari region starts from Khati. The route 'hand rails' along the east bank of the River Pindari up to Malyadaur. The route from Khati to our next destination Dwali was very pleasant, with no steep ground. Bamboo trees are found in abundance here and the locals from Khati use bamboo for many aspects of their lives especially in the household. Dwali lies on the bottom of the Nandakot range and the campsite is situated next to a river junction.

On 22 April, we moved from Dwali to Phurkia. The leg to Phurkia was short in comparison to the last one and we were now gaining more altitude. The beautiful valley of rhododendrons and mountain ranges either side gave the team members the experience of the pure Himalayas. We arrived at Phurkia just in time and managed to set up the campsite just before heavy snow fell.

On 23 April, we moved from Phurkia to Base Camp (BC). We already had a few members with early symptoms of Altitude Mountain Sickness (AMS). The team agreed to continue towards the BC in order to be able to spend more time there. The route was through the same valley. We followed the River Pindari up to the start of the Pindari glacier. The BC lay directly south east of Malla Panchal on the western bank of the river. It is good grazing land where there are two to three seasonal stone huts built by the locals at Khati. The BC is also used by Yarsha Gumba harvesters from Khati and villagers close by. Yarsha Gumba is a type of caterpillar which turns into a plant after its short lifespan. This very small and delicate plant can be used for medical purposes. The locals are offered substantial sums of money for it, for export to China. There is a lot of interest from locals in this lucrative market; however, it also brings an environmental concern. The plant is difficult to find and involves disturbing the earth substantially to obtain it. During its harvest, there can be a lot of soil erosion, destroying other plants and natural habitat.

We spent two days at BC for acclimatization, rest and equipment preparation. Also, this offered an ideal opportunity for any of the members to recover from AMS. We also managed to schedule in time for snow and ice safety training.

On 25 April, the expedition team was split into two groups again and the first group went to establish Advance Base Camp (ABC) at Buria glacier with two High Altitude Porters (HAP) while the second group stayed at BC allowing more time to acclimatize for those who were already suffering from AMS. The route is roughly 7 – 8 kms with a steep uphill climb and it can take up to five or six hours to get from BC to ABC. Thankfully, we managed to set up ABC just before the weather deteriorated.

The following day, the second group arrived at ABC except for Rfn Dipesh who was still recovering from AMS. Unlike the first group who had conducted the route clearance task their journey was slightly shorter and took just four hours. With Rfn Dipesh still recovering from AMS at BC, it was planned he would join the rest of the group the following day. The summit day was now set for 28 April.

The summit day arrived; the team members were all excited and well prepared. Reveille was at 2300 hours on 27 April and we left the ABC at 0100 hours on 28 April. All of the team roped up in their groups - we had two groups of three and one group of four including a liaison officer and HAPs. It was an extremely cold night with freezing temperatures but we were lucky with the moon state; the date being close to full moon meant that we had natural light. Each individual had their head torches shining on the hard snow and ice. The route had already been cleared by the recce group; therefore it was easy to cover the distance up to the Baljuri Col.

We managed to reach the Col by approx 0500 hours in the morning. We now had to climb the next 200 metres from the Col using the South-East Ridge line. The forward team and the second team took turns in clearing the route from the Col to the ridge. The snow was very deep in this area and it took us roughly two hours just to cover a distance of 200 metres. The distance between the teams at this stage was 50 – 70 metres. By 0745 hours, we were on the secondary ridge line. From this ridge line, it was only a matter of 400 – 500 metres up to the summit.

The height was approx 5400 metres. Unexpectedly an avalanche was triggered. The avalanche was approaching the teams at such speed that the forward team got caught up its edge. The centre person, Rfn Hari, got entirely submerged in the snow. The rear and front men on the rope just managed to carry out an ice axe arrest on the hard ice, which kept the rope intact and Rfn Hari safe from falling 1000 feet below. Then, Capt Saroj assessed the ground with a hasty pit check. At this time, the other two teams were standing on the avalanche slab. We now had to extract the entire team from this area to the Col due to the high possibility of another avalanche being triggered.

We regrouped at the Col then had to find another route via the North ridge line. The route from the ridge was a sheer ice wall of 300 – 400 metres; it had to be fixed rope all the way through. We had already been on the ground for 11 hours and Rfn Dipesh was still feeling pretty bad with AMS at this stage. The expedition leader had to make the hard decision to abandon the plan for the summit. The next agenda was to rescue and recover by going down to ABC followed by BC with minimum kit, before bad weather closed in and then ferry the load the following day from ABC.

The narrow margin of our failure to reach the summit was due to the avalanche that meant we could not complete the last 400 metres. However, we are all very proud to be associated with the first Gurkha expedition in India. The expedition area has so much history associated with Gurkhas and Nepal: The Anglo – Gurkha war erupted along the Gurkha Empire's southern border. Major General Gillespie succeeded in driving out the Gurkhas from Kumaon by 1815. The Treaty of Segauli restored Sudarshan Shah to the much smaller Garhwali kingdom seated at Tehri. The Kumaoni Commissionery was then established to administer Kumaon, and eastern (British) Garhwal, for the British. Britain then acquired the region's substantial natural resources and lucrative trade routes.

The Kumaon and Garhwal region is home to some of the finest soldiers in the Indian Army, along with the Indian Gorkhas. The area gave us an experience of the soldier's pilgrimage, sense of belonging and the historical connection.

The team were also lucky to do some sightseeing in Delhi, and visited Agra and the Taj Mahal, one of the Seven Wonders of the World, and of course we did a bit of souvenir hunting too!

The journey from the hustle and bustle of the plains around Delhi to the valleys and mountains of Kumaon was a life-time experience for the team. Also, it was a great opportunity to promote mountaineering in the Regiment; there was not a single individual on this trip who did not benefit from it enormously.

Exercise JUNGLE GURUJI

By Rfn Nagendra Limbu, B Company, 5 Platoon, 1 Section

Ex JUNGLE GURUJI was the very first exercise held (from 12 - 16 October 2009) after the arrival of 2nd Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles in Brunei. The main aim of the exercise was to improve jungle skills early, for those who already had jungle experience, and for those who were new in Brunei it was an opportunity to learn new skills in the jungle. The exercise was divided into two phases with two days of live firing and the rest with blank ammunition.

B (Gallipoli) Company was to be deployed in Training Area 'C' on the morning of 12 October, after enough days to prepare our kit for the exercise. After reaching the training area we were given a jungle brief by Sgt Suk relating to Health and Safety in the jungle. We were then divided into four groups to be sent to four different stands (food, fire, water and shelter) prepared by our Gurujis. Each lesson was about 50 minutes long and at the end of the lesson we would have a break and swap over to the next stand. We learnt many different ways in which to sustain ourselves, in case of the need for emergency survival drills, using the natural resources in the jungle - such as collecting water from leaves, making temporary and permanent shelters and searching for edible fruits. After the completion of the lessons we headed to our harbour area.

The next two days involved practicing individual and pair Close Quarter Battle (CQB) in the jungle. It was a completely different kind of CQB. The enemy would appear very near in the jungle terrain. The individual CQB developed individual close combat skills, whereas the CQB in pairs prepared the team for fire and manoeuvre in the jungle. At the same time, Sgt Krishna Yonghang was conducting an interesting lesson on memory skills – the traditional Kim's Game. We were given three minutes to watch a collection of 16 different items and then after half an hour we had to write them down. It was all about committing to memory what we saw.

On the third day of the exercise we heard that two visitors were coming to our training area. That was also an

encouragement for us to continue working hard. The visitors were Major General R L Kirkland MA and Colonel P G Mitchell. They visited all the stands and took part in individual CQB as well. We also had the chance to meet them at the CSM's stand where we were taking tracking lessons. After the end of the live firing phase, we continued to practise contact drills with blank ammunition. It was all revision of our basic drills and skills. We also took navigation lessons from Sgt Suk and practised it in the jungle. We found it quite different from navigation in the UK. It was very hard and very slow to go through the jungle as there was minimum visibility and it was easy to go astray.

On the very last day of the exercise, which was Friday morning, on extraction from the training area we practised a patrol contact drill under possible IED and sniper threats which was a surprise package from our OC. Exercise JUNGLE GURUJI was very successful and useful for all of us to revise our basic combat skills and familiarise ourselves with proper jungle skills. We also found many things to be improved in ourselves which we look forward to doing in our upcoming exercises. Jai B Company!



Maj Gen R L Kirkland CBE MA at the ICQB lane in Training Area C during Ex JUNGLE GURUJI on his visit to 2 RGR



Maj Gen R L Kirkland CBE MA in Training Area C during Ex JUNGLE GURUJI on his visit to 2 RGR



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 Support 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

Lt Gen D R Bill CB

Officers of the Regiment (as at July 2010)

RHQ QGE

Lt Col S J Hulme MBE
Maj Prembahadur Ale MVO
Maj Ekbahadur Gurung
Capt J W C Walker

Commandant
Gurkha Major
Gurkha RCMO
Adjutant

Field Officers

Maj I Moore
Maj G D Brown MBE
Maj Dudhprasad Gurung MVO

OC 69 Gurkha Field Squadron
OC 70 Gurkha Field Support Squadron
SO2 CE Plans, MSSG

Captains

Capt Bhismaraj Gurung
Capt Krishnabhadur Gurung
Capt Yogprasad Thapa
Capt Rajen Gurung
Capt A J Gregory
Capt N M Anderson
Capt D K Kesur
Capt Devkumar Gurung
Capt Bishnubhadur Ghale
Capt C W Willows
Capt S I Ahmed
Capt Tarabhadur Pun
Capt Tulbahadur Ale MBE
Capt Mohankumar Tamang
Capt Buddhibhadur Bhandari
Capt Meenjang Gurung
Capt Yambahadur Pun
Capt Mohan Gurung
Capt Ashokkumar Gurung
Capt Dirgha KC
Capt Kamalbahadur Khapung Limbu

Subalterns

Lt L S Johnston-Smith
Lt R F Gallagher

Newsletter

For The Queen's Gurkha Engineers, the last 12 months have been characterised, as is the case for all Brigade of Gurkhas units, by considerable commitments to Operation HERRICK, as well as overseas exercises and the managing of the excess manpower that resulted from the GTACOS implementation. The Regimental Headquarters have been working tirelessly in order to ensure better careers and futures for officers and soldiers by negotiating with both the RE and Gurkha wings at APC Glasgow. Having had some significant success, the QGE is very grateful to the RE wing for providing the opportunity to transfer our officers and soldiers on promotion to the RE cap badge and also for allocating several places on technical courses. Moreover we managed to secure two UOTC posts in Cambridge and Wales that created two SSgt's posts in QGE. Currently the QGE is 433 strong and most of them are based in Invicta Park Barracks. One troop is based in Salisbury and another is based in Devon. So far 47 Gurkha soldiers have been transferred to the wider Army - mainly to the Royal Engineers. This year 18 new recruits are joining the QGE.

Like every other unit in the British Army, The Queen's Gurkha Engineers has played its full part in current operations in Afghanistan: Gurkha Troop from 33 Armoured Engineer Squadron deployed on HERRICK 9 and successfully completed their tour, and both 69 and 70 Squadrons have supplied high-risk search teams in both Operation HERRICK 11 and 12 tours. Whilst referring to Operation HERRICK 11, we must not forget Military Plant Foreman (MPF) WO2 Markland who was tragically killed whilst working alongside his Gurkha sappers

from 70 Squadron. The QGE will always remember his total dedication to the Regiment and extend our sincere sympathy to his wife and two sons. As this newsletter is being written, 69 Gurkha Field Squadron is working in Afghanistan as part of Operation HERRICK 12 (BAM Squadron) with the Resources Node from 70 Squadron. They are due to finish their tour in September 2010. More on Op BAM can be found in 69 Squadron's newsletter.

Notwithstanding the operational commitment plot, 70 Gurkha Field Support Squadron deployed to Exercise WARPAINT for three months in Canada during autumn 2009 and had an extremely successful tour. Commando Gurkha sappers from Devon also deployed to Norway and Belize on exercise and currently they are undergoing pre-deployment training for Op HERRICK 14. Similarly the Gurkha Troop in 33 Squadron in Salisbury, having successfully completed their HERRICK tour and post operation leave, is now deployed to Kenya for construction projects.

Besides all these busy activities, The Queen's Gurkha Engineers hosted General Sir David Richards KCB CBE DSO, Colonel Commandant Brigade of Gurkhas, during a half-day visit to the Regiment. Having had a very informative visit, General Saheb had nothing but praise for our significant contribution to current operations and the many other areas to which the Gurkha sappers have contributed in the British Army. The QGE also bade a fond farewell to its Commandant, Lt Col Richard Wardlaw RE, and Gurkha Major, Maj Dudhprasad Gurung MVO.

To replace these officers, the QGE welcomed Lt Col S J Hulme MBE RE and Major Prembahadur Ale MVO. The Regiment also celebrated its 61st birthday and held an Attestation Parade for Recruit Intake 2009. We were delighted that Lt Gen DR Bill CB, Colonel of the Regiment, was able to attend both occasions.

It might not be out of place to mention the Queen's Gurkha Orderly Officer, one of the most prestigious posts in the Brigade of Gurkhas. The current GM completed his tour in the Palace and was invested by Her Majesty The Queen as a Member of the Royal Victorian Order (MVO) in July 2009, and towards the end of same year the QGE was very pleased to learn that Capt Devkumar Gurung had been selected as one of the two QGOOs with effect from November 2010.

In every task the QGE sappers undertake, they always put in 110% effort. As a result of hard work and skill, the QGE teams won both the Nepal Cup and Trailwalker in 2009. These were not the only sporting successes; QGE took part in many other sporting events and managed very commendable results.

As with previous years, The Queen's Gurkha Engineers endeavour to fulfil our mission to the highest standard and look forward to the challenge, whatever changes there may be to the Army in the future. Jai QGE!



Maj Prembahadur Ale receiving his MVO from the Queen

69 Gurkha Field Squadron - Forward Operating Bases, Patrol Bases and Shower Stands (2009/10)

By Maj I Moore RE

69 Gurkha Field Squadron have spent the majority of this year preparing for Op BAM; a four month surge deployment in support of Op HERRICK. It is focused on upgrading military infrastructure in Helmand Province, so our preparation has included overseas exercises in Canada and Brunei, a major construction project in the UK and a period of basic skills revision.

We began the year on Ex WARPAINT in Canada. This proved an excellent precursor to our pre-deployment training, as we were tasked with making the BATUS training facilities more representative of Afghanistan. Had it been a summer deployment this would have been easy but as it coincided with the Canadian winter, we spent much of the time clearing snow and imagining what the Afghan landscape would look like. Nevertheless, we built all manner of structures to replicate those in Afghanistan, including mud hut compounds, village centres and live firing ranges.

Some then moved on to support 1 RGR and 40 Commando during Ex COMMANDO RAJA in Brunei. Once again this brought many of the tasks we expected to see in Afghanistan, as we focused on clearing areas of trees and setting up hasty helicopter landing sites. Needless to say the soldiers also benefited from the opportunity to brush up their infantry skills and live in the arduous jungle conditions.

If these two activities had not been enough, the majority of the Squadron then deployed to Dorset for a construction exercise. Again we would complete tasks replicating those expected in Afghanistan, as we built a Forward Operating Base (FOB) and Patrol Base (PB) for the Defence College of Communications and Information Systems. These facilities would be used to prepare Royal Signals soldiers for their own deployments on Op HERRICK, so we were happy that our work left a lasting and useful legacy. We also put together many of the smaller structures that make soldiers' lives on operations easier; shower stands, sun shades and ablutions. Again this was invaluable, as it gave everyone a chance to brush up on their basic carpentry skills.

Having completed the task in Dorset and enjoyed a few weeks' summer leave, we began Mission Specific Training with 21 Engineer Regiment in Ripon. Even though many had deployed to Afghanistan before, this proved vital as we were reminded of the nuances of the Afghan culture, re-familiarized with the austere geography of the region and even learnt a few more words of Pashtun! We also got to complete a very enjoyable live firing package and some invaluable artisan trade training in Chatham.

Aside from pre-deployment training the Squadron has achieved many things. Several members of the Squadron

completed Ex TRAILWALKER 09, finishing first and fifth overall; our footballers joined their 70 Gurkha Field Support Squadron brothers to lift the Nepal Cup for the first time in 16 years; and a select bunch took part in Gurkha Highlander 2009, an epic 200 mile charity trek from the West to the East Coast of Scotland. They completed this feat in seven days and raised a staggering £20,000 for the Gurkha Welfare Trust along the way. We have also organized the Regimental Dashain, Tihar and birthday celebrations, joined the Regimental sailing expedition to Croatia, played our part in the numerous high profile visits to the Regiment and helped English Heritage move a large wooden siege engine at Dover Castle!

Whilst most of our achievements have been team efforts, we have also seen numerous individual successes. WO2 (SSM) Dirgha has been commissioned to the rank of Captain; Spr Santosh Goley was awarded the best student prize on both the All Arms Commando Course and the PNCO Cadre and promoted to Lance Corporal 'off the square'; and Sgt Bikash Rai, Cpl Birendra Khambang and Cpl Ashok Gurung were promoted to the next rank.

70 Gurkha Field Support Squadron

Another turn of the seasons, another year passed for 70 Gurkha Field Support Squadron and like those gone before and those yet to come, 2009 /10 has been as busy as can be.

The Squadron ended 2009 on a high with a deployment to Canada on Ex WARPAINT. The task was to 'contextualize' the training area at the British Army Training Unit Suffield (BATUS) to bring it in line with Op ENTIRETY and the British Army's focus on Afghanistan. From the middle of September until the end of November, the Squadron was hard at work building a grenade range, a rural 'Afghan' village and a company-sized forward operating base. Perhaps the most exciting element of the deployment was the first use of the Deployable Engineer Workshop (DEW), a new piece of Royal Engineers equipment designed to create the utility of an artisan trade workshop in the austere conditions of somewhere like the Canadian prairie. This was the first time that the DEW had been deployed and operated overseas and it certainly kept Capt Rajen Gurung and Capt Colin Willows' hands full for the duration of the deployment.

The Squadron was very lucky to have the time to celebrate Dashain and Tihar whilst deployed and thanks must go to the Nepalese Community of Calgary who invited us to celebrate the occasion with them. The men also came up trumps by entertaining the families based at Ralstone village, putting on a memorable Gurkha cultural display and in the process raising around C\$2000 for the GWT and local charities. The Squadron returned from Canada confident in the knowledge that their work would soon be put to good use as the BATUS training year started and sub units began their preparations for deployment to Afghanistan by practising their skills in a realistic exercise environment.

As ever we have seen a great deal of change in the Squadron. Maj Richard Walker, the Officer Commanding left to take over as Officer Commanding Falklands Company at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst; Major Ian Moore returned for his third tour with QGE; and we have also said goodbye to Capt Drysdale, Dias, Dirgha, Gay, Kesur and Mohan, SSgts Jiwan and Man, Cpl Nanda and LCpl Nirmal who all move on to new jobs and pastures. Unfortunately this period has also seen the end of the Gurkha Captain's tenure and we have said a sad goodbye to Capt Yog - he departs the QGE after 25 years for a job within the Royal Engineers. Conversely we have welcomed back WO2 (SSM) Bishwa and Sgt Narendra and are pleased to welcome Capt Gregory and Lts Gallagher and Johnston-Smith for their first tour with QGE.

2009 has thus gone in a flash. We expect 2010 to pass equally quickly, as we will spend most of the year on or recovering from operations. Naturally we hope that we will achieve the same success, both home and abroad. Jai 69 Gurkha Field Sqn, Jai QGE.

Concurrent with the deployment to Canada, 70 Squadron also supported two important operational deployments. The first saw Cpl Dilbahadur and a small RE detachment jetting off to Cyprus as part of the UN mission, Op TOSCA. They had a very successful tour and received high praise for their work - in particular LCpl Jamansher who received a commendation from the UN commander of the mission. The second was the deployment of two Royal Engineer Search Teams (REST) and a Royal Engineer Search Adviser (RESA) on Op HERRICK 11. The two teams performed exceptionally well under very difficult circumstances, not least the loss of RESA WO2 Dave Markland. WO2 Markland was killed on 8 February 2010 by an IED blast in Helmand Province. His tour of Afghanistan was outstanding and he was widely regarded as 'the RESA of choice' in theatre. His loss was keenly felt throughout the Squadron and the QGE, though most acutely by those in his Support Troop and the REST he led on Op HERRICK.

The rest of the personnel deployed on Op HERRICK 11 recovered to the UK earlier this year and are now well settled back into squadron life. The Gurkha presence is still strong in theatre, however, and as the REST returned a further REST and a full Resources Node under command of Capt Tara Pun deployed for Op HERRICK 12. These soldiers are still carrying out their duties overseas and are expected home in the next couple of months.

While the Squadron itself may not be deployed on Op HERRICK, we have still been given numerous opportunities to support in different ways. Personnel have recently deployed to support the pre-deployment training of elements of 16 Air Assault Brigade. Special mention should go to Sgt Subash and Sgt

Naresh who endured two weeks of being stuck in the depths of Wales on the Castle Martin ranges. Sgt Subash in particular noted that the British Army always seem to locate their training areas in places with the worst mobile phone coverage! Another team of four enjoyed a two week exercise in Otterburn in support of an Artillery exercise. They blew their way through an impressive quantity of plastic explosives and received high praise from Lt Fisher for their performance throughout.

Ex PUL NIRMAN saw the Squadron deploy to the much-loved training area in Wyke Regis, Dorset. Whilst most military training areas are located as far from any form of civilisation as possible, and preferably somewhere it often rains, Wyke Regis Training Area is nestled into the English south coast and offers a fantastic location to practise key combat engineering skills. The Squadron was lucky enough to spend two weeks in May building bridges, water points and setting up demolitions. The weather held for the most part, although on the one day off - the day set aside for deep sea fishing, mountain biking and hiking - the wind blew and the rain came in sideways. It just goes to show that no matter how hard you plan, there are some things you just can't account for. Despite the occasionally inclement conditions, the Squadron achieved some excellent training and had a good time to boot. The exercise culminated with a Super Sapper Competition, testing the soldiers both physically and mentally over the course of the last day. The outright winner was Sapper Santosh Gurung with Spr Niranjana Gurung and Spr Ganga Tumbahangphe coming second and third respectively.

QGE Sappers Save Suspension Bridge

By Capt Tarabhadur Pun QGE

A 33 metre long three-span suspension footbridge, which was built in the early 1900's, crosses the River Arun and links North Stoke and South Stoke. It is situated along the South Downs near Amberley Village in West Sussex. The bridge was badly damaged by a falling oak tree in 2007 and ever since the public footpath has been closed as it was unsafe. This had frustrated walkers for several years and eventually local members of the Amberley Society and West Sussex County Council determined to resolve the issue. The Council proposed replacing the landmark suspension bridge with a conventional beam bridge at a cost around £100,000. To the members of the Amberley Society neither option was suitable. They wished to restore the beautiful original suspension bridge which was a significant local attraction. Two retired Royal Engineers - Reggie Trench and John Fitzmaurice - and locals of the Amberley area got together with the Chairman of the Amberley Society, Grahame Joseph, to contact the Army to seek assistance. 70 Gurkha Field Support Squadron Queen's Gurkha Engineers were delighted to be tasked with carrying out the repair of this bridge as a training exercise, charging only for the cost of the materials.

A reconnaissance team from the Squadron including the Commanding Officer, Major G Brown MBE RE (a professionally Qualified Engineer) a Clerk of Works (Mechanical) (CoW (M)) WO2 M Burns MinistRE, a Draughtsman LCpl Tanka, a Surveyor Spr Kiran and a couple of other tradesmen deployed on site in early 2009 to complete the 'Design', the first element of

The last couple of months have seen some important structural changes with OC Maj Gavin Brown, QM Capt Collin Willows and Support Troop Commander Capt Buddhi Bhandari all posted out. Into these gaps, however, we have seen the arrival of Maj Adam Rowson as OC and Maj Rajen Gurung as one of the first Gurkha QMs in the QGE. As a send off for those leaving and as a reward for the hard work that the men had put in over the year, the Squadron deployed to Scotland in June on an Operational Learning Exercise, Ex GURKHAS LEAP. This exercise saw the officers and men of 70 Squadron touring the battlefields of Killikrankie, Sherriffmuir and Falkirk, important sites in the Jacobite Rebellions of the 17th and 18th Centuries. It was truly a sight to behold, 40 young Gurkhas leaping through the forests of Killikrankie, some wearing kilts, some wearing red coats, re-enacting the ancient battle with a little help from two ladies from the National Trust. It was a fantastic experience and besides the battlefield tours we had the opportunity to participate in the Alva Highland Games where the men competed in the hill race and demonstrated Taekwondo and Kukri dancing.

A busy year indeed, with much more yet to come. As ever the missions and tasks are stacking up so that 70 Gurkha Field Support Squadron will never be short of things to do. Our only hope is that the coming year will be as fulfilling as the one just past.

the three phases (Design - Resource - Construct). It was determined that all parts of the bridge (less the far bank tower) were to be replaced and manufactured from raw materials in the Squadron's workshops.

The Resources Specialist Cpl Ganga, supervised by SSgt Semanta, started procuring the materials for the bridge parts. As the bridge was very old and was a bespoke solution for that site, it was very difficult to source exactly the same material sizes as the original. This made the task quite complicated and thousands of tiny adjustments had to be made to the dimensions and geometry of the bridge to enable us to use standard present day materials. However, the hard work of Resource Specialists and the enthusiasm of local suppliers to assist the military with this Military Aid to the Civilian Community (MACC) task made it possible.

At this point the author was posted into the Squadron taking over as Resources and Workshop Troop Commander, having completed two years in a much easier job as Infantry Platoon Commander in Gurkha Company, ITC Catterick. Parachuted in, he at once deployed his Troop and supporting elements from other Troops on to site on 26 May 2009. The site was set up immediately upon arrival under the command of SSgt Man, Site Commander. Now the construction phase could begin.



Visit by CRE Col A Bellingall RE

Firstly of course, we had to strip out the old bridge. The area around the bridge was designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) so there were quite a few restrictions to the working practises. We were not allowed to use plant or cranes or any mechanical methods so we employed ingenuity, combat engineering and a fair bit of blood, sweat and tears. Critically we were not allowed to disturb the water area so we constructed a pontoon under the bridge as a working platform, using brand new plastic drums. To lower the very heavy towers we used Anchor Earth Holdfast (AEH) sets, effectively winching the towers safely down. After three weeks the Troop recovered all stores and bridge parts and returned to Maidstone for the fabrication, the second phase of construction.

The fabrication was the critical path of the whole project. Given the very unique nature of the bridge components we knew we had to get the fabrication of all the new parts exactly right. The major metal bridge parts were made in our Squadron Workshop by a team including Spr Balam, a Fitter Machinist Guru, supervised by Sgt Naresh the Workshop Sergeant and commanded overall by WO2 Burns the Workshop Manager. However it was a Squadron effort and all members assisted. A huge amount of time cutting and shaping was required to make the new tower, decking and hand rails. The steel was galvanized by a civilian contractor and the whole process was completed within four weeks. To ensure we had the dimensions correct we assembled parts of the bridge in the Workshops as a trial.

Everyone was so keen to see this project succeed and worked so hard that they sometimes even forgot their meals.

The Troop redeployed back out to the task site to construct the bridge over the gap. This included re-installing new anchorage systems, suspension cable, hangers and of course concreting in the huge anchor systems into the ground. We raised the two towers with a system that reversed the process under which we had dismantled them and then begun to hang and build the rest of the suspension bridge off the cables. On Wednesday 15 July when the bridge was beginning to take shape, the Commander Royal Engineers (CRE) 3 (UK) Div, Col Andy Bellingall MBE RE visited the site and had a Gurkha curry lunch with the Troop. He commented that he was impressed with the scale and technical difficulty of the project. He was very pleased that the local community and the Squadron had bonded so well, putting it down to the cheerful demeanour, courtesy and professional approach the Troop had taken. There followed a visit by Commandant Queen's Gurkha Engineers, Lt Col Simon Hulme MBE RE on 16 July. Lady Mary Munford, daughter of the 16th Duke of Norfolk, visited the site too. She said "I am thrilled with the work that has been done and have loved chatting with you, the ever cheerful Gurkhas and watching all the activities."

On 17 July, Grahame Joseph, the Chairman of the Amberley Society, in liaison with Captain Tarabhadur Pun, Project

Manager, organised a special social event to celebrate the project's completion ahead of a formal opening ceremony with the County Council. The event was attended by 160 guests who were joined by the Arundel and South Downs MP Nick Herbert. We arranged tours of the works and, under marquees, served a curry meal and performed cultural dances including the famous Khukuri Dance. Speaking at the event, Nick Herbert said, "Everyone can be proud of this beautiful bridge and I congratulate the Amberley Society, the Gurkhas and all who were involved for what has been achieved." The MP added, "This evening has shown the special bond between the Gurkhas and the British public."

Here comes the final but the most important bit of any project, the Handover and Takeover. The pre-handover took place on 22 July followed by a proper handover to John Perks (the Public Right of Way Officer of the County Council), Ian Steel (Senior Engineer Amey) and Grahame Joseph on 24 July. Then finally, on 27 July, the official opening of the bridge took place. A Gurkha piper led Mrs Deborah Urquhart, West Sussex County Council Cabinet Member for Environment and Economy, followed by a marching troop led by Captain Tarabahadur Pun to the bridge. Mrs Urquhart cut the ribbons using a Khukuri, walked forward and unveiled a plaque bearing the crest of The Queen's

Gurkha Engineers, covered with a large flag of 70 Gurkha Field Support Squadron, to declare the bridge open. During her speech, Mrs Urquhart described "a bridge that has captured the imagination of the local community." A light finger-buffet lunch was served by the Council and a cheque for £3,040 raised by members of the Amberley Society for the Gurkha Welfare Trust (GWT) was handed over to Captain Tarabahadur Pun by Grahame Joseph – a cheque for a further £3,000 from West Sussex County Council for the GWT was received later too.

The project was completed in less than ten weeks, costing the Council less than £25,000. The locals got a new bridge, the Council got a new bridge at a good price and the Squadron obtained good training. Not only the tradesmen including Design Draughtsmen, Surveyors, Construction Material Technicians, Carpenters and Joiners, Fitter Machinists, Welders, Bricklayers and Concreters, Electricians and Fabricators got their skills refreshed, but also our combat engineering skills were brushed up. The finished suspension footbridge is the only remaining one in West Sussex and has now been designated an official landmark site. It is to be renamed "Gurkha Suspension Bridge" and will be shown on all Ordnance Survey maps. It is hoped that the Army's reputation in the public eye has been raised significantly as a result of this project. Jai QGE!



Repaired Suspension Bridge



Mrs Urquhart opening the Bridge

Nepal Cup 2009

The Nepal Cup is the most prestigious sporting event in the Brigade of Gurkhas' calendar and is contested every year between units within the Brigade.

The Nepal Cup was presented to the Brigade of Gurkhas by Maharaja Shamsher Jang Bahadur Rana in 1948. The tournament took place 46 times between 1949 and 1994. However, there was no competition in 1971, as the Brigade of Gurkhas were extracting from Malaya to Hong Kong. In the past, The Queen's Gurkha Engineers have won the Nepal Cup ten times and reached the final 15 times (13 times pre-1997 and twice post 1997). The first time QGE won the Nepal Cup was in 1974, beating 6 GR with the score 3-2, the team being captained by Capt (QGO) Makar Dhoj Shahi.

QGE won the Nepal Cup in three consecutive years from 1991 to 1993, an unbeaten record for consecutive wins. It wasn't until 2009, a long wait of 16 years, that The Queen's Gurkha Engineers, once again saw victory - bringing the Cup home to where it belongs.

The Nepal Cup 2009 tournament was held at Queen's Avenue Sports Field and Wavell Ground, Aldershot over the

period from 23-26 June. In the quarter-finals, the QGE team would face 1 RGR. As they were the defending champions, it was deemed to be the most challenging game of all. Capt Buddhi Bhandari and Sgt Bikash Rai had the testing job of training the team. Despite an extremely busy schedule, we still managed to take time off to train. From the management perspective, the most difficult task was to mould the individual tacticians into a team.

Due to the Regimental commitments, the team had only one opportunity to play a friendly game before the actual Nepal Cup match. It was played against 2 RGR and we won with a convincing score of 3-0. This gave the team a healthy boost and a realistic hope of winning the Nepal Cup.

On 23 June, came the match against 1 RGR. We had a convincing win with a score of 3-0, booking our place in the semi-final with Gurkha Company (Sittang). The semi-final was the most nail-biting game of all! Two penalties had been given against QGE, and our team had to fight back three times to equal the score. In extra time the tactics changed to the full-on offensive which was rewarded with two superb goals to put the final score at 6-4.



The QGE Nepal Cup Team

The final was between QOGLR and QGE on 26 June at the Wavell Ground. The Pipes and Drums of the Brigade of Gurkhas performed before the kick-off. Both retired and serving members of the Brigade, including 230 Trainee Recruits, were present to cheer on the teams. BFBS Gurkha Radio provided live commentary for those who couldn't attend the game. The QGE team started the match with lots of confidence, and soon took the lead. We were two goals up at half time. The team dominated the field most of the time displaying exceptional skill and outstanding team work. Spr Nirajan, created havoc in the opponent's mid-field. During the second half, the QGE team scored twice again. Overall, the game was very entertaining. Both teams should be praised for their outstanding performance throughout the match. As the final whistle blew, all QGE supporters celebrated the long-awaited victory.

The Cup and individual prizes were presented by the Regimental Colonel of the Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment, Brigadier A S J Fay Saheb. The Sam Cowan Trophy for the 'Man of the Match' rightly went to LCpl Ganesh Rana for his overall contribution to the game. The players were very happy and excited as they lifted the Nepal Cup and posed for pictures afterwards. Jai QGE!

Officials and Players of the Queen's Gurkha Engineers 2009 Nepal Cup Football Team

OIC	Capt Yogprasad Thapa
Asst OIC/Coach	Capt Buddhibhadur Bhandari
Team Manager	Sgt Bikash Rai
Players -	LCpl Gyan Rai, LCpl Bikram Gurung, LCpl Gajendra Gurung, LCpl Ganesh Rana Magar, LCpl Daya Gurung, LCpl Suresh Sherma, LCpl Tek Gurung, Spr Amardip Thebe, Spr Binot Gurung (Goal Keeper), Spr Arpan Gurung, Spr Suman Limbu, Spr Nirajan Budhathoki, Spr Prakash Rai, Spr Robin Pun, Spr Nagesh Sunwar, Spr Deepak Rai

Trailwalker 2009

By LCpl Rajiv Chhetri

'Fitness', which is a very common term especially for those serving in the forces, can be understood in a variety of ways. Some think it is passing the six monthly fitness criteria, for some it might be pushing the body to its very last limit, while others might take it as a good balance between the body and mind. For someone who is going to enter a Trailwalker event and not just complete it but be competitive, fitness has got a whole different dimension. So not wasting too much time on thinking of the perfect definition of fitness, this year's QGE Trailwalker Team started its training just under a month before the actual event, for this, one of the biggest charity fundraising events held in the UK, helping thousands of needy people all around the world through Oxfam and the Gurkha Welfare Trust.

This year's team was led by Capt Mitchell (2IC 70 Gurkha Field Support Squadron) and LCpl Bhimal Rai, both of whom had experienced the endless pain of Trailwalker on more than one occasion. Capt Mitchell set the training programme and dealt with all the administrative issues while LCpl Bhimal (a member of a winning team, whilst serving at RMAS), was the man on the ground during the training. The two teams consisted of Spr Bhupendra, Spr Arun, Spr Santosh and the author (as the team leader) in Team Assaye, with Team Delhi consisting of Spr Seesan, Spr Nirajan, LCpl Premjung and LCpl Tilak (team leader). On 17 July 2009 we made our way to the Start Point at Queen Elizabeth Country Park where we were to camp for the night and where we witnessed for the first time the scale of the event as hordes of people had arrived the day before us and were busy registering their teams and setting up their tents. There were more than three hundred four-man teams registered for this year's events with more arriving throughout the night.

At 0600hrs on 18 July we formed up on the start line sizing up the other teams and having a rough guess where the competition lay. When the horn blasted, the only thing going through my mind was the fact that I was going to take the first step of the one hundred thousand or so needed to complete the 100km course. All the eight men in both our teams took it easy and slow but kept an eye on the leading team. Most of the other Gurkha regiments had entered teams, including the defending champions of last year from the Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment, but not knowing what part of our bodies would give up first over the remaining 95 kilometres, we were in no hurry to do anything but follow our own pace.

We passed the first check point where our support team were waiting just like everyone else's and with a quick swig we were on our way to chase the leading pack who hadn't even stopped at all! Soon it all started to get serious as the leading group increased the pace before the third Check Point, but, knowing that they were either too strong for us to keep up with or they were setting too quick a pace to maintain for long, we continued at our own steady rate.

The leading group of 12-15 teams had started to thin out after Check Point 1 and by Check Point 3 there were seven teams spaced out over 1 km. Team Assaye and Team Delhi were to the rear of this pack.

Everyone was starting to feel the pressure and the worst thing was that we were not even half way! The short admin breaks we were taking started to eat up more and more of our time which was increasing the gap between us and the leading teams. After the fourth Check Point our two teams separated as one of our runners had an injury and I decided to catch up with the front group which was QOGLR. It took us almost 30 minutes to get them in our sights but when we did we found that we were now lying in third place with the Queen's Gurkha Signals team just ahead of us in second. Having pushed a devastating pace early on, the leading QOGLR team were paying the price and were beginning to struggle. It was a perfect opportunity to turn the tables on them but the constant reminder of the remaining 50 kilometres kept us doubting our ability. It was at this point, and I still remember the exact words, when I asked my team "Can we do this?" and their answer was "there is only one way to find out".

Between Check Point 4 and 5, Team Assaye took the lead for the first time, while Team Delhi moved into fifth place steadily pursuing the team in front. For the Support Team and QGE Supporters who had made their way to the South Downs this was tremendous news! Everyone waited to see how our teams would fare over one of the longest legs....and held their breath!

But this was not easy and we found this out shortly after the fifth Check Point when we really had to push the pace to increase the gap between us and the second team which had only been a couple of minutes. We skipped taking a break at the sixth Check Point in order to increase our gap (which now stood at nine minutes!), but this soon backfired when one by one all the four members of our team started to suffer with leg cramps. My team and I found the last 40km of the race immensely painful because we couldn't slow the pace as the advantage we had gained over the last 20 km would have all been in vain. We were all finding it difficult to run on the hard surface, with our knees and feet screaming at us with every step. We decided to speed walk up the hills and give our legs a rest and a quick massage before we could attack down the hills and along the plains. We kept each other going as best we could and tried to keep our minds off the pain.

By Check Point 7 Team Assaye's lead had dropped to seven minutes and the QOGLR Team were once again gaining on the leaders. Team Delhi were battling away in fifth and were only five minutes behind the fourth placed team.

The support team were of great help at this stage as they had been throughout the entire run. The GM, Major Dudhprasad



The winning Trailwalker Team with supporters

Saheb, OC 70 Squadron, Maj Brown Saheb, and the TQM, Capt Walsh Saheb (who had organized and led the QGETeams at last year's events), and almost all the QGE Sahebharu, had travelled down from Maidstone to support us on the run which proved how important this race was to them and the Regiment, and gave us an immense boost as we ran by.

Another factor that started to play on our minds was the realization that, if the unthinkable at the start of the day was to come true, that we could actually win, it would be over 17 years since the QGE had last won Trailwalker, way back in 1992 during the Hong Kong days. We then realized that not only were we doing a worthwhile charity event but in the process we were also writing a small part in the history of QGE.

By Check Point 8, having run more than 75 km, Team Assaye still maintained a slim lead. The race was entering its final stages. Check Point 9 would be the last time the Support Crew could be on hand before the finish. It was still anyone's race.

As we came into the ninth Check Point, where we would see our Support Team for the last time before the finish, we were still in the lead but had no idea by how much. After a quick stop we picked ourselves up and headed off for the final Check Point and then onto the last leg to the finish line. The tension was unbearable as we simply did not know how fast we needed to go and how hard to push ourselves to keep ahead of the QOGLR team. 15 minutes after leaving Check Point 9 we received a call from Capt Mitchell Saheb saying that the QOGLR team had just left the check point. We could not

believe it! We were 15 minutes ahead and within touching distance of the finish. Although we could not afford to relax, this news filled us with a new strength and all of a sudden filled in that final part of the equation whose answer was 'victory' – and victorious we became, crossing the finish line in a time of 10 hours 44 minutes and 30 seconds. We had done it!

By Check Point 9, Team Delhi were still in fifth, but had dropped a lot of time and was eight minutes behind the fourth placed team.

Team Delhi were having similar problems with cramps but were doing incredibly well, finishing just under an hour after us. The fight for fourth and fifth was a lot closer than anyone would have thought as there was no more than 600m between the two teams as they crossed the finish line.

I don't ever recall having a similar feeling of sheer pain, emotion and pride all at once immediately after crossing that finishing line with my team-mates and I suppose that goes for everyone else who completes Trailwalker. The only difference we had was the massive sense of achievement having come through in first place. With big smiles on our faces we stood proudly on that podium, but those were very instant smiles because each step after that felt like another 100 km. Overall, both our teams were delighted to complete and win such an event which of course wouldn't have been possible without the help, training and support of both QGE Squadrons and the RHQ. Even to this day I haven't actually found out the true meaning of fitness but I am very sure that it wasn't fitness alone that got us through that day. Jai QGE!



WO2 Meenjung Gurung being presented a Khada by Comd QGE Lt Col Hulme MBE RE on the occasion of his commissioning



Cake cutting by the former Col of the Regiment Maj Gen RL Peck CB flanked by the Comd QGE and GM

QGE Birthday Celebrations

The Queen's Gurkha Engineers celebrated its 61st Birthday on 13 September 2009 at Invicta Park Barracks, Maidstone. Due to various other commitments and the date of Kalaratri, the Regiment's actual birthday was brought forward to coincide with the Queen's Gurkha Engineers Association Annual General Meeting.

The day started with the AGM in the Officers' Mess, which lasted two hours. All retired and serving members of the Regiment, including attached personnel (RGR Clerks and QOGLR Chefs) along with their families gathered in the arena ready to receive the QGEA members. As the members arrived they were greeted in the traditional way.

Several interesting competitions were organized to make the day more colourful, including 'Tug-of-War' and 'Chello'. The Tug-of-War was an Inter-Squadron Competition where the ten strongest soldiers from each squadron participated. The event was exhilarating and was hugely supported by squadron members. After three pulls, the victory went to 69 Squadron. Later on the Chello competition began, where



The 'Chello' competition

individuals had three throws and the longest throw was counted for the competition. It was massively entertaining and there was no shortage of participants, including Capt Prebahadur Ale MVO. However, the winner was the mighty Cpl Mohan Thapa. Concurrently, the families Chutney Competition took place, for all families living in and around Maidstone. After a very close, mouth-watering contest, the judging panel finally announced that the winner was Mrs Dipa Thapa (wife of Cpl Top Thapa).



Tug of War

After the competitions, Commandant QGE Lt Col S J Hulme MBE RE Saheb announced the winner of the Bowring Trophy and read out the Special Birthday Routine Order. 21170282 LCpl Bishnuprasad Gurung won the Trophy, as best Lance Corporal of 2009 in the Regiment. The Commandant Saheb also formally announced the Late Entry Commissioning of WO2 (QMSI) Meenjung Gurung and congratulated him and his family on his well-earned promotion. This was followed by the cutting of the Birthday Cake, in the centre of the arena, Major General R L Peck CB Saheb (former Colonel of the Regiment), flanked by Commandant QGE and GM QGE.

After a delicious curry with 'Kalo Masu', the prize giving took place and the entertainment package continued with the children's dance, folk dance, modern dance and traditional 'Joshilo' khukuri dance, culminating with the usual cocktail dance to finish.

The day was a huge success, thoroughly enjoyed by every member of the QGEA, QGE and families. Special thanks go to BFBS Gurkha Service for broadcasting the event live, putting the scattered QGE family in touch worldwide on this special day. Jai QGE.



Queen's Gurkha Signals

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

Raised in Kuala Lumpur in 1948, by Major A C Cox 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 -	Jan 1991
Turkey	Op RESINATE NORTH	May 1991 - Apr 2003
Balkans (Bosnia/Croatia)	Op RESOLUTE/PALATINE	Apr 1992 - Apr 2004
Saudi Arabia	Op JURAL -	Aug 1992 - Feb 2003
Rawanda	Op GABRIEL -	Oct 1994
Congo/Brazzaville	Op DETERMINANT-	Mar - Apr 1997
Kuwait	Op RESINATE SOUTH	Nov 1997 - Feb 2003
East Timor	Op LANGAR -	Oct - Dec 1999
Macedonia/Kosovo	Op AGRICOLA -	Mar 1999 - 2002
Sierra Leone	Op BASILICAS/SILKMAN	Jun 2000 - Aug 2002
USA	Op VERITAS -	Oct 2001 - On going
Ivory Coast	Op ORACLE -	2002
Afghanistan	Op SAPPHIRE/FINGLE	Feb 2002 - Sep 2002
UK	Op FLAK -	Apr 2003
UK	Op MEDWAY/BASILISK	2000 - 2005
Iraq/Kuwait/Qatar	Op TELIC/GRIMES	Mar 2003 - Aug 2009
Kosovo	Op MERCIAN	Mar - Apr 04
Afghanistan	Op HERRICK	23 Oct 04 - On going
Lebanon/Cyprus	Op HIGHBROW	15 Jul - 6 Aug 2006

The organisations 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)
 The Royal School of Signals (Blandford)
 Brunei Signal Troop
 Nepal Signal Troop
 Alpha Troop 217 Signal Squadron (MOD Stafford)
 Rear Link Detachment 1 RGR
 Rear Link Detachment 2 RGR

Also personnel in Gurkha Company (Sittang), Gurkha Company/Language Wing ITC Catterick, 18 (UKSF) Sig Regt, RSIT, BOWTAG(N), BOWTAG(S), DHU Chicksands (Corsham), JAMES Project (Warminster), LF Sec (G), 1 Mech Bde, 12 Mech Bde, ATC Pirbright, 33 Sig Regt and 1 (UK) Armd Div in Germany.

Colonel of the Regiment

Brigadier N A W Pope CBE

Affiliated Corps:

The Royal Corps of Signals

Affiliated Regiment:

32nd (Scottish) Signal Regiment (Volunteers)

Official Association:

6th Signal Regiment, The Royal Australian Corps of Signals.

(Unfortunately the Regiment was disbanded on 31 Dec 94, following a review of the Australian Defence Force's Strategic Communications requirement. However, at the sub-unit level, 138 Signal Squadron was retained in service.)

Regimental March Past: Scotland The Brave

Staff List

British Officers of the Regiment

Brig N A W Pope CBE	Col of the Regt	Dir of the Eqpt Plan, London
Lt Col R J B Spencer	Comd	RHQ
Maj J W Dagless	OC	246 Gurkha Sig Sqn
Maj O T B Courage	OC	248 Gurkha Sig Sqn
Maj A E A Corkery	OC	250 Gurkha Sig Sqn
Capt M P Hunston	Ops Offr	246 Gurkha Sig Sqn
Capt L S Mathews	Ops Offr	248 Gurkha Sig Sqn
Capt C J P Anderson	Ops Offr	250 Gurkha Sig Sqn
Capt J Reid	SO3 G6	HQ Brunei Garrison
Capt M J Dennis	SO3 G2/G3/G6	HQ BGN
2Lt R M Carr	Tp Comd	246 Gurkha Sig Sqn
Lt P M E W Wilson Ramsay	Tp Comd	248 Gurkha Sig Sqn
Lt R L Meite	Tp Comd	250 Gurkha Sig Sqn
2Lt T E B Jones	Tp Comd	217 Sig Sqn

Gurkha Officers of the Regiment

Maj Yamkumar Gurung	Gurkha Major	RHQ
Capt Narayanbahadur Bhandari	G/Adjt	RHQ
Capt Nirmal Gurung	RCMO	RHQ
Capt Prembahadur Ale	Trg Adjt	RSS Blandford
Capt Purna Gurung	2IC	246 Gurkha Sig Sqn
Capt Laxman Pun	2IC	248 Gurkha Sig Sqn
Capt Tolbahadur Khamcha	2IC	250 Gurkha Sig Sqn
Capt Lalbahadur Gurung	2IC	RSS Blandford
Capt Ganesh Gurung	OC	BST
Capt Surje Gurung	OC	NST
Capt Kedar Rai	Ops Offr	217 Sig Sqn
Capt Ambar Gurung	Tp Comd	250 Gurkha Sig Sqn
Capt Hebindra Pun	Tp Comd	246 Gurkha Sig Sqn
Capt Tesharjang Gurung	Tp Comd	246 Gurkha Sig Sqn
Capt Lokbahadur Gurung	Tp Comd	248 Gurkha Sig Sqn
Capt Omprashad Pun	Tp Comd	250 Gurkha Sig Sqn
Capt Amritkumar Gurung	Tp Comd	248 Gurkha Sig Sqn

Gurkha Officers holding E1/E2 Appointments

Maj Hitman Gurung MVO	SO2 G6 CIS	2 (SE) Bde
Maj Krishnabhadur Gurung	QM	37 Sig Regt
Maj Dhanabhadur Gurung MVO	SO2 G6 CIS	HQ 145 (S) Bde
Maj Yambhadur Rana	Ops Offr	22 Sig Regt
Maj Nirmal Bhattachan	Gurkha Major	HQ BGN
Maj Buddhahadur Gurung (1)	QM	HQ SOinC (A)
Maj Ratnabhadur Pun	OC DSG	RSS Blandford
Maj Buddhahadur Gurung (2)	SO2 Comd Sp	HQ SOinC (A)
Capt Tekbahadur Rai	SO3 G1 USSO	Blandford
Capt Rajeev Shrestha	SO3 CS Sp	HQ SOinC (A)

Regimental Newsletter

By Lt Col R J B Spencer, Commander QG SIGNALS

As I report today (4 Jan 10) the Regiment is 603 strong. All three field squadrons and independent troops of the Regiment have been very successful in their tasking for the past year and continue to work harder for the future. The Regiment's reputation has continued to flourish. As in the previous years, members of the Regiment are extremely busy and have played their part to the full with soldiers continually deploying on exercises and operations.

All three Squadrons have been busy as ever deploying on operations, being involved in high profile exercises and training in the UK as well as overseas and have been on stand-by for Notice to Move throughout the year.

246 Gurkha Signal Squadron was heavily committed to Very High Readiness tasks. This included Small Scale Force Intervention, Small Scale Contingency Battlegroup, Joint Forces Headquarters and Joint Forces Logistic Component. It is still supporting enduring operations in Florida and holding a R3 for six months and had four deployments to SBMA Forward in Qatar and provided ICS support to Staff Officers. Ex RED TRICORN followed by Ex IRON TRIANGLE were the 3 Division Collective Training exercises where 246 Gurkha Signal Squadron played a vital role and provided a robust and resilient Communication Information System using the Cormorant Network System. The Squadron has been selected as part of the Campaign Signal Regiment and has been formally tasked to deploy on Op HERRICK next year and this will be our main effort for the next 18 months.

248 Gurkha Signal Squadron has fully integrated with 22 Sig Regt, and with approximately half of the Regiment deployed on Op HERRICK between August 2008 and February 2009. Currently they have four soldiers deployed on Op HERRICK. The Squadron's focus has now turned to the provision of Bowman. There remain many issues to resolve, not least the trade imbalances with severe shortages of CS Engr (I) and Installation Tech expertise. There are families who are enrolled to Stafford College and Stoke University. Some are engaged with ESOL Courses. The Squadron and Regiment are now starting to get to grips with their new role of being a Close Support (CS) Regiment to HQ Allied Rapid Reaction Corps.

New capabilities received including Commercial-Off-The-Shelf (COTs) equipment such as Richelieu together with Reacher and Mitral satellite detachments.

250 Gurkha Signal Squadron SHQ has seen a major appointment change-over of the SSM, SQMS and Squadron Clerks. The Squadron has been involved in Exercise JOINT VENTURE in Cyprus followed by Op TELIC 14, and has been the focus for most of 2009. The Squadron took the Spearhead Land Element (SLE) from 2 Signal Regiment in October 2009 and JTFHQ soon after. Currently, Cpl Min Roka is deployed to Sierra Leone providing a CS Operator for the HQ International Military Advisory and Training Team (IMMAT). A team of five deployed on Ex GRAND PRIX with 3 Scots in Kenya in January 2009 and a recce team for Ex GLOBAL REEF has recently returned from Belize.

Both Nepal Signal Troop and Brunei Signal Troops continue to be in their best possible shape providing a rigid CIS Support to respective commands during a difficult and challenging period. They have also hosted many visits.

As ever the Blandford team is kept busy with the numerous QGS course personnel going through their roster and achieving good results in the process. Our men have done well on their courses and have frequently been awarded the Top Student Award.

There have been 59 successful candidates who have transferred to the wider Army and personnel continue to put in for transfer.

On the shooting front the Regiment has been at the forefront winning various championships. After four years remaining at the top in the Army Operational Shooting Competition (AOSC), our soldiers, representing their respective units achieved:

2nd	2 Sig Regt
3rd	22 Sig Regt
4th-	30 Sig Regt

26 members of the Regiment got into the Army 100 this year alone with Cpl Khagendra narrowly missing the Queen's Medal.

Again, our team won both the Corps OSC and respective Brigade SAAM. Results were:

- 143 Brigade SAAM 1st 30 Sig Regt
2nd 22 Sig Regt
- 15 NE Bde SAAM 2nd 2 Sig Regt
- Corps SAAM 1st 2 Sig Regt
2nd 22 Sig Regt
3rd 30 Sig Regt

ExTRAILWALKER 2009 saw 480 teams enter - £1.3 million has been raised to date and money is still coming in. Once funds are finalised it is anticipated we shall be able to present half a million pounds to the Gurkha Welfare Trust. The QGE team won the event with a time of 10 hrs 44 mins 30 secs, the QG SIGNALS team came second, followed by the team of Maj Courage (OC 248 GSS).

In summary, the Regiment has continued to provide a robust Communications Infrastructure for the wider Army, delivering military capability well above the requirement.

Regimental 60th Birthday Celebrations

"You are young in history; but old in tradition and rich in inheritance. 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."

So spoke Major General Perowne CB, CBE on the occasion of the Cap Badging Ceremony of Gurkha Signals on 23 September 1954, five years after it was formed in 1949. Since then, this speech has been read 55 times and has always inspired all QG SIGNALS officers and soldiers, both past and present. The birthday is always regarded as a Regimental Parade and celebrated in a family atmosphere. It gives the members of the Regiment an opportunity to meet at least once a year as they are all located in different parts of the country. The event always takes place in Gamecock Barracks, Bramcote, where the RHQ QG SIGNALS is situated.

The birthday celebration this year carried significant importance as it was the 60th Anniversary of the formation of the Regiment. The event took place on Saturday, 26 September, and because this date coincided with Kalaratri 2009, the Regiment had two reasons to celebrate. There was a large presence from QG SIGNALS Association members as well as serving members of the Regiment to witness the historic event.

The day started with bright sunshine and a light breeze. There was a feeling of excitement and preparation had begun from early morning. The fatigue parties were busy completing last minute jobs and by 1030hrs, all personnel had arrived and Squadrons had formed up under their respective Squadron Sergeant Majors. Retired and Association members were also on parade. The parade kicked off at 1045hrs when the parade SSM, WO2 (SSM) Nimbahadur Pun reported to parade officer, Captain Narayan Bhandari, Adjutant QG SIGNALS. At 1055hrs, the parade VIPs – Colonel of the Regiment, Brig NAW Pope CBE, Commander, Lt Col R J Spencer and Gurkha Major, Major Yamkumar Gurung – arrived at the main arena. Upon receiving the report from the parade officer, Commander and GM read out the birthday speech in English and Nepali respectively. Immediately after the speech, citations for those who had won the annual awards were read by Manning Warrant Officer, WO2 David Rai. The categories were – ‘The Most Hardworking-Soldier of the Year’ (Cpl Basanta Gurung), ‘The Best Sportsman

of the Year’ (Sig Bikram Thapa), ‘The Best Trainee of the Year’ (Sig Milan Rai), ‘The Best Piper of the Year’ (LCpl Bijay Gurung) and ‘The Best Shot of the Year’ (Cpl Khagendra Tamang).

The Colonel of the Regiment presented trophies to all the winners of these prestigious awards. Soon after, Maj Ben White, former OC 246 Gurkha Signal Squadron, unveiled the Regimental History and briefly highlighted the significant historic events of the Regiment since it was formed. He had invested a lot of time and effort to produce this excellent book, for which he deserves a Thulo Shyabash.

Afterwards, it was time for the Colonel of the Regiment to address the whole Regiment. He reiterated the importance of the birthday speech and urged all members to understand the message it gives, and to uphold the Gurkha values and standards. He also highlighted the successes and achievements over the past 12 months and the challenges that lay ahead. He said the Regiment was in excellent shape and proudly scored the Regiment's performance as 10 out of 10. His speech inspired us all.

Immediately after the speech, he unveiled a new Silver Piece of a Gurkha Piper to mark the historic event of the 60th Anniversary. This was followed by the ceremonial cake cutting by Mrs Pope and the GM. Before the parade was dismissed, the Regimental pipers played a selection of tunes. Afterwards, WO2 Bharat Shrestha organised a ‘Big Photo’ shoot for all, including families.

After the photo, everybody moved inside a giant white marquee where drinks, tipan tapans and bada khana were laid out. During the bada khana there were short presentations on new communication infrastructures targeted to brief the retired members of the Regiment. There was also an extremely entertaining Naach programme that was received with loud rounds of applause.

After all this, there was still one more event to go – which was the long awaited inter-squadron Tug-of-War competition. The winning spirit demonstrated by the teams and in the support from their squadrons was second to none. The



Cpl Khagendra Tamang receiving the trophy for best shot from Brig Pope



Comd QG SIGNALS presenting the awards

atmosphere was such that even if a fighter plane had passed above our heads, people would not have noticed it – nothing could have penetrated the screaming and shouting from the supporters. Alas, there can only be one winner, and once again, 250 Gurkha Signal Squadron were victorious.

The Commander awarded the prizes and thanked everyone for their support and participation. He also thanked

all Association members for travelling to join the celebration and for making the event unique. This short speech brought the event to its official conclusion. Officers and SNCOs stayed behind for the Kalaratri celebration at night and the Mar ceremony the following morning. It had been a perfect day for the birthday celebration, everyone had enjoyed themselves. And so old friends said their farewells, vowing to meet again next year. Jai Queen's Gurkha Signals.

QG SIGNALS Attestation and Commissioning Parade

On 18 December 2009 at Gamecock Barracks, Bramcote, 35 young Gurkha Trainees took their oath to serve in Queen's Gurkha Signals. Lt Col R J B Spencer, in his capacity as Commander QG SIGNALS, took the salute in the presence of the Gurkha Major, Major Yamkumar Gurung, Pandit Jagadish Paudel, and all Officers and Other Ranks of the Regiment. This was a historic day for the new members of the Regiment as they were embarking on their new lives as QG SIGNALS soldiers.

Every year a number of Gurkhas join Queen's Gurkha Signals from ITC Catterick after completing nine months' gruelling military training. This year, 35 of the soldiers arrived at

Gamecock Barracks, the home of the Regiment, on 2 October 2009. They were put through their paces, and undertook various educational and computer courses under the supervision of Sgt Laxmanbabu Rana. Teachers from North Warwickshire and Hinckley College and instructors from within the Regiment taught subjects ranging from English, Maths and computers to Basic Signalling Skills, a mandatory course in order to select their trades and prepare for phase 2 training in Blandford for all newly arrived members of the Regiment.

On the day, Commander QG SIGNALS formally commissioned Capt Amrit Gurung. He then gave a speech

congratulating Capt Amrit and welcoming the trainees: he asked them to maintain the high standard that QG SIGNALS have always set, not just within the Brigade of Gurkhas, but in the Royal Corps of Signals, be it during peacetime or on operations. The Commander further announced that Maj Dhanbahadur Gurung MVO would be taking over the mantle of Gurkha Major in 2010.

A curry lunch was laid out for the trainees, Officers and Warrant Officers in the Himali bar after the parade. Before everyone tucked in, the Commander made two more announcements. Firstly, he officially bade farewell to Capt Nirmal Gurung, who was retiring after 27 years of distinguished service, and thanked him on behalf of every member of the Regiment for his outstanding contribution, especially in the

field of shooting, and wished him and his family well in his new endeavours with the Gurkha Welfare Trust. He further announced the result of trade allocation to the trainees, who had been waiting anxiously for this moment. The allocation of trade was based on their results in the various exams they had to undertake during their Induction Training package.

Our new comrades have moved on to Royal School of Signals in Blandford to start their relevant trade courses. We are sure they will live up to and maintain the standard set by their predecessors in all trade courses, and grasp the opportunity to learn new skills required to perform their duties to the best of their abilities in the future.

Jai QG SIGNALS!!!

Paras 10 Challenge

By LCpl Prakash Chhantyal

The Paras 10 Challenge was founded by W01 J J Wilson, and was hosted by the Parachute Regiment in Aldershot (1982-1993). Since the Paras left Aldershot in 1993, the legendary event fell dormant. In 2008, 'P' Company, the Parachute Regiment's own Training and Selection Wing, revived the race to mark the first time since WWII that all four of the Parachute Regiment's Battalions (1 PARA, 2 PARA, 3 PARA AND 4 PARA) deployed on operations in the same theatre at the same time (Afghanistan). The race attracted 650 runners and raised an estimated £40,000, split into two equal halves between 'Help for Heroes' and 'The Airborne Forces Security Fund'.

The 2009 Para 10 event took place at the Infantry Training Centre, Catterick Garrison, North Yorkshire. The race itself was a grueling endurance race; 10 miles with a 15 kg Bergen and a ten mile individual run. This was a multi-terrain endurance event which followed the same route as the Parachute Regiment's 'P' Company selection march. In order to pass 'P' Company selection, each individual needs to complete the course in 1 hour and 50 minutes. To enter the race, each

competitor had to contribute £25. Bearing that time (1 hr 50 mins) in mind, LCpl Sujan Thapa (PTI) from 246 Gurkha Signal Squadron entered two four man teams (Team A and Team B) and three individual runners.

On 13 September 2009, we prepared ourselves for the race alongside around 1610 competitors with the motto 'We start the race as a team, we finish as a team'. Within 1 hr 52 mins, both the teams and the three individual runners had finished the race. It was a high sigh of relief and moment of achievement for all the team members. It was worth doing for a good cause. We raised £310.27 for 'Help for Heroes'. Although the sum isn't that significant, we hope it will make a difference for those wounded service personnel and their families in need.

Finally, we would like to thank all the personnel who contributed to the charity and also to LCpl Sujan Thapa (team coordinator) for his guidance and hard work and sheer determination – without him, we as a team wouldn't have been able to compete in the race. Jai 246 Gurkha Signal Squadron!

Team A

1. LCpl Sujan Thapa
2. Sig Nirmal Gurung
3. Sig Bikram Thapa
4. Sig Purna Limbu

Team B

2. LCpl Prakash Chhantyal
2. LCpl Subash Gurung
3. LCpl Naresh Gurung
4. Sig Navin Gurung

The three individuals

- SSgt Bombahadur Gurung
LCpl Tilak Rana
Sig Shantanu Pradham



Participants with their medals after the race

Welfare Pensioners and Walking Boots - A Duty Trek in Eastern Nepal

By Major Adam Corkery

I joined the Brigade of Gurkhas in the summer of 2008 as the Officer Commanding 250 Gurkha Signal Squadron in Bramcote and in December 2009 was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to undertake a 'Directed Duty Trek (DDT)' in the East of Nepal. British officers working within the Brigade are encouraged to undertake a DDT at some stage during their tenure and the scheme has three primary beneficiaries. Firstly the officer benefits by gaining a greater understanding of the culture, background and politics of the home country of the soldiers and officers with whom he works. Secondly the Gurkha Welfare Scheme (GWS) benefits; there are insufficient welfare officers and assistants employed in Nepal to visit every project or welfare pensioner as regularly as they might wish and the fresh perspective and honesty that officers undertaking duty treks bring is invaluable to the scheme - I will elaborate further on the work of the GWS shortly. The third group that benefit are, one hopes, the soldiers of the Brigade who gain leaders with a more empathetic understanding of them, their backgrounds and their families' situation.

The GWS is the field arm of the Gurkha Welfare Trust (GWT), that is to say it is the organisation that spends the money and ensures that it is used to best effect. It does this in two broad areas - administering Individual Aid and Community Assistance. Individual Aid includes welfare pensions where an ex-serviceman is not eligible for a service pension but is nonetheless deserving of assistance and also hardship grants to alleviate specific situational difficulties that ex-servicemen or their immediate families find themselves in - these commonly include such things as homelessness due to fire or landslide. Community assistance may be awarded where three broad criteria are met; firstly where a community has a significant

ex-Gurkha population, secondly where there is a real need for such assistance and thirdly where a moderate grant could meet this need and change lives for the better as a result. Such community projects currently include bridges, schools, micro-hydroelectric plants, solar panels and the provision of water to villages.

Armed with this little knowledge, a map and a tasking pack, I found myself (along with LCpl Prakash Gurung, a soldier from my Squadron selected to be my trek guide who I hope and believe got as much out of the experience as I did) on a Yeti Airlines Jetstream to Biratnagar. Arriving in the East seemed a world away from the noise and bustle of Kathmandu and we were soon transferred to the camp of British Gurkhas Dharan to rendezvous with our trekking crew of four and the apparent mountain of equipment needed to sustain us. It was then quickly



on up to the Area Welfare Centre (AWC) in Dharan where we were to spend our first night. A warm welcome awaited us with a super meal laid on and the most comfortable beds of the trek.

On the first day we drove to Danda Bazaar where our first task was to inspect the Bhanu High School which has had a major extension funded by Ex TRAILWALKER around 12 months ago. The school was being well looked after although the areas not under the control of the GWS such as the computers were not given the same through-life support that GWS insists are applied to its own projects and we sadly therefore found that most of the machines were not working. After a productive inspection, we moved off on foot. Our first night was supposed to have been under canvas outside the school but this would have meant a long day the following day and we therefore walked on for a couple of hours to a village called Bodhe where we had been told there was suitable flat ground and water. In the end there were neither but our presence had not gone unnoticed and an ex-serviceman insisted on our staying in his house with his family. I had thankfully been advised to carry a little whisky on the trek and it proved useful the following morning as ex-Cpl Devendra Dewan couldn't be persuaded to take any payment but happily accepted a bottle of Scotch!

Day two was an eight hour walk but without any tasks. A river crossing in a dugout canoe was certainly the day's highlight and although obviously quite normal to the villagers was a new experience for me and the first of many contrasts from the 'tourist Nepal' that I had become familiar with over several previous visits. Leaving Panchakanya Pokhari on the morning of day three, we walked to the village of Okhre and took some time to locate the home of Mrs Asharmaya Limbu, the widow of an ex-QG SIGNALS signaller. Her story touched us both very much and it was with sadness that we heard that since being widowed she had lived alone in increasing unhappiness wracked with indecision over whether to remain in her house in Okhre in very hard conditions or to move to Dharan to live with her daughter and son-in-law risking ill-treatment at the hands of her daughter's new family and potentially losing her welfare pension too. There was no obvious advice to give and it was in a sombre silence that Prakash and I walked off having finished this second task. Again that night we failed to find a camping place amongst the terraced millet fields and were taken in by the daughter-in-law of another ex-serviceman.

The previous night, we had purchased from this lady the most expensive chicken I have ever bought and so I did not feel too bad about our hostess's refusal to take any further



Maj Corkery having a chat with one of the villagers

payment on the morning of day four! Walking to Myanglung, we visited another Trailwalker school, the Singhabahini High School which was generally well run with little to report on. In the afternoon we walked on to Tehrathum and were accommodated within the AWC and again well looked after. Day five was a long and cold one, climbing up into the clouds around Gupha Bazaar. We arrived just with the last of the light and the temperature plummeting down to around minus 15. We found a basic lodge in preference to camping and spent the evening around a charcoal brazier sharing the space with several families on long walks to or from their villages and a quantity of yak meat drying in the rafters.

We knew that day six would be a long one and therefore left in freezing darkness at 0610 hrs. It was another non-tasked day but somewhat of a route march and we were relieved to arrive at AWC Taplejung eleven and a half hours later and again in the dark. The AWC, as with all the others, was immaculate and staffed by people who obviously took much pride in both their surroundings and their work.

With stiff legs we rose on day seven and visited the Bhanu Jana Secondary School in Phungling. This was again a well run institution with few concerns to report back on. We walked on after the inspection to the village of Kabile where we remained for the night, giving us a relatively short day. In Kabile we booked a place on a bus the following morning which would compensate for the slight shortening of day seven and thus rose at 0430 hrs to get on the transport. I like to consider myself a reasonably seasoned traveller but this was definitely the most dangerous bus I have ever been on and when, at around 10am, the bus hit a huge hole in the track and two people were thrown clear off the roof and one left hanging down the side of the bus,

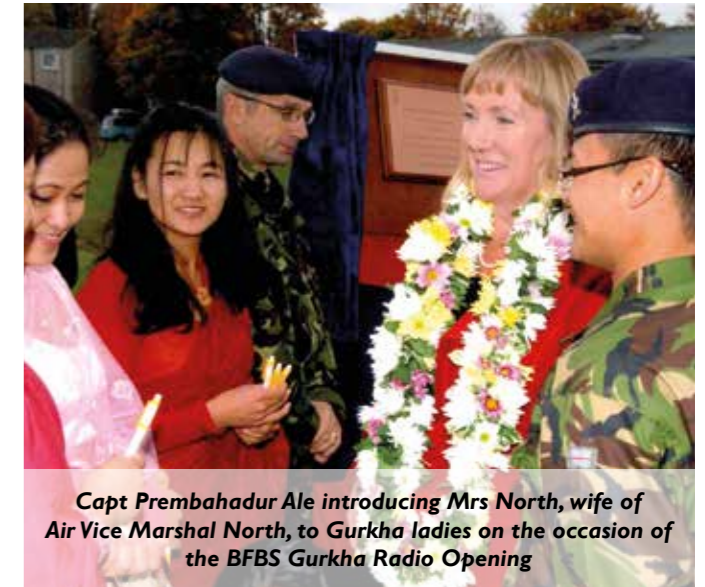
we elected to debus and revert to the pedestrian approach. Thankfully no-one was seriously hurt but it was an interesting reminder of the everyday risks that many Nepalis face and that we would consider unacceptable in the West. We walked for about an hour to the house of Ex-Rfn Lalbahadur Shrestha and his wife. They were better off than our previous welfare pensioner and had the support of family locally and, for a couple in their 80s, were not doing too badly. Mr Lalbahadur seemed to enjoy reminiscing and boasted of having been the best shot in his paltan at one time. We found out the information that we needed for the GWS report and continued chatting with them over a meal cooked by our porters. Our eighth and final night was spent at AWC Phidim.

From Phidim we had planned to spend the next night in Dharan with the AWC, but as there was a bandh scheduled for the following day we actually moved by Land Rover straight back to Biratnagar and returned, in somewhat of a whirlwind of activity, to Kathmandu that night.

Looking back, I am completely convinced of the merit of the DDT scheme and that all of the stated reasons for sending officers on these treks were justified in my case. I learned a huge amount about the culture and people of Nepal, of their great generosity and positive nature and of the enormous cachet surrounding service within the Brigade. I learned more about the GWS and the reasons that we must continue to support it through activities like Ex Trailwalker and of course my Nepali improved a little. If you are a British officer reading this and have not yet undertaken a DDT, I would wholeheartedly recommend it. If you are a soldier reading this and know a British officer who hasn't done a DDT, politely suggest that he does one and volunteer your services as a trekking guide!



Capt Prembahadur Ale, Senior Gurkha Officer Blandford Camp, WO2 (SSM) Shankar Gurung and Sgt Pramod Gurung pose for a photo in front of the Road, after its naming was officially approved by the County



Capt Prembahadur Ale introducing Mrs North, wife of Air Vice Marshal North, to Gurkha ladies on the occasion of the BFBS Gurkha Radio Opening

Queen's Gurkha Signallers at the Royal School of Signals

Many of you will be aware that the Royal School of Signals (RSS) in Blandford, as well as training Royal Signals (R SIGNALS) soldiers, provides exactly the same technical and military training to tradesmen of Queen's Gurkha Signals (QG SIGNALS).

QG SIGNALS was formed 60 years ago to support 17 Gurkha Infantry Division in its operations in Malaya against the communist insurgency. After that the Regiment saw service in the Borneo campaign in the 1960s and then in Hong Kong (where the Army was helping to halt the influx of illegal immigrants and Vietnamese boat people and dealing with tension created by Chinese sabre-rattling on the border). In these areas the Regiment became adept at many forms of signalling, including jungle communications, providing links for infantry battalions operating in the high rise areas of Hong Kong and emergency communications whenever the Colony was battered by a typhoon. QG SIGNALS also ran Army COMMCEMS throughout the Far East. Members of QG SIGNALS have served in the Falklands, East Timor, Sierra Leone and just about all other major operations conducted by the British Army in recent years.

With the UK's withdrawal from Hong Kong, QG SIGNALS moved, along with the rest of the Brigade of Gurkhas, to England where it now consists of: RHQ QG SIGNALS and 250 Gurkha Signal Squadron as part of 30 Signal Regiment in Bramcote, 246 Gurkha Signal Squadron as part of 2 Signal Regiment in York and 248 Gurkha Signal Squadron as part of 22 Signal Regiment in Stafford. There are also troops in Brunei and Nepal and of course a sizeable detachment at Blandford.

QG SIGNALS soldiers are all recruited in Nepal, where the selection procedure is somewhat different and more physically demanding than that used in UK, after which they complete infantry Phase 1 training at Catterick. Currently 35 Gurkhas are selected each year from their Phase 1 training to join QG SIGNALS and these soldiers commence their Phase 2 training at Blandford alongside their R SIGNALS colleagues. Formal

English language training takes place during their Phase 1 training. Throughout their service they follow the same trade progression as R SIGNALS.

At Blandford, in addition to the QG SIGNALS Phase 2 personnel, there are always a number completing other courses as well as quite a few on the permanent staff as instructors or as staff officers. There are currently nearly 40 Gurkha families in Blandford Camp. These personnel all provide a wide range of support to the local community on behalf of the Regiment and the Garrison. Recently Blandford Forum Town Council named one of the roads in Blandford Forum after Gurkhas, in recognition of their contributions to the local community. The Gurkha Road will always be there in the town as a testament to the friendship that has been fostered by two communities for many years.

The Gurkha community in Blandford Camp has a small number of unique support features; they have their own military clerk and chefs and their own temple. In addition, reception of BFBS Gurkha Radio has recently started in the Camp. The Radio was officially opened on 19 October 2009, on the occasion of the visit of the Air Officer Commanding 22 (Training) Group, Air Vice Marshal B M North OBE MA RAF.

QG SIGNALS personnel at Blandford held a combined celebration of Dashain and Tihar on 17 October 2009. Attended by Garrison Commander, Brig Tim Watts OBE, the Mayor of the Blandford Town and other senior officers, the party was ably organized by Senior Gurkha Officer/Training Adjutant Capt Prembahadur Ale and his team.

The Blandford community was well represented at the Regimental 60th Birthday Celebrations at Bramcote in September 2009.

QG SIGNALS has a strong family culture and all who have served with the Regiment remain forever a part of it. Jai QG SIGNALS!

A View from a Newly Commissioned Officer

By Lt Rob Meite

I am on my first tour as a Troop Commander in 250 Gurkha Signal Squadron, 30 Signal Regiment. I have been commissioned for one year and it has been a busy mix of work and play. After commissioning I went straight into the job of a Troop Commander at 21 Signal Regiment on a six month attachment, then my Troop Commanders course followed by posting to my first unit.

On arrival at 30 Signal Regiment I was lucky enough to be posted to 250 GSS. The fast pace of life immediately hit me. Initially I was due to be one of the few Britons left in Iraq. However, I missed that opportunity and I now plan to spend a couple of months learning Nepali on my long language course in Nepal.

There have been many changes in the Regiment and my Troop currently has detachments at varying states of readiness in support of Joint Task Force Headquarters. In addition we are also providing manpower to the UK node in Colerne, Ex GRAND PRIX and the four Mission Rehearsal Exercises. W Troop in its current guise is newly formed so we have been steadily bonding as a troop. I have found this to be very easy with Gurkha soldiers. The close knit group of Queen's Gurkha Signals has meant most of the men knew each other and they have also made me feel very welcome.

My first responsibility as W Troop Commander was 250 GSS Dashain and then QGS 60th birthday celebrations. Obviously this responsibility was to have fun and practise my dancing and not any of the organization, which was left in very capable hands and was a great success. Shortly after this period of celebration were the Tihar festivities which capped a most enjoyable few weeks. This period really put into focus how important these events are for a family-oriented squadron, especially after returning from operations.

Work eventually began with preparations for Ex GLOBAL REEF which took place in Cyprus from 9-22 November 2009. This exercise was designed to help the Troop prepare for overseas deployments and put into action the communications assets we would use. This was an amazing opportunity to test all aspects of a deployment and recovery and to ensure my involvement in all elements. The Troop established Bowman HF communications over a distance of 3300km and maintained that for the duration of the exercise as well as the Light Weight Recce Node (LWRN) and TACSAT. To finish the exercise we managed to do some mountain biking and hill walking in the sunny and rather cold Troodos Mountains. We now move into Christmas celebrations, making the most of the mix of British and Nepalese tradition that makes the squadron more effective.



The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment

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 1 July 1960.

34 Company Gurkha ASC formed in July 1960 and redesignated the Gurkha All Arms MT Training Wing GTR on 1 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 1 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 1 September 1976 to 8 April 1994 when they joined the Hong Kong Logistic Support Regiment RLC.

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.

Changes 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 5 April 2001. The Bde of Gurkhas Chefs were recapbadged to QOGLR with effect 5 April 2002. On 12 May 2006, on parade at New Normandy Barracks, 10 Tpt Regt RLC was officially re-titled 10 Tpt Regt QOGLR. To coincide with the 50th Anniversary, 10 Tpt Regt QOGLR was retitled 10 QOGLR on 5 July 2008.

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 Sqn 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)

Colonels of the Regiment:

Colonel – The Gurkha Army Service Corps

1960 – 1965 Maj Gen P G Turpin CB, OBE

Colonel – The Gurkha Transport Regiment

1965 – 1973 Maj Gen P G Turpin CB, OBE

1973 – 1978

Maj Gen D G T Horsford CBE, DSO

1978 – 1984

Brig P I Attack MBE

1984 – 1987

Brig R M Llewellyn OBE

1987 – 1992

Maj Gen R M Llewellyn OBE

Colonel – The Queen's Own Gurkha Transport Regiment

1992 – 1993	Maj Gen R M Llewellyn CB, OBE
1993 – 1996	Brig P C C Trousdell
1997 – 2001	Maj Gen P C C Trousdell CB

Colonel – The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment

2001 – 2003	Maj Gen P C C Trousdell CB (Promoted to Lt Gen Jun 03)
2003 – 2008	Brig S P Cowlam CBE
2008 -	Brig A S J Fay

Active Service Campaigns:

Malaya, Brunei, Borneo, Malay Peninsula, The Gulf, UN Cyprus, UN Former Republic of Yugoslavia, Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Staff List (as at October 2010)**Officers of the Regiment**

Lt Col M P Moore
 Maj N G A V Flint RLC
 Maj Sovitbahadur Hamal Thakuri MVO
 Capt L J Butler RLC
 Maj C R Woodley RLC
 Capt G N Priestly RLC
 Capt A Jenkins RLC
 Capt Kumar Gurung RLC
 Capt N S Homer RLC
 Capt Nandprasad Kala
 Maj P M K Beaumont RLC
 Capt H P M McCullough RLC
 Capt Palijar Tamang
 Capt Rudrabahadur Chhantyal
 2Lt D E Young RLC
 Maj P S Reehal MBE RLC
 Capt C Molinaro RLC
 Capt Tambahadur Dhega
 Capt Bhimprasad Gurung
 Lt A R Norman RLC
 Maj J H Marshall RLC
Post Gapped
 Capt A Hutcheon
 Major C Hampton-Stone RLC
 Capt S J Barker RLC
 Capt A D Watson RLC
 Capt D J Smith RLC
 Lt S Marsh RLC
 Lt D F E Naismith RLC
 Maj J Baxter RLC
 Capt Tikaprasad Rai
 Capt Diwan Limbu
 Capt Hariprasada Rai
 Maj J Hoban RLC
 Capt Rajpati Gurung
 Capt M Le Maistre RLC

Comd QOGLR
 Second in Command
 Gurkha Major
 Adjutant
 Regimental Quartermaster
 Regimental Technical Quartermaster
 Operations Officer
 Regimental Career Management Officer
 Regimental Welfare Officer
 Gurkha Chef Manning Officer
 OC 1 Tpt Sqn QOGLR
 2IC 1 Tpt Sqn QOGLR
 Admin Officer 1 Tpt Sqn QOGLR
 Tp Comd 1 Tpt Sqn QOGLR
 Tp Comd 1 Tpt Sqn QOGLR
 OC 28 Tpt Sqn QOGLR
 2IC 28 Tpt Sqn QOGLR
 Admin Officer 28 Tpt Sqn QOGLR
 Tp Comd 28 Tpt Sqn QOGLR
 Tp Comd 28 Tpt Sqn QOGLR
 OC 36 (HQ) Sqn QOGLR
 2IC 36 (HQ) Sqn QOGLR
 AO 36 (HQ) Sqn QOGLR
 OC 66 Sqn RLC
 AO 66 Sqn RLC
 Ops Offr 66 Sqn RLC
 Tp Comd 66 Sqn RLC
 Tp Comd 66 Sqn RLC
 Tp Comd 66 Sqn RLC
 OC 91 Supply Sqn RLC
 2IC 91 Supply Sqn RLC
 Tp Comd 91 Supply Sqn RLC
 Tp Comd 91 Supply Sqn RLC
 OC 94 Stores Sqn QOGLR
 2IC 94 Stores Sqn QOGLR
 Ops Offr 94 Stores Sqn QOGLR

Capt Chakrabahadur Neupane
 Capt Baldeep Tamang
 Maj Khimprasad Gauchan
 Capt Minbahadur Limbu
 Maj Tirtharaj Gurung
 Maj Rudrabahadur Sahi

Tp Comd 94 Stores Sqn QOGLR
 OC Gurkha Troop, DST Leconfield
 OC 27 (HQ) Sqn, 2 Log Sp Regt RLC
 RSO, 19 CSS Bn
 Trg Maj, 88 PC Regt RLC (V)
 Trg Maj, 155 Regt RLC

Commander's Annual Review

By Lieutenant Colonel M P Moore RLC

2010, understandably, is largely remembered for the Regiment's deployment on Operation HERRICK II. From the turn of the year to April, all four QOGLR squadrons were actively involved in supporting operations in Helmand Province: 1 Transport, 28 Transport and 36 Headquarters Squadrons in the Close Support Logistic Regiment (CSLR) role and 94 Materiel Squadron forming the nucleus of the Theatre Logistic Group – all based in Camp Bastion. Six months of arduous operational duty in Afghanistan further demonstrated the Regiment's utility and adaptability in providing logistic support in a complex and challenging operational Theatre. As I reflect, I can only be proud of what we have collectively achieved. The tour has further strengthened our reputation and credibility across the Brigade of Gurkhas, and indeed the Army as a whole, and I continue to be flattered by the constant stream of comments I receive on how well our Gurkha soldiers conducted themselves in the face of a fierce and determined enemy. For me, professionalism, pride and humour are qualities that neatly sum up the Regiment's performance in Afghanistan. These, together, give us a unique Gurkha logistician and soldier whose heritage stems back some 52 years – much of which I believe has remain unchanged.

And of course, we ought not to forget our wounded, for they continue to recover and attend intensive rehabilitation programmes in the UK. Private Kiran Gurung, injured in Nade-Ali District in November 2009, has spent the majority of the year on an extensive neuro-rehabilitation programme, with his parents by his side. In October this year, he was transferred to the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre, Headley Court, where he will continue on a long term recovery programme, administered by one of the Army's newly-formed Primary Recovery Units. Kiran has made an amazing recovery, which has been aided by the strong support he has received from serving members of his Regiment, particularly 28 Squadron. While his rehabilitation is likely to be a long one, we will endeavour to keep him close to his Regimental home in Aldershot and ensure that throughout this difficult journey, he continues to feel part of the QOGLR family. It is the ethos and spirit of our Regiment that I know will serve him well in the years to come. Lance Corporal Kamal Thapa (injured whilst serving with the Brigade Reconnaissance Force in October 2009) and Private Surydip Temba (wounded in February 2010) are both on the

path to making full recoveries. I should also mention LCpl Tye and Pte Curtis, (wounded in August 2009) whilst serving with 66 Squadron in Kabul. LCpl Tye continues to make progress with the aid of the excellent medical facilities and doctors at Headley Court and Pte Curtis has made an exceptional recovery. We wish them all well.

The HERRICK II finale was witnessing 10 QOGLR's Medal Parade on 28 May 2010, with the Colonel Commandant, General Sir David Richards (Chief of the General Staff at the time), presenting the Operational Service Medal for Afghanistan to 230 officers and soldiers. It was an absolute honour to have the Colonel Commandant present medals, including to all five of our wounded soldiers, and unveil the Regiment's Operation HERRICK II 'Silver Piece' in the Officers' Mess. Later in the year, Operational Honours and Awards List 35 was published, with Major Patch Reehal, Sergeant Pritabhadur Gurung and Private Bishal Gurung being awarded the Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service and the Chief of Joint Operations Commendation respectively. As well as being thoroughly deserved, their awards were a significant achievement for the QOGLR – Shyabash!!

Finally, I should say that, now at the two-year point as Commander QOGLR, my tenure will soon come to an end. I have been very fortunate to have commanded the Regiment during such a momentous period in its history, made possible by the many talented people I have had under command. To a man, they have been a privilege to lead. Late 2010, I returned to Nepal for my duty trek with the Gurkha Major, Major Sovit Hamal Thakuri; my first one since being in command. The four-day trek in Kaski and Lamjung Districts was not only demanding on the Moore body, but meeting the families of some of our serving officers and soldiers en route taught me more about our Gurkha soldiers: their roots, culture, qualities and heritage. The QOGLR enjoys a strong bond of trust and friendship, underpinned by our Regimental Associations in Nepal, which affords us a unique kaida. And while the Strategic Defence and Security Review are likely to lead to some changes in our structure, I am confident that the ethos and traditions of the Regiment will remain intact. 2011 is another year, another challenge. But I am certain that whatever is asked of the QOGLR in the next few years, we will be more than ready to respond. Jai QOGLR!



David Cameron's visit to QOGLR in Afghanistan

Exercise GRAND PRIX VIPER

After several months of planning and preparation, and with Malaria tablets and jungle hats issued, 10 The Queen's Own Logistic Regiment was finally ready to deploy to Kenya on Exercise GRAND PRIX VIPER – the first time that a Logistic Regiment had ever deployed on such a scale to Kenya. The exercise was divided into two halves, with 1 Squadron deploying first and then handing over to 28 Squadron with an RHQ.

1 Squadron deployed on 9 January 2009 in order to meet the vehicles and equipment off the boat in Mombasa. Having married up with the vehicles, it was a demanding three-day drive up-country to Nanyuki and the exercise area. Despite the quality of the Kenyan roads and the local driving, all personnel and vehicles arrived without any major problems, but it was the next leg of the journey that would prove to be the biggest test.

Between Nanyuki and the Log Base in Sosian, there was a six-hour drive across the Kenyan plains. The conditions provided an excellent driver training opportunity and tested the vehicles. Log Base KATHMANDU was constructed in the middle of nowhere in the African bush and its success was due in no small part to the detailed planning by the Quartermaster. It was to be home for the Squadron for the next six weeks before 28 Squadron arrived in March.

The focus for the Regiment was to train in austere conditions in the context of a hybrid war that reflected the 'Contemporary Operating Environment'. The training was facilitated by the Royal Welsh and the Grenadier Guards from 11 Light Brigade who were taking part in Exercise GRAND PRIX. This enabled the Regiment to integrate its logistic training with their exercises.

The early training concentrated on low-level soldier skill and an excellent range package that saw all take part in moving top-cover shoots from logistic vehicles. Having completed this, the focus switched to learning about and practising Combat Sustainment Patrols (CSPs), as well as understanding the Force Protection (FP) tactics, techniques and procedures. Before too long, the FP elements were interacting well with the CSPs, and the skills became more and more honed. The training was greatly assisted by a small training team of NCOs from 27 Regiment who had recently returned from operations in Afghanistan. Their knowledge was invaluable. The training culminated in conducting real-time CSPs into the respective Battlegroups areas of operations, while they conducted their exercises.

In addition to the training, over the three months that the Regiment was deployed, it became actively involved in supporting a local school that was 20 minutes from the Log Base. The soldiers turned a ruin into a house with four rooms, in which to accommodate the school's teachers. With two 'Big Brews' and a fun run, the Regiment raised over £600 to buy stationery and other necessities for the school. The house, later called Khukri House, was officially opened on 24 March by Major General Brealey, GOCTheatre Troops when he visited the Exercise. It was very moving to see how grateful the parents and children were for what we had done for them, and it made us appreciate just how lucky we are.

The Exercise was a fantastic opportunity. It enabled the Regiment to replicate the types of conditions that have been faced recently by Logistic Regiments on operations in a way that cannot be done on Salisbury Plain. It was tremendously worthwhile, and greatly enjoyed by all the soldiers.

Staff Ride: The Battle of the Bulge

The Officers and Senior Ranks from 10 The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment, together with the CO and RSM of 155 Wessex Transport Regiment (V), set off on an epic journey through time in May 2010. Led by Anglia Battlefield Tour guide Maj (Retd) Tim Sanders MBE, we were taken to the battlefield sites and scenes of the Ardennes Campaign 1944-45.

The German "Wacht Am Rhein" offensive of December 1944 was Hitler's last ditch effort in the West to split the Allies cohesion, encircle the Allied Northern Army Group and protect the Ruhr, the heart of the German war industry. Furthermore, by retaking Antwerp, the Germans would force the Allies to use extended lines of communication stretching back to the Normandy beaches, which would seriously hamper the forthcoming advance into Germany. This would allow time for Germany to concentrate on the Eastern Front and the development of the V weapons. In the West this campaign became known as the 'Battle of the Bulge'.

Based in a quirky family-run hotel in Bastogne, we spent each day travelling the routes taken by key formations and discussing the battles and the frictions encountered. On Day One we ventured to the German Start Line, the River Our, which divides Luxemburg from Germany – a great location to set the scene for the entire campaign. We then followed the advance of the 47th Panzer Corps through Manarch and onto Clervaux, both of which had been held by the American 110th Infantry Regiment, which had received the order to stand and fight. The battles for these small villages, hamlets and road junctions decimated the Regiment, but gained the Allies vital time.

Day Two was spent visiting the German war cemetery in Recogne. The ages of the soldiers who fell ranged from 17 to well over 60 years old. It is believed that the German Army lost 230,000 soldiers killed, wounded or captured during this campaign. It was rather interesting to notice the differences between the Commonwealth Cemeteries and German Cemeteries, for the latter include trees amongst the graves to represent the circle of life. After this, we visited the American memorial in Maddison dedicated to the 90,000 killed, wounded and missing in action during the Battle of the Bulge. Seeing the horrific casualties incurred by both sides, when compared with those rates we suffer in modern campaigns, graphically illustrates the acceptance of losses when fighting total war.

During the tour each Squadron was required to produce a presentation on the battle ranging from Intelligence to Logistics and Equipment Support from both the Allied and German perspectives. There were some entertaining amateur dramatics from 1 Squadron, in which Lieutenant's Danny Young and Andy Thackway took it upon themselves to dress up as old American veterans. Of particular interest were the original shell scrapes overlooking the village of Foy. These were dug by Easy Company 101 Airborne Division, over 60 years ago, and certainly stimulated a few re-enactments from Band of Brothers with Capt Tom Cowan claiming to be Capt Speirs.

On Day Three we followed 'Kampfgruppe Peiper' of the 1st SS Panzer Division, the only German unit to reach the Meuse. This highlighted the constraints under which even the ruthless SS fought this campaign. They were obliged to abandon combat vehicles as they ran out of fuel and had to rely on capturing US dumps. The lack of infantry forced some objectives to be bypassed causing the advance to be diverted along circuitous secondary routes exhausting precious fuel. The high water mark of this advance, the village of La Gleze, was the end of the road not only for the German advance but also for the staff ride. It was also the perfect opportunity to celebrate Commander 10 QOGLR, Lt Col Moore's selection for promotion!

The Battle of the Bulge presents a perfect opportunity to study, in a comparably small area, a battle from which we can learn many lessons for today and the future. The principles of war, as well as the advance and defence, are demonstrated across this campaign. The realities of battle and the sheer casualty rates are staggering and most evident when visiting the site of the Malmedy Massacre. There are many logistic lessons to be learnt as well. After five years of continuous warfare, fighting and facing invasion and final defeat, on two fronts, it is surprising that the Germans could even consider such an audacious counter-attack. The fact that their war machine, after the destruction of its Western Army Group in Normandy, could, over a three-month period, produce, equip and train a 600,000 strong force to mount this counter offensive was a remarkable achievement. The paucity of motorised transport, lack of routes, and limitations on fuel and ammunition were key factors contributing to the Germans' failing to reach their objectives.



Gurkha Company (Sittang) Royal Military Academy Sandhurst



Staff List

Major S A Archer RGR	OC
Capt Tekbahadur Gharti 1 RGR	2IC
WO2 Shree Chandra Gurung 2 RGR	CSM
CSgt Rohitbahadur Gurung 1 RGR	CQMS
SSgt Mohan Gurung QG Signals	Welfare SNCO
Sgt Ram Thapa RGR	Edn/Reset
Sgt Padambahadur Gurung RGR	Ch Clk
Capt Trilochan Gurung 2 RGR	Ops/Trg
SNCO Sgt Jit Bhane Pun 1 RGR	Ops/Trg
Gap post	1 PI Comd
Sgt Bharat Kumar Rai 2 RGR	1 PI SNCO
Capt Prakash Gurung 1 RGR	2 PI Comd
Sgt Hisbahadur Thapa 2 RGR	2 PI SNCO
Capt Dolbahadur Gurung 1 RGR	3 PI Comd
Sgt Minbahadur Pun 1 RGR	3 PI SNCO

Newsletter

Key Personality Changes

A significant number of changes have taken place in the higher echelons of GC (S) over the year.

Major Archer returned to the post of OC in November 2009 having completed his Op tour in Afghanistan where he was working for the Combined Training Advisory Group (CTAG) in Kabul, responsible for recruit, NCO, officer and special to arm training of the Afghan National Army (ANA).

Capt Tekbahadur Gharti, 2IC GCS, departed on some well earned resettlement training before pension and Capt Trilochan Gurung assumed the role from December 2009. Capt Hemkumar Rai, 1 PI Comd, went back to 2 RGR as QM Tech in October 2009. Replacements for both Ops/Trg Offr and 1 PI Comd are still awaited.

In addition, WO2 Shreechandra Gurung arrived in July 2009 to take over as CSM GCS from WO2 Sureshkumar Kandangwa, SSgt Sudeep Rana arrived in March 2010 to take over Resettlement and Welfare SNCO posts from SSgt Mohan and Sgt Ram Thapa, Sgt Jitbhane Pun 1 RGR arrived in August 2009 to take over Ops/Trg SNCO from Sgt Nunbahadur Thapa, Sgt Padambahadur Gurung arrived in August 2009 to take over Chief Clerk from Sgt Mulbir Rai and Sgt Hisbahadur Thapa arrived in June 2009 to take over 2 PI Sgt from Sgt Tekbir Rai.

4 Division SAAM 2009

As an infantry soldier, shooting is the most important skill and plays a vital role in battle. Bearing this in mind, to improve the shooting skills of the soldiers, Gurkha Company (Sittang) took part in the 4 Division Skill-at-Arms Meeting. Altogether eight men represented GCS and divided into two groups of four men; one gunner and three riflemen.

The SAAM was held on 9 and 10 May 2009 at Ash and Pirbright Ranges. Altogether there were six matches including gun and team matches. There was also a falling plate



Col Trg, Col JCC Schute OBE, SO1 G7 Trg and GCS Comd Gp with Shooting Team



OC and CSM GCS with Capt Dol and his team during their visit

competition at the end. Seven regular units competed in the SAAM with the top three qualifying for the Central SAAM. GCS performed to a very high standard coming second and thus qualifying for Bisley.

In summary the experience and the results were exactly what we were hoping for and we proved that Gurkhas are still some of the best shots in the Army

Ex SPRING VICTORY 2009

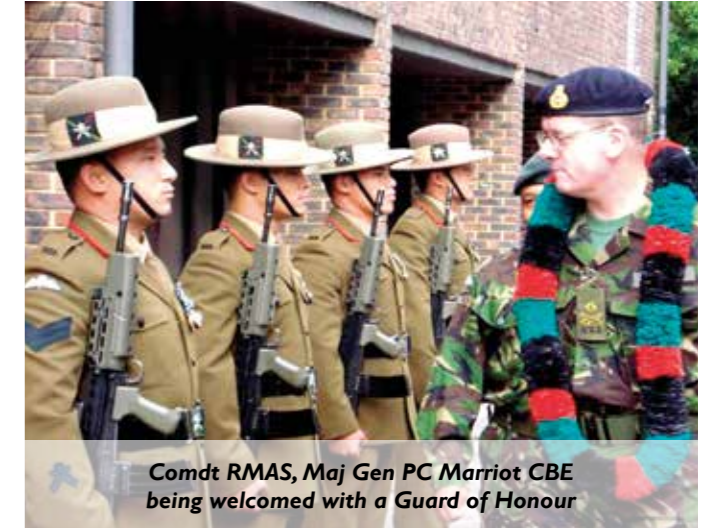
Ex SPRING VICTORY was the final threshold exercise for Officer Cadets which took place over the period 15 -24 March 2009 at Saint Cyr Coetquaidan in Northern France.

On 11 March 2009, we set out on our journey to Portsmouth by coach. From the Portsmouth docks we took the ferry to Ouistreham. After we arrived, we were driven to Saint Cyr Coetquaidan. Upon reaching our destination, CSgt Rohit Gurung (CQMS GCS) gave us an initial briefing, and then we were shown to our accommodation.

The following day we received a 'SPRING VICTORY' briefing from the British Liaison Officer: Lt Col SP Owen. Some of the group moved to Vannes Meucon to support the Reception Staging and Onward Integration (RSOI) Package while the remaining personnel began the preparation for the exercise, beginning with the setting-up of the area where we were to stay for the duration of the exercise. Initially, in Vannes Meucon for the RSOI, the Officer Cadets deployed to the training area where they conducted the BL/BE along with the French Officer Cadets; this is where we played the part of the enemy. We were highly praised by both British and French Officers.

On 15 March, the main phase of the exercise began where we were divided into four groups for four different locations - Pratzén, Boise De Loupe, Le Forte and AI Echelon. Our task was to play as the scenario dictated. There were multiple roles that we had to portray, e.g. villagers, bandits, local policeman and opposition forces.

On the other side Ex-Troops were operating in three different areas where one of the 'Companies' played the part of



Comdt RMAS, Maj Gen PC Marriot CBE being welcomed with a Guard of Honour

the Insurgents. Every three days their role changed (in a round-robin), which consisted of occupying the Forward Operation Base (FOB), Search Ops, Amphibious Ops, Hostage Rescue Ops and other drills and tactics in and outside the FOB.

After completion of all three rotations by all three companies, the final attack was completed at Ville Bizzard. At the end of the exercise, the Commandant RMAS, praised Gurkha Company (Sittang) for their part in Ex SPRING VICTORY and complimented us on the great support that we had given. The speech given by the Commandant boosted our morale. It was a very successful and enjoyable exercise.

Dashain 2009 Celebration

On 26 September 2009, 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 Pandit and the Pujari team, led by SSgt Mohan.

On the night of Kalaratri, all Officers, SNCOs and their families gathered outside New College to greet the guests.



Phulpati ceremony outside the Temple, with the Firing Party



Maj Gen Marriot, and his family enjoying drinks and Tipan-Tipan at the start of Kalaratri



Tika is received from the Senior Gurkha Officer, A/Maj Tekbahadur Gharti

Amongst the main guests, we were delighted to have the Commandant RMAS, Maj Gen P C Marriot CBE and Mem Saheb, and Chief of Staff RMAS, Col T J Checketts OBE. After a couple hours chatting over drinks and tipan tipan, the CQMS announced that the Gurkha Bhat would be served in the New College Dining Hall. A delicious meal was had by all, after which everyone made their way down to Woolwich Hall for the entertainment.

The Officiating OC GC(S), A/Maj Tekbahadur Gharti, gave his Dashain speech and handed over to Capt Prakash Saheb, who led the cultural show with true professionalism. The performers were magnificent and thoroughly entertained everyone with a typical mix of Gurkha cultural dances. At the end of the programme, everyone, including the chief guest, came onto the stage for the cocktail dance. The evening proved to be a wonderful blend of colour, taste, music, dance and tradition.

The next day (the ninth day) all GCS personnel and families assembled for the traditional 'Mar' ceremony at the Temple. On the tenth day all ranks from GCS gathered again at the Temple to receive Tika from the senior Gurkha, A/Maj Tekbahadur. All in all, the festival was a tremendous success, marking one of the main religious festivals but also celebrating our heritage and culture.



Mrs Rutherford-Jones Mem Saheb being presented a bouquet by OC Mem Saheb

A Trip to the Royal Hospital Chelsea Founder's Day

Gurkha Company (Sittang) was invited, through Mr Frank Jackson, the Academy Carpenter, to attend the Founder's Day Parade at Chelsea Hospital with twelve personnel. This is an annual event to remember King Charles II as the founder of the Royal Hospital Chelsea. It is held at the Royal Hospital in London on the first Thursday in June each year. The team was led by A/Maj Tekbahadur Gharti, accompanied by the Mayoress of Sandhurst.

After the inevitable struggle through London traffic we arrived at the Royal Hospital Chelsea and were met by the liaison officer who gave us a short brief on the day's event. At the end he said "Be proud, keep smiling and be patient with the cameras". He was right because as we took the first step out of the car park in our No2 Dress, a group gathered and voices jingled in our ears – "Oh, lovely Gurkhas, we are so proud of you. Can we take a picture please?" And so the day began.

At the reception, all spectators were given oak leaves to wear in memory of the founder, King Charles II. His statue is decorated with oak leaves, in memory of his escape after the Battle of Worcester in 1651, when he took refuge from his pursuers by hiding in an oak tree. Around 300 Chelsea Pensioners in their famous bright scarlet coats and gold-edged tricorne hats were on parade in the Figure Court at the Royal Hospital and approximately 2500 spectators assembled to witness the parade which was inspected by HRH The Duke of Gloucester.

It was King Charles II's intention that the hospital should be for the 'succour and relief of veterans broken by age and war'. Currently there are 296 In-Pensioners both male and female - the oldest is 97! The average age is 82 years and 4 months. 175 In-pensioners fought in the Second World War and the remainder are survivors of the many campaigns that have taken place since then.

Straight after the parade the team were presented to HRH The Duke of Gloucester. There then followed the Garden Party. The most spectacular episode of the day, for us, was when about 3000 people attending the party suddenly stood up and cheered when we appeared. This was completely amazing and the team were astounded by the overwhelming public support

for them. The conversations were dominated by war stories. Before departing, the Governor of Chelsea Hospital, General the Lord Walker, thanked the team for attending the parade.

In conclusion, the day was absolutely phenomenal. This was a rare opportunity to visit the Royal Hospital Chelsea and a great privilege to meet the war veterans. The day was inspiring and gave us a good insight into the history of Founder's Day and the Chelsea Pensioners. The day can best be summed up by Rfn Ojahang Limbu who said: "The day made me realize how proud I was to be a Gurkha. People were very keen to meet and speak to us and treated us like celebrities".

Farewell to Commandant RMAS

On 15 June 2009, Gurkha Company (Sittang) held a farewell function for the outgoing Commandant RMAS, Maj

Gen D J Rutherford-Jones and his family. Everyone gathered at the Ark Community Centre and after the arrival of the Chief Guest, the party began. The CQMS team served a few rounds of drinks and tipan tipan. While nibbling the starters, everyone had the opportunity to mingle and chat. Capt Prakash Saheb organised a fantastic cultural dance performed by some of the children. This unexpected event thoroughly entertained everyone present.

A delicious dinner was served after a quick announcement by the CQMS. After the dinner, A/Maj Tekbahadur Gharti gave a farewell speech and made a presentation, General Saheb replied expressing his thanks to everyone for their hard work and support. The speeches were followed by a Kukri Dance performed by the soldiers and, finally, the guests were called onto the stage to show off their own dancing skills.

Gurkha Company (Mandalay) Infantry Battle School

Staff List

Maj Guptaman Gurung MVO MBE RGR	OC
Capt Manikumar Limbu 2 RGR	2IC
Capt Yubaraj Garbuja 2 RGR	PC 1 PI
Capt Jogendrasing Limbu 2 RGR	PC 2 PI
Capt Pitamber Gurung 1 RGR	PC 3 PI
WO2 Harising Gurung 1 RGR	CSM
CSgt Shreeprasad Thapa 1 RGR	CQMS
SSgt Raju Gurung QGE	Gurkha Welfare SNCO
Sgt Lokraj Jiraj RGR	Chief Clerk

Gurkhas in Brecon – Now and Then

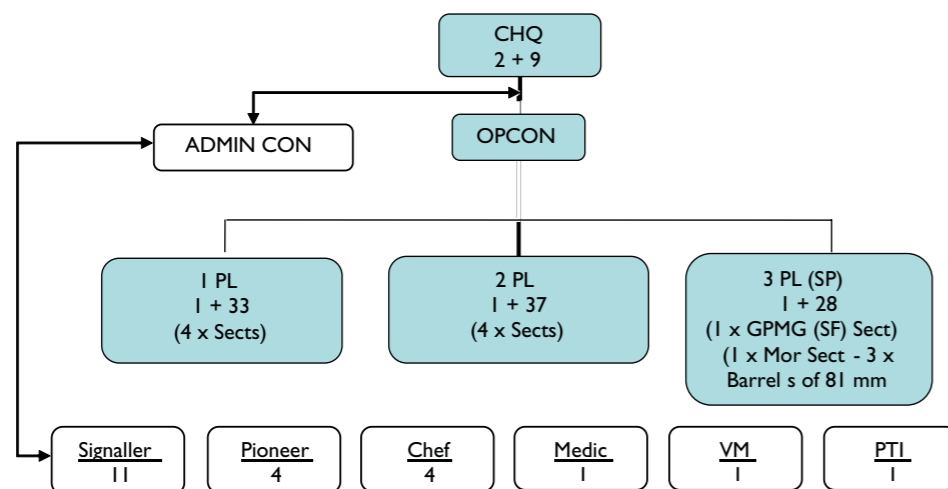
By Maj Guptaman Gurung MVO MBE

Gurkha Company (Mandalay) Mission Statement

“To provide general training and duties support to HQ Infantry Battle School and Training Divisions (including SWS DFD) as directed by CRC in order to enable the effective delivery of quality training in accordance with Operational Performance Statement.”

Gurkha Company (Mandalay) was formed in 1980 as the Gurkha Demonstration Company with two Platoons to support the then Platoon Sergeants’ and Section Commanders’ Tactics Courses under the old NCOs’ Tactical Wing. At the beginning of the Nineties, all Infantry-related courses began to

be concentrated at and run from Brecon with the exception of Support Weapons and Signals. The transformation was completed in 2000 when the Platoon Commanders’ Division moved from Warminster. Currently the Infantry Battle School runs more than 18 different courses totalling up to 44 each year. Because of the increased commitments, the scale of the Company was also increased from two platoons to three from 1995. With the introduction of the Basic Tactics Course (BTAC) for the TA, an additional Section was formed up in 2006. The Company was renamed Gurkha Company (Mandalay) in September 2004. Below is the Company’s Orbat:



It was about 22 years ago that I came to Brecon to do my Platoon Sergeants’ Battle Course. As the home base of the Gurkhas was in Hong Kong, the majority of the career courses within the Brigade of Gurkhas used to be run in there, a kind of in-house arrangement. Only a handful of Gurkhas were sent out to the UK competing with the rest of the Army and I was one of them. Only those who went through the courses then would recall what it was like and only the best and toughest survived. Even then, a mere pass was not guaranteed. It was quite normal to have a pass rate of 50 – 60 % in those days. It was widely speculated that “when you are a student at Brecon, even a dog barks on you” and to a certain degree it was true. Unlike the rest of the Infantry, the Gurkhas only get one chance to do a career course. If you fail then it is very rare for you to get a second chance. It was therefore quite natural to be nervous when you were sent to Brecon.

The only reassuring thing was that, to support the tactic courses, there was a Company of Gurkhas consisting of two platoons. Gurkha chefs prepared curry in the cookhouse and Gurkha drivers drove students and Directing Staff to and from the Sennybridge Training Area. Much of the surrounding area was much like my home except that it might be a little too cold and wet. Therefore, it was not a bad feeling when I first arrived in Dering Lines. At long last, the course came and went; I survived Brecon.

Never in my wildest dreams, did I ever think that I would come back to Dering Lines to command the Company of Gurkhas. I had been visiting Brecon quite often over the past years and was aware of the changes that had been taking place, it was only when I was posted here that I realised how drastically things had changed. There was new accommodation, messes, organisation and Pay-As-You-Dine. The biggest change was the number of courses that IBS runs, including tactics, skill at arms, live firing tactical training, snipers and machine gun training for all Officers and NCOs of the Army. What has not changed is the role of the Gurkhas. The Company has been providing training support for the courses since 1974. As mentioned above its strength has increased from two platoons to three. The numbers of families has also increased.

With the changing focus from the old style cold war scenario to the contemporary operating environment, the way that Gurkhas do their business has also changed. From what I can recall, wearing Soviet-style woollen hats, insignia and overcoats, the Gurkhas looked remarkably like the forces of Ghengis Khan travelling to and from Sennybridge Training Area almost everyday and acting as the enemy, dying hundreds of times in the cold miserable weather. That is no longer the case.

Although the principal role remains unchanged, in line current operations, the OPFOR (enemy) troops are required to be much more imaginative to train the Officers and NCOs of the contemporary Army. The uniform has changed to desert combats. Even this uniform does not meet the realistic contemporary training requirement. Although the routine is much like in the past, the men have certainly become much busier with the increased number of courses. It is quite normal

for them to be detailed from one commitment to the next, with no pause for breath.

Instead of standard practice, commanders at all levels are given much more freedom of action by the Directing Staff and they do it quite perfectly without jeopardising the overall plan as the majority have been on operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Not only do the Gurkhas play the role of enemy and demonstrate basic drills, they are employed in a variety of roles (e.g. acting as interpreters, CIVPOP, local landlords and tribal leaders) which certainly gives the training a much more realistic feel for all levels of students passing through Brecon. One of the biggest morale boosts for the men is the opportunity to go on an overseas exercise with the Platoon Commanders’ Division.

One thing that has not changed over the years is the attitude of the locals towards the Gurkhas. The Company often receives invitations to take part in ceremonial and other special functions from the Burma Star Association, The Royal British Legion and a variety of charitable organizations within the principality of Wales. Depending on our commitments, the Company endeavour to meet as many requests as possible. Many of the old generation still think that Dering Lines belongs to the Gurkhas as we have been here for such a long time. Public Relations within Wales remain an integral part of the Company’s core function.

The Company takes part in a number of very high profile PR events throughout the year and the public support, as always, has been remarkable. Despite heavy commitments, the Company organised the Gurkha Durbar 2009, a fourth biannual charity event for the Gurkha Welfare Trust (GWT) and the Army Benevolent Fund (ABF) on 31 August 2009 at the Infantry Battle School in Dering Lines.

OC GC (M) always takes a close interest in the planning. There was a variety of stalls and activities to entertain everyone, which included a Jungle Safari Lane, the experience of firing live rounds and dancing, performed by Gurkha children, and a mouth watering Gurkha Curry washed down with Cobra Beer.

Out of so many public events, the most important one is the annual Brecon Freedom Parade when the Gurkhas march through the town of Brecon. It is a special occasion with many people eagerly awaiting the day. This has been going on since 1985 when the Gurkhas were awarded the freedom of Brecon. I feel personally very proud having being able to participate in the parade in various capacities, as a SNCO in 1991, as a Platoon Commander in 1998 and now as the Officer Commanding the Company. With the increased number of families, it has certainly become much more colourful.

The 25th Brecon Freedom Parade was held on 6 September 2009. The Parade was followed by traditional dances by our children and the BG Band. The Mayor, Cllr Ieuan Willam, gave a short speech praising the Company’s efforts and highlighting the mutual support, cooperation and friendship between Gurkha Company (Mandalay) and the friendly people of Brecon. We are

grateful to the Director of Music of the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas and the Pipes and Drums of 1 RGR who were able to travel a long way to support both events. Without their support, it would simply have not been as successful as it was.

The focus remains the training support to all Divisions who are responsible for training the Officers and NCOs of the Infantry to meet the challenges of current operations. Gurkha Company (Mandalay) certainly plays its role within the overall concept. Some may be acting as OPFOR troops in Cellini village; others may be doing a live Battle Exercise at C Range, or manning the main gate of Dering Lines and some in their No 2 Dress supporting a charity event. In essence, they are all supporting the Infantry Battle School and the Army. One may argue that the jobs here are fairly routine. However, the course programmes are constantly changing in line with the Contemporary Operating Environment. At all levels, commanders in the Company are given the opportunity to act freely within this concept, bringing an extra dimension of leadership to the junior commanders. The operational

experience of the majority of company personnel has also greatly assisted in adding value to the courses.

Sport within GC (M) is rightly given a high priority, whenever possible, in the form of the Inter Platoon Championship. However, I have to admit that organising this kind of activity is proving much more difficult with our increased commitments. The Company also represent the Infantry Battle School in various sporting competitions. We were able to compete in the 5 Division Volleyball Championships and it was no surprise that the team were the winners. Subsequently the Company qualified for the Army Championship and at long last, after a hard fought battle against Gurkha Company (Sittang), eventually became Champions of the Army. Unlike in previous years, the Company was also able to participate in the Brigade of Gurkhas annual Nepal Cup competition. Although the end result was not what we had hoped for, it was still a huge achievement for a team made up of 'Burhos' to beat some major units. We will definitely do well next year. Jai Gurkha Company Mandalay.



The Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas

Staff List

Director of Music
Assistant Director of Music
Band Sergeant Major

Major R W Hopla BA(Hons) ARCM psm CAMUS
Captain Sewanta Pun BMus(Hons)
WO2 Rajkumar Tamang

Newsletter

Early April 2009 saw the Brigade Band slipping out of its smart Ceremonial uniforms for secondary role biennial Military Training. Conducted at Winterbourne Gunner by subject matter experts, the week-long programme involved sectional training on specialized equipment, treatment of casualties and in-theatre detection tuition. The final assessment - Exercise AYO GURKHALI - tested all of above, including a 'press briefing' to the media. As you can see from the accompanying photo, Brigade Band personnel left nothing to chance, taking things **very** seriously.

Later in the month, following the recording of our new and highly successful ethnic album 'Namaste', we undertook our annual Gurkha Music Festival at The Duke of York's Royal

Military School, Dover. The concert series, an original brainchild of a (then) young, spritely Major Neil Morgan, was celebrating its 10th Anniversary and over the decade has steadily grown into a very popular event. The final sell-out performance saw the former DOM Gurkha presented with a Brigade Band stand banner. Following a brief instructional conducting lesson from the current DOM Gurkha, Neil was invited to close the 2009 Festival to the strains of the Brigade March - Yo Nepali.

Following Nepalese New Year celebrations and the taking of pre-tour leave, mid-May saw the Brigade Band packing for its Germany roulement tour. It has to be reported however that the two month long trip did NOT get off to the smoothest of starts. Flying from UK, the brass quintet accompanied by





DOM opening the Gurkha Music Festival



The annual Bugle Majors convention...

a team of Traditional Dancers were to perform at the British Embassy, Warsaw. Unfortunately, whilst Band personnel arrived safely for the engagement, the main freight never quite made it! By chance, two dancers had their National Dress with them so whilst the quintet sang a selection of Nepalese Folk music, they danced for the VIP guests to the great appreciation of the Ambassador.

It is pleasing to write that, barring our Poland experience, the remainder of the Germany tour passed without incident. Often working alongside fellow musicians from other countries,

we undertook a wide variety of engagements taking us to Belgium, France, and Austria and across much of Germany. Highlights were performing at the Kaiserslautern NATO Music Festival, Berlin Armed Forces Day and Massed Bands to commemorate the 250th Anniversary of the Battle of Minden.

Following well-earned leave, we returned to work finding many new faces around barracks. During our Germany tour, 1st and 2nd Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles had gone through a rotation resulting in the 1st Battalion being our new hosts. To celebrate their return to UK, many receptions were organized



With Jools Holland



Cpl Kiran enjoying German beer...



The Band at Kaiserslautern

including a families open day where our popular Hill Boys played into the small hours. Our new friends have already done much to welcome us into Battalion life and we look forward to supporting them musically over the next three years.

We were particularly excited in September to be invited to support the Gurkha Welfare Trust for a Retreat Parade and Concert for the people of Aberdovey. The Brigade Band had not performed in North Wales for many years so to return to this wonderfully tranquil part of the country was a real pleasure.

The local people really took Brigade Band members to their hearts, with an open invitation to ride on the famous Tallylyn Railway. The historic steam-operated railway is operated by volunteer staff and runs for seven and a quarter miles through the beautiful and unchanging Fathew valley. It was a fantastic experience for us all.

The month of September ended supporting major events – the annual Gurkha Company Passing Out Parade and the Midlands Game Fair. Taking place in Catterick, the Passing Out



Smile for the birdie.....

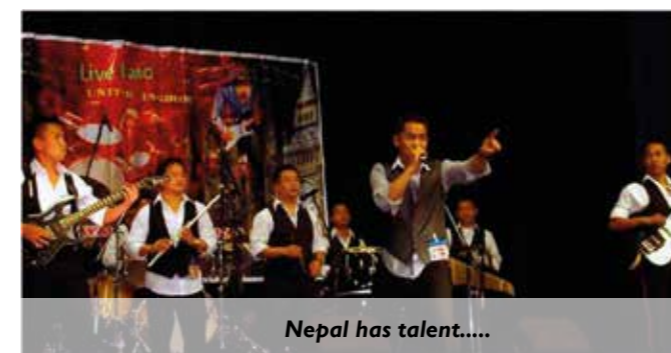


The Good, The Bad and Cpl Bhojendra!

Parade completes the intense training of Gurkha soldiers before they join their respective units. Following the parade, serving members of the Brigade join the young soldiers to celebrate the culmination of their hard work and to wish them well as they start their military careers. This was followed by the Midland Game Fair – an event we have undertaken for several years. As always, we were warmly received by the terrific audiences and even by some of the local wildlife!

once again defeated all opposition in its path to reach the final, where they were pitted against arch-rivals RMSM. In a keenly fought match, the Brigade Band eventually ran out winners and received the trophy from the Commandant. We have promised to return in 2010 for the competition, the highest of sporting awards in the CAMUS calendar.

We could not finish this article without going back to the month of May to make mention of our most recent crowning as CAMUS Football Champions. Returning to defend our title under new management (Cpl Santosh), the Brigade Band team



Nepal has talent....



We are the Champions...

The Rifles

The Rifles Forged in Battle – An Overview of the First Three Years

On 1 February 2007, The Rifles were formed out of a merger of The Devonshire and Dorset Light Infantry (DDLI) with The Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire Light Infantry (RGBWLI), The Light Infantry (LI) and The Royal Green Jackets (RGJ). The Royal Green Jackets and The Light Infantry each contributed two battalions to the new regiment and the DDLI and RGBWLI amalgamated into one battalion just prior to the creation of The Rifles. The regiment consists of five Regular battalions (1-5 RIFLES), two Territorial Army battalions (6&7 RIFLES), two Independent Territorial Army companies and over 100 affiliated Cadet Detachments. The regimental strength numbers about 460 Regular Officers, 220 Territorial Army Officers, 4,500 Regular Riflemen, 1,500 Territorial Army

Riflemen and in excess of 12,000 affiliated Cadets (Army Cadet Force and Combined Cadet Force).

The Regular battalions are stationed permanently in Chepstow (1 RIFLES) on the English/Welsh border; Ballykinler, Northern Ireland (2 RIFLES); Edinburgh (3 RIFLES); Bulford Camp, Hampshire (4 RIFLES) and Alanbrooke Barracks Paderborn, Germany (5 RIFLES).

The frequent three to six yearly battalion moves ('Arms plotting') to different theatres in different roles are a thing of the past and the battalions of The Rifles now remain in their permanent home base locations and deploy from there on operations.



1 Feb 2007 - OC, 2IC, CSM of C Coy 3 RIFLES on Formation Day in Helmand.



Summer 2008, CO 2 RIFLES Lt Col Rob Thomson at the opening of the Miteree/Devic Bridge Kosovo built by 70 Gurkha Field Support Squadron

The Territorial Army battalions are based on Wyvern Barracks, Exeter, Devon (6 RIFLES covering the South West of England) and Brock Barracks, Reading, Berkshire (7 RIFLES covering the Home Counties). There are also Independent Companies; D (Rifles) Company, Bishop Auckland, Durham and E (Rifles) Company, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, with Y (RIFLES) Platoon based in Doncaster.

The size of the regiment and its different operational roles and locations offer soldiers and officers a variety of career opportunities and places to serve, unmatched by any other infantry regiment in the British Army.

In just over three years since formation, all our battalions have deployed on operations at least once. 2 RIFLES have



Sept 2007, Lt Col Sanders, CO 4 RIFLES, hands over Basra Palace to Col Sadi, Iraqi Army



May 2009, a rifleman of B Company 5 RIFLES embarks in a helicopter in Iraq shortly before the battalion handed over responsibility for their TAOR to the Iraqi Army and US Forces.

deployed three times (Iraq, Kosovo, with 70 Gurkha Field Support Squadron, and Afghanistan) making the guideline gap between operational tours of two years something of a hollow promise. Now that the turbulence of forming the regiment and the infantry reorganisation has subsided we look forward to this routine becoming established!

Iraq – First In Last Out

In Iraq 2, 3 and 4 RIFLES were deployed in Basra during some of the heaviest fighting of the campaign, including covering the withdrawal from Basra Palace. 2 RIFLES and elements of 3 RIFLES were in Iraq at the time of formation in early 2007, so giving the new cap badge a true baptism of fire. They were relieved by 4 RIFLES in April 2007 who continued to defend Basra Palace until its successful handover to the Iraqi security forces in early September 2007. Following this, they were employed on operations in the Iran/Iraq border regions, which made a welcome change from the urban fighting of Basra.

Later, in May 2009, 5 RIFLES handed over the remaining UK ground force presence in Southern Iraq to Iraqi and US Forces, so giving them the distinction of being one of the first British infantry regiments to enter Iraq in 2003 (as 1 LI) and the last to leave on handover.

Afghanistan – Toe to Toe with the Taliban

In Afghanistan, elements of 3 RIFLES saw in the change of cap badge in Helmand Province on 1 February 2007. In October 2009, the regiment began a series of back to back tours by

RIFLES battalions beginning with 1 RIFLES. They deployed from October 2008 to April 2009 on a six month tour mentoring the Afghan Army in Helmand as part of 3 Commando Brigade. 1 RIFLES had formally joined the brigade following a test exercise in Belize in early 2008.

Since this tour they have enjoyed a well-deserved break from operations during which they have started to develop and refine the water-related and other skills needed in the Commando role. They now look forward to another stint in Afghanistan in early 2011



Summer 2007 - 4 RIFLES sniper, Basra

Battalion headquarters and elements of 4 RIFLES deployed during summer 2009 to provide reinforcement cover for the elections and to take part in Op PANTHER'S CLAW.

Concurrently 2 RIFLES, with superb support from a police mentoring team from F Company 2 RGR, were deployed in Sangin dealing with both the "Pac Man" Improvised Explosive Device challenge and the elections. As a result of not being part of the main effort, they enjoyed less manpower and resources than have been allocated subsequently to this testing and often deadly area of operations. Nevertheless, they made several small steps of progress to build a firm foundation for those who came later. Their commitment to the mission, courage and fortitude in these circumstances has been exemplary and has been matched by 3 RIFLES who, with A Company 4 RIFLES, took over from them. Building on 2 RIFLES' success, 3 RIFLES significantly expanded the area denied to the Taliban, opened more schools and increased the levels of legitimate commercial activity in the Sangin Bazaar and elsewhere. It is to be hoped that additional US troops arriving in the area will create force levels and resources which will be adequate for the task of securing this area from the Taliban permanently and at reduced cost to NATO troops and local civilians.

Territorial elements of the regiment have also played a significant part in our Iraq and Afghan deployments in the form of composite companies and many individual reinforcements. Their support has been of a very high standard and they have made their share of the sacrifice in full measure.

The high operational tempo has forged the identity of the new regiment and brought it close together through shared hardship and experience of battle. Hardly a patrol or convoy, in all the operational theatres, has returned to base without having



Summer 2009, the 2 RIFLES Battle Group Padre, Mark Geraint-Jones, after a service in Sangin.

had some sort of contact or fire fight, often at uncomfortably close quarters and employing every weapon in the armoury including hand-grenades. In one incident a Rifleman, with great coolness, returned a Taliban grenade to sender! Even when back in their bases they have been subject to intense indirect and direct fire attacks.

The Riflemen's steadiness under fire is testimony to the excellent basic and pre-operational training they receive before deployment. On recent operations, sniping has come to the fore as a skill of great utility and all battalions are placing emphasis on creating a large pool of riflemen trained in the art.

Since formation the exploits in battle of the regiment and individual Riflemen have been recognised with the award of two Conspicuous Gallantry Crosses, six Distinguished Service Orders, 13 Military Crosses, one George Medal and two Queen's Gallantry Medals.



20 August 2009, 2 RIFLES Javelin gunner in action on Election Day in Sangin, Photo: Eros Hoagland



Winter 2008/2009, 1 RIFLES on mentoring operations in Helmand

The regiment's operational experiences and achievements, together with the casualties we have suffered and shared, have contributed to a rapid building of the strong new regimental identity and a network of proud supporters. This has paid dividends both in recruiting and in creating a network of moral and practical support for the regiment in a time of considerable stress and need.

The wider regimental network extends to the family, friends and supporters of past and present riflemen and all those living in the areas where we are based, recruit and enjoy relationships by virtue of our antecedent regiments and their associations. The regiment is greatly indebted to this wider family and service charities for their moral, practical and financial support, which sadly remains so necessary in a time of continuous operations. Since formation (as at 1 June 2010), 53 Riflemen have been killed in action and 290 wounded, including over 40 with life-changing injuries.

To meet the future demands of this casualty toll, the Rifles Charities are running a fundraising campaign, "The Care for Casualties Appeal", to raise £1 million in 2010. To find out more about this initiative, and how to support it, please go to www.careforcasualties.org.uk

For the future the regiment as a whole will enjoy a 12 month gap before they return to go "toe to toe" with the Taliban again in early 2011 - a welcome respite for Regimental Headquarters from their duties of attending repatriations, and ensuring the best possible care for the next of kin of our

casualties in the immediate aftermath of their loss. In contrast, our long term involvement with the care of our wounded and bereaved next of kin never ceases. To manage this process we have established, with charitable funding, a Regimental Casualty Officer, at RHQ in Winchester, responsible for monitoring the care of our wounded and their rehabilitation. This post is only established and funded for an initial two year period whilst the Army puts in place its own recovery capability. It is almost certain that it will have to continue, because we will have an enduring need to keep a regimental eye on all aspects of long term care for our bereaved and wounded to ensure no one is failed by the system.

Finally, in spite of our operational commitments since formation, members of the regiment have achieved much in the fields of sport and adventure including walking unsupported to the South Pole, a challenge for the British super-flyweight boxing title and winning the Queen's Medal for shooting at Bisley, once in the Regular Army category and twice in the Territorial category.

RHQ Winchester 1 June 2010

The motto of The Rifles is "Swift and Bold".

For more information about The Rifles see www.the-rifles.co.uk or contact the Assistant Regimental Secretary Communications on 01962 8285528 or e-mail: aregsec2@the-rifles.com



On watch the evening before handover of Basra Palace

2nd/1st Battalion The Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment

Exercise PACIFIC KUKRI

Lt Darby writes:

At the time of Exercise PACIFIC KUKRI, 2/1 RNZIR was spread between Afghanistan, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, and Waiouru. As a result, the unit was unable to provide any elements for joint training with B Company, 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles (1 RGR) who participated in a six-week-long exercise conducted in-and-around Tekapo early in 2009. The interaction and support from 2/1 RNZIR to the exercise consisted of two officers, each spending a week or so with the Gurkhas' Company Group.

As 2IC Support Company at the time, I was more than happy to spend a week observing the Gurkhas' training, with the original focus of my visit to observe their employment

of support weaponry. Instead, though, on arrival in Tekapo I was attached to the training team, called a Permanent Range Team (PRT). I was then given the opportunity to run one of the platoon training stands as a DS/EXCON – which, after trying to get my head around the British radio net system, was very rewarding and interesting, especially given the Gurkhas recent operational experience in Afghanistan. Meal times were especially good; with the Gurkha cooks providing regular and very tasty Nepalese curries (just don't ask what the furry thing you're eating is!). In my short time spent with them, I was able to observe live platoon night ambushes with mortar support; a platoon live advance supported by mortars, DFSW, and snipers; and along with the rest of the Battalion's available officers and



A Gurkha with a C9 provides overwatch.



A sniper pair equipped with their shiny new .338, supports a Platoon advance.

warrant officers observed the final Gurkha Company live attack. By their nature, the Gurkhas' were very hospitable, and their soldiers seemed intent on giving me as many cups of tea as humanly possible. Additionally, I was also fortunate enough to enjoy a one-man Rally of New Zealand in the Tekapo training area, run by the OC PRT, Capt Ben Marshall. This had predictable results and led to Rhodes Rentals significantly increasing their insurance premiums.

Overall, working with the Gurkhas' was a very rewarding experience which provided many useful lessons with regard to both training and operations. Hopefully in the future, larger elements of 2/1 will have the opportunity to once again work alongside and amongst our Allied unit, 1 RGR.

Capt Wylie writes:

After a chance conversation with the OC of B Company 1 RGR, Maj Rae, on his way through Burnham I discovered the Gurkhas did not have their Company 2IC working with them. Seeing an opportunity and a chance to escape minute writing and giving the OCS class of 2008 extra duty, I joined the Gurkhas for their final Exercise.

The tactical exercise was part of build-up training for deployment to Afghanistan in 2010. 1 RGR had deployed in 2007 to Southern Afghanistan and over 80% of the soldiers were veterans of that tour. Their experiences were invaluable, in particular their experiences with IEDs.

The tactical exercise consisted of a two-day insertion march in goat country to secure Round-Hill Ski Field. The ski field simulated an Afghan town and was already up and running with role players and local workers by the time the Company arrived. A three-day patrol programme was then initiated, where there was a mix of conventional and SASO tasks. The Gurkhas' ability to transition through these phases was testament to their experience. Working as the patrol master I was able to keep very good situational awareness and confuse the hell out of the Gurkhas with my accent and use of NZ 'RATEL'. The term 'Sunray' was mistaken for a pagan god and I got more than a few odd looks from the Gurkha signallers.

The exercise escalated with the use of IEDs. Unlike my notional experience of IEDs, I was very surprised to see a Toyota Hiace van blown to pieces by PE4 as a convoy drove past. Only later did I find out that this was a Michael Caine situation: "He was only supposed to blow the bloody doors off". The use of IEDs and of proxy VBIEDs was excellent training and helped build a greater awareness of this aspect of modern conflicts.

The Company then transitioned into more conventional tasks. We attacked and cleared Tekapo camp after a very cold and long night insertion march to get into the area. The attack culminated in the area being mortared and the Company being forced to withdraw to the Battalion assembly area. A period of Battleprep was then instigated for a live attack complete with support assets on the remnants of the enemy.

The final attack included yet another long, cold night insertion march to an assembly area where live ammo was issued tactically. The attack itself commenced with mortars onto the area and precision sniper fire onto identified targets. The mortars lifted only after the Forward Line of Own Troops, was almost on the first position. This was a great experience but, following the attack, the 2/1 mortar men highlighted how a mistake in the charge bags could have resulted in a bloody mess. The enemy position was laid out over a 2 km area and was in line with what they have seen in Afghanistan. The attack culminated at Feature Hotel where a weapons gallery was available for the observers and members of 2/1 to get hands on with British weapons including the .338 sniper rifle.

Personally it was a great experience. I saw an OC with Cam Cream on for the first time in a while and was able to slot into

an organisation that is truly unique. Two things really struck me from talking with the Gurkhas. Firstly, the CO of IRGR spoke of how they had not been in a combat situation for many years and had a lot of trepidation when they deployed to Afghan in 2007. He said this disappeared after 24 hours in theatre and the soldiers acquitted themselves well. The second was the realisation that the soldiers of 2/1 can and do foot it with the best of other nations. It was a very satisfying experience and I was humbled by the Gurkha hospitality and generosity. Working alongside and as part of other organisations and nations is the reality of being in the New Zealand Army. These opportunities are a great way to develop professionally in a small Army and country. Hopefully this will not be the last we see of the Gurkhas and will lead to future training and possibly operational opportunities with a much larger NZ contribution.

ANZAC Week 20 – 25 April 2009

For ANZAC Day this year A Company 2/1 RNZIR was split, with each platoon being tasked in and around the Canterbury region. The OC, Lt Thompson and all of I Platoon headed off to Fairlie for a combined service with B Company 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles. I Platoon conducted the cenotaph guard and firing party. This went down well with the locals, and was made even more special with Lady Hillary being in attendance, as she was there to visit the Gurkhas' training in Tekapo.

Our other two platoons conducted their rehearsals in camp during the week and attended the service in Burnham.

ANZAC day started off with an early rise, then the introduction to rum and coffee in Taiping Barracks to our younger soldiers that had just joined the company. Once the morning service was completed 2 Platoon and 3 Platoon headed off to Methven and Rannerdale War Veterans Homes respectively. This gave the opportunity for our young soldiers to share a few stories with our veterans, as well as to have a couple of beers, before returning back to Burnham.



OCA, Lady Hillary and Maj Fraser Rea, OC B Company, 1 RGR



Curator's Report on The Gurkha Museum - 2009

In the past year we have experienced an increase in visitor numbers to the Gurkha Museum and hope that our final total will better that of last year which was our best on record. No doubt, the Joanna Lumley publicity for the Gurkhas in the spring and summer contributed to the overall visitor number increase. The Trading Company has achieved a remarkable and positive level of trade since the beginning of the year, despite the doom and gloom present in the national economy. We look forward to an active trading period in the run up to Christmas 2009. Again, I must add my thanks to the numerous Volunteers and Gurkha Staff who have manned the Museum Shop and Mobile Shops over the summer period. A great deal of hard work has been achieved in projecting the Museum's message to the public.

This year we recruited Laxmi Gurung as a Museum Attendant and Shop Assistant. We sadly bade farewell to two of our longstanding Museum members, Brigadier Christopher Bullock, who stood down as Chairman of Trustees after six years (having previously been the Curator) and Lieutenant Colonel Tony Hellard, the Accountant who retired at the end of September after 9½ years loyal service to the Museum. The post of Chairman has now been assumed by Colonel Richard Cawthorne (ex GTR) and the Accountant has been replaced by Lieutenant Colonel Miles Lemon (ex RA/RAPC/AGC).

The McDonald Gallery has provided the venue for our many major functions, the temporary summer exhibition and a number of highly successful lectures. The summer temporary exhibition was staged from 8 August - 6 September 2009 (being favourably reported in the Times); the exhibition was titled 170 Years of Conflict in Afghanistan. The exhibition was opened by Field Marshal Lord Bramall and attracted a wide range of public interest – a new record visitor attendance for a temporary exhibition. The commercial use of the Gallery has ensured a healthy return of income for 2009 and enables members of the public to see our collection of paintings, medals and accoutrements on display in the Medal room as well as the Gallery.

Winchester Military Museums (WMM) again have worked together to ensure co-ordination and mutual benefit to the five Winchester Military Museums. The winter series of lectures (staged each year October – March) appeals to a growing audience from within a 25 mile radius of Winchester. We continue to work closely with the Hampshire Education Authority for our School Educational Programme with schools from the Local Education Authority Area. There is much interest in Nepalese cultural matters and the museum has made great strides to provide schools with the necessary information. Hopefully the Signage Project which has been running for

over three years will be completed in the New Year 2010 and enhance all WMM's Museum Access.

The Brigade of Gurkhas Visitor Centre, Shorncliffe continues to attract increasing numbers of visitors and local schools to view their exhibits. The Visitor Centre staged an exhibition on the "The Malayan Emergency 1948-1960" from November 2008 – April 2009. The temporary exhibition "170 Years of Conflict in Afghanistan" is currently being staged in the Visitor Centre until the end of February 2010. The Gurkha Staff at the Visitor Centre have been actively promoting school visits as well as tours by Ex-Service Associations in the region.

This year, the Friends have been most generous with funding to enable new acquisitions of a 5th Royal Gurkha Rifles (Frontier Force) officer's crossbelt silver hallmarked plate dated 1889 and a 7th Gurkha Rifles officer's Wolseley pattern helmet. A Brunswick pattern rifle from the Honourable East India Company 1849 has been added to the weapon collection. There was also a major donation of 8th Gurkha Rifles officer uniforms and a Richard Simkin (1840 -1926) painting of 8th Gurkha officer dress by Mr J R M Kennedy. The museum has completed two new projects; the installation of the interactive Touch Screen that explains the campaign medals won by Gurkhas since 1815 to the present day. The donation for this undertaking was provided by a most generous benefactor and Friend of the Museum, Judge Yoav Byron (Kattan). The other successful project involved the refurbishment of the Museum entrance and reception area. New panels were designed and incorporated with a plasma screen that projects images of Gurkha service from 1815 to the present day. The work area for the staff in reception was modernised and new office storage incorporated. The funding for this project was generously granted by The Foyle Foundation for which the Museum is most grateful.

Looking ahead, I would like to remind our readers of some dates for your 2010 diaries: Gurkha Museum Special Evening Film/Lecture on Thursday 18 March 2010 by a panel of speakers including Richard Holmes, General Richard Sherriff and Philip Geddes, titled "The Devil's Wind"; the Gurkha Brigade Lecture and Curry Lunch on Friday 16 April 2010, titled "The Assault on Kanchenjunga 1955 - The World's Third Highest Mountain" by Lieutenant Colonel Tony Streater OBE; and the Friends Lecture and Curry Lunch on "Pakistan's Regional Role Today with Afghanistan and India Post Mumbai" by Dr Humayun Khan (former Foreign Secretary, Pakistan) on Friday 11 June 2010. The Summer Exhibition for 2010 will be titled "Faith, Food and Fashion in Nepal" and will run from 7 August – 5 September 2010. The Annual Theme Lecture and Curry Lunch by Major Gordon Corrigan titled "Slaughter with a Smile" (his new book)



- will be presented on 8 October 2010. Seating capacity for lectures is limited, so early booking is recommended.

The next project to be undertaken at the Museum for 2010 will be the updating of the display of the contemporary Brigade of Gurkhas on the first floor. Work has also begun to produce an interactive and comprehensive display of British gallantry awards, British and Nepalese decorations and Gurkha Regimental Badges and Accoutrements. The latter project will take two years to complete.

We look forward to meeting our readers during the next twelve months and hope that you will be able to come and view the Museum's newly completed projects and visit the temporary exhibition during 2010.

Finally, for those who would like to become a Friend of the Gurkha Museum (the cost of four pints of beer), you can join by visiting the Museum website www.thegurkhamuseum.co.uk or phone the Museum Office for an application form on 01962 842832.



The Gurkha Welfare Trust

The Gurkha Welfare Trust 5 November 1969 to 5 November 2009

(A brief given by the Trust's Director, Colonel W F Shuttlewood, to the Gurkha Brigade Association AGM on 5 November 2009 at the Army & Navy Club, London)

Introduction

The Trust celebrates its 40th birthday to-day. As a consequence I would like briefly: to review its achievements over the past 40 years, to consider its current work and to provide some pointers for the future.

Poverty and distress amongst ex-Gurkhas in Nepal was nothing new in Nepal in the 1950s and 60s, to the increasing frustration of the Regiments of the Brigade who were then in the vanguard of providing welfare support. But it was the Brigade's substantial Redundancy Programme of the late 1960s, a product of the then Government's Defence Review, that focused public attention on the plight of those Gurkhas whose service had been cut short by the withdrawal from east of Suez. The response was the establishment of the Trust as an overarching organisation to provide welfare to ex-Gurkhas and their families. The Appeal that accompanied its formation put in place some important concepts that are as relevant to the Trust today as they were 40 years ago:

- First, it brought to the public's attention the extra ordinary martial qualities of the Gurkha soldier, both in service and in retirement. It highlighted the extraordinary loyalty and dignity of the Gurkha, his dedication to this country and the British Crown, all qualities that were typified by the picture of Rambahadur Limbu VC on the front cover of the Appeal's booklet.
- Second, in graphic detail it drew the public's attention the conditions of very real poverty and distress amongst ex-servicemen in Nepal, a poverty that was unimaginable in this country. Specifically, it described the challenges of every day living, the struggle for existence, the complete absence of any form of medical help, the continuous threat of natural and other disaster, and the lack of any form of help beyond the individual and his immediate community.
- Third, it placed in the minds of the British people the concept of a Debt of Gratitude as stated in the closing page of the brochure: in some way we, the British public, had let the Gurkha down - and we were beholden to provide remedy.

We all now know the remarkable response to the initial Appeal: the overwhelming wave of public affection and generosity in this country and beyond that, I sense, took the founding fathers and others by surprise; and above all, the resources to enable the Trust to address the purpose for which it was established: the relief of poverty and distress amongst the ex-service community in Nepal.

1969 to 2009

The intervening years have been marked by a number of key developments:

- The establishment of the Trust's role and remit, as defined by its objects – and more importantly its Mission Statement - that bring together the three key ingredients that are the hallmarks of the Trust's work: poverty/distress, ex-servicemen of the Brigade and their dependants, and Nepal.
- The establishment of an infrastructure in Nepal to enable the delivery of welfare support, initially in Dharan and latterly in Pokhara. The Trust's network of Area Welfare Centres and patrol bases are as important today as they were in the early 70s. They are far more than a front line for the delivery of welfare support: as centres of excellence they also provide a focus for hill communities and the constant reassurance that the Trust is at hand to provide support as necessary.
- An enduring, if sometimes difficult, partnership with the Ministry of Defence, based on the premise that the Trust would raise funds to provide welfare; Government/MOD would pay for the means of delivery.
- In 1989, the establishment of the Gurkha Welfare Fund, with the Prince of Wales as its Patron, to bring together an extraordinary coalition of like-minded organisations: the Gurkha Welfare Appeal (Canada), the Gurkha Welfare Trust Foundation (USA) (led by the remarkable Rosa and Elice McDonald), and of course the Kadoorie Charitable Foundation.
- A partnership with ODA, subsequently DfID, to provide water to Gurkha communities in the hills.

- f. The development of a number of key welfare programmes:
- The provision of a welfare pension to provide ex-Servicemen and their widows in extreme poverty and distress with the surety of a regular income, a reasonable standard of living, and a dignified and secure old age.
 - The provision of primary and secondary medical support, the former based on the AWCs, the latter on Nepal's increasingly effective medical infrastructure.
 - A student grant scheme aimed at the children of ex-Servicemen.
 - A school construction programme.
- g. The mobilisation of the British public in support of the Trust and its objects.

The Trust in 2009

Today, the Trust has evolved into a multi-million pound business – a far cry from its circumstances in 1969. It employs over 290 personnel in Nepal, and now 8 in this country in the Salisbury office. It enjoys the support of over 70,000 dedicated, passionate and, when necessary, vociferous supporters drawn from across society. It is led by a powerful Board of Trustees representing all key skills needed for the proper development and execution of Trust strategy.

Throughout this period of change and development the Trust has remained faithful to its enduring mission: the relief of poverty and distress. This year the Trust expects to spend £12M, the majority in support of welfare pensions, but substantial sums will also be spent in support of our medical and water programmes – and also on infrastructure and administration. The bottom line is the requirement for £33K each day to support our welfare programmes. This remains a constant challenge for the Trust's fundraising activities.

In support of this expenditure the Trust has budgeted for an income of almost £10M in the current year, a daily income of £26K and a deficit of £2M against expenditure. These are budget figures and should not cause undue or immediate alarm, but they provide an indication of the current scale of Trust activities and the finances which underpin them.

This budget deficit is partly offset by the Trust's substantial investments, currently standing at £39M, but it serves a singular and important purpose: it justifies the need to raise further funds.

But the process of change continues and you will all be aware of Miss Lumley and her Gurkha Justice Campaign. It is not the Trust's place to make a judgement on the rights and wrongs of the issue or the potential consequences, intended and unintended. It is, however, our place to react to a new and emerging need and that is what the Trust intends to do. In doing so we need to take into account the following major issues:

a. The Trust's Responsibilities.

- (1) First, our Objects make it clear that we have a commitment to the welfare of all ex-Gurkhas, wherever they might be. You will also know that we exercise our responsibilities in UK via the ABF and the payment of an annual grant.

(2) This has worked well but it will simply not endure the additional workload anticipated under the revised settlement arrangements. We judge that a higher level of commitment and engagement is required beyond that provided under the current arrangements.

- b. **The Imperative of Nepal.** Second, Trustees are rightly adamant that we should retain our focus on Nepal. There is a different order of dependency on our support, in all its forms, and we can ill-afford to ignore the 10,000 or so welfare pensioners who depend on us entirely for their daily needs.
- c. **Welfare in UK and the Service Charities.** Third, it is clear to us that the current provision of welfare support in this country, via the Service charities, works extremely well. It is not therefore the Trust's intention to reinvent the wheel but to work within and augment where necessary the work of the existing Service charities.
- d. **The Expectation of Trust Supporters.** Fourth, our supporters have made it abundantly clear that they expect us to engage in UK. It is essential we meet that expectation otherwise their support will go elsewhere, to the detriment of our activities in Nepal. I concede that some supporters have jumped ship, either in protest at what Miss Lumley has achieved or at the Trust's response. But the overwhelming majority have supported the Trust's intent to engage in UK.
- e. **The Serving Brigade.** Fifth, we also judge it is essential to retain our links with the serving Brigade, almost all of whom settle in this country on retirement. We are their charity and should remain so. Over and above the One Day's Pay Scheme, we estimate the support of the serving Brigade generates £1M each year in a wide variety of ways.
- f. **The Trust as Lead Charity.** Finally, we consider it essential that the Trust retains its position as lead charity for the provision of Gurkha welfare. There is a danger of imitation and we note the establishment of a plethora of alternative "Gurkha" charities that, if left unchecked, would severely damage our ability to raise funds.

Collectively these factors give us a circle to square: how do we engage in UK whilst preserving a focus on Nepal? The MOD's Gurkha Settlement Project has provided the key. Engagement alongside Government in general, and MOD in particular, would not only reflect our arrangements in Nepal, it would also provide the Trust with the platform and profile in UK it would need if it was to: retain the lead charity status, keep the faith with our supporters, secure the patronage of the serving Brigade. Furthermore, providing we leave the delivery of welfare support to the existing Service charities, with luck and sensible planning, we would not be distracted from maintaining a focus on Nepal.

We are therefore in the process of engaging with MOD in support of the Gurkha Settlement Project. A joint Gurkha Welfare Centre has been established at Salisbury with Aldershot retained in the short term as a Forward Operating Base. Its tasks are:

- To act as a focus for all ex-Gurkhas in the United Kingdom who seek welfare support – and to provide a ready and immediate source of advice and counsel.
- To work with Government, led by the Ministry of Defence, to ensure individuals seeking welfare support are able to claim their statutory entitlements.
- To complement and support the existing Service charities in the delivery of welfare support and when necessary to coordinate their work.
- To provide an outreach facility to Gurkha communities and local government agencies involved in the provision of welfare and other support to ex-Gurkhas.

It is our intention that this response will be appropriate and satisfy our supporters that we honour our commitments, but I stress that our engagement stops well short of the delivery of aid to those in need.

And then there is Joanna. I am pleased to report she has declared her support for the Trust and offered to lead a programme of fundraising activities. We intend to take full advantage of this over the next 12 months by running a series of appeals in various forms, all with Miss Lumley at their centre.

The Future

There are challenges ahead. I mention six of them:

a. The Role of the Trust.

(1) The Trust supporter does not differentiate between the serving and retired Gurkha; he/she does not want to understand the differences between those who in retirement receive a service pension, and those who do not – after all a Gurkha is a Gurkha. His role and conduct impact on the Trust and there is no doubt we have benefited favourably from publicity generated by the Gurkha Justice Campaign and the operational successes of the serving Brigade.

(2) But the challenge the Trust faces is this: to many of our supporters the job has been done and, once the surge of settlement is passed, we will have no role. We will therefore have a hard time persuading them that our real work remains in Nepal – and that their support is still required. Our need to engage robustly in UK underscores our efforts to keep the Trust in the public eye.

(3) We must also guard against a change of perception of the Gurkha, from loyal valiant soldier in service to greedy complainer in retirement. The continuous legal challenges

may secure a short term boost to Trust income, but eventually they will cause irreparable damage to the image of the Gurkha that underpins all our fundraising activities.

b. **The Decline of the WP Population.** The WP population is in decline and with an average age of 84 years current forecasts are that in 40 years or so there will be none left. It is too early to begin to talk about the long-term future of the Trust but as our commitments in Nepal decline so we will have to be ready to respond to changing needs as Nepal evolves. Our residential home project is part of this process.

c. **Nepal.** We have been fortunate to remain unaffected by the political, social and economic turmoil in Nepal, largely because of excellent staff, an intolerance of corruption and an active policy of non-engagement/non-involvement in the politics of the country. This paid dividends during the Maoist insurgency but there are signs that the Nepalese government is beginning to take a more active interest in Trust affairs, currently through the BGWCC. Where previously projects would be agreed without question, increasingly proposals are being challenged. We need to guard against too much interference if we are to maintain our position of absolute neutrality.

d. **The Trust Supporter.** Our supporters too are in decline, or more appropriately they are dying. These are the bedrock of our support and somehow we need to be able to persuade the younger generation that we need their support as well. There are signs we are beginning to make inroads and activities such as TRAILWALKER play a key role in this process.

e. **The Serving Brigade.** Finally there is the serving Brigade. Their continued support is essential. We will need to work hard to keep their support and by engagement in UK we hope to be able to begin that process.

f. **Links with Government.** Finally we must guard against developing too great a dependency on Government support for our activities. Eighteen per cent of our income comes from Government and I judge, in current economic times, this is not healthy for the Trust.

Conclusion

I sense the Trust has arrived at a half way point in its evolutionary cycle. As a patient it is well resourced, well led and well supported. But the process of evolution will continue: new challenges, new needs, and new demands. We have much to look forward to and I remind you that: life begins at forty.....

The Gurkha Brigade Association

GBA Calendar of Events – 2011

UNIT	DATE	LOCATION	EVENT	REMARKS
GBA	14 Mar	London	Memorial Gates Ceremony	
	12 May	Gurkha Museum	Briefing by Col BG	
	11 Jun	RMAS	GBA Memorial Service and Reunion	
	1 Jul	Shorncliffe	Nepal Cup Final & All Ranks Reunion	
	27 Sep	National Memorial Arboretum	Inauguration of Gurkha Memorial	TBC
	4 Oct	Army & Navy Club	GBA Trustees Meeting	
	10 Nov	London	Field of Remembrance	
	10 Nov	London	Gurkha Statue Ceremony	
	10 Nov	Army & Navy Club	GBA Committee Annual General Meeting	
	10 Nov	Army & Navy Club	GBA Annual Dinner	
	13 Nov	Cenotaph	Remembrance Sunday	
The Sirmoor Club	14 Apr	SG House, London	2 GR Trust & SRA (SC) Committee Meeting	
	21 May 11 Sep	Army & Navy Club Farnborough	AGM & Reunion Luncheon Sirmoor Sathis Delhi Day Reunion	
6 GR	15 Apr	Cavalry & Guards Club	Cuttack Legion Luncheon Club	
	30 Apr	Museum	Officers & Ladies Curry Lunch	
	16 Sep	Farnborough	AGM & Reunion	
7 GR	14 May	Farnborough	All Ranks Reunion	
	10 Sep	Gurkha Museum	Reunion	
10 GR	30 Apr	Ropley Community Centre	Reunion	
RGR	7 May	Twickenham	Reunion	
QGE	18 Jun	Minley	Families Lunch & Reunion	
	24 Sep	Maidstone	AGM & Regimental Birthday Celebrations	
QG Sigs	24 Sep	Bramcote	AGM & Reunion	
QOGLR	6 May	Gale Bks, Aldershot	AGM	
	9 Jul		Reunion	
	14 Oct		Dinner	
Other Reunions	02 May	9 Apr	9 GR Informal Reunion	
	04 Jul	13 May	4 GR Memorial Service & Informal Reunion	

UNIT	DATE	LOCATION	EVENT	REMARKS
Gurkha Museum	31 Mar		Special Evening Lecture – The Falklands War	
	15 Apr		Gurkha Brigade Lecture & Curry Lunch – Kut 1916	
	10 Jun		Friends Lecture & Curry Lunch – The Pakistan Army	
	6 Aug - 4 Sep		Summer Exhibition – ‘The Scottish Connection – Pipes, Tartans, Kukris & Courage’	
	7 Oct		Theme Lecture and Curry Lunch - Training Local Lashkars: NW Frontier & Afghanistan	
Brit/Nepal Society	23 Feb	London	Annual Nepali Supper	
	1 Dec	Nepal Embassy	AGM	
HQBG	29 Jun – 1 Jul	Shorncliffe	Brigade Conference	
Nepali New Year/ Hindu Religious Festivals	4 Aug 11		Nag Panchami	
	13 Aug 11		Rhikhi Tarpan, Rakshya Bandhan	
	21 Aug 11		Krishna Janmastami	
	27 Sep 11		Jamare Aunsi	
	3 Oct 11		Phulpati	
	4 Oct 11		Kalaratri	
	5 Oct 11		Mar	
	6 Oct 11		Tika	
	26 Oct 11		Laxmi Puja	
	27 Oct 11		Gobardhan Puja	
	28 Oct 11		Bhai Tika	
	15 Jan 12		Maghe Sankranti	
	28 Jan 12		Saraswati Puja	
	20 Feb 12		Shivarati	
	1 Mar 12		Holi (Chir lina jane)	
	7 Mar 12		Holi (Rang Khelne)	
	31 Mar 12		Ram Nawami	
13 Apr 12		Nepal New Year's Day		
Buddhist Religious Festivals	17 May 11		Buddha Jayanti the combined day of Buddha's Birth, enlightenment and Maha Parinirvana	
	2 Jul 11		Guru Padma Sambhava Day	
	3 Jul 11		Choekhor Duechen (Dharmachakra Day)	
	26 Jul 11		Buddha's First Sermon Day	
	9 Nov 11		Labhab Duechen (Anniversary day of descent of Lord Buddha from the Tusita heaven to human realm)	
22 Feb 12		Losar (New Year)		

2009 Chiang Mai Gurkha Masters Golf Classic 'A convivial interlude of golf & social soirées in Northern Siam'

By Golf Correspondent – Gupta MacHaggis

Last April's days had just begun, when Andy sent off salvo one. 'Twas all about some golf event – Andy's "Chiang Mai Tournament".

With our 'shyabashes' all unfurled, salvo two went round the world.

It clashed with Europe & US tour, so big shot 'take-up' – very poor.

Undaunted was our Andy Watt. With dram, in hand, he had a thought....

"Damn the big-time 'Pro' usurpers – my Tourney will be, just for Gurkhas."

Andy Watt, a 10 GR stalwart, retired to the paddy fields of Chiang Mai some years ago and found himself in the midst of a plethora of international standard golf courses. He couldn't resist the challenge, so took up the Royal & Ancient game – albeit only a year ago, aged 65. A rather late start, one might say, for a Scottish 'son of Lochaber'?

Not knowing he played golf, nor knew anything about it, several of us were surprised to receive a missive, saying he intended to run a golf tournament and would there be any interest? It was obvious, from the numerous annexes, that Andy had already got the plan well 'in hand' and had arranged some good deals. With our support, he sent his missive to the Gurkha family. He was surprised to receive so many enthusiastic replies – even from the UK and Spain. His only major sponsorship was from Aphno Paisa – the famous Nepal trading bank!

In the end, despite a few cancellations, due to the financial crisis and the devaluation of UK's 'Peso', 47 turned up for this "Golfing Reunion". Of those, 30 were players from 2/6/7/10 GR and QGE. The latter helped lift the IQ average. Family supporters made up the balance. They came from afar – including, UK/EU/Australia/Korea/China/HK/Nepal/India/Thailand/Malaysia and Singapore.

Troops started arriving at the Amari Rincome Hotel (a Thai chain) on Wednesday 14 January, but all were on parade for the tournament director's briefing, on Friday evening. This included free drinks and small eats, until late – compliments of the hotel. Another Andy Watt 'bando'.

Now to golf – the 'raison d'être'

Saturday 17 January was a 'Texas Scramble', whatever that is? Having "googled", as instructed, and found lots of other 'scrambles', I assumed they were all much the same. Stated it was a fast game. This "Fast game" took us all about 5.75 hours – repeat: 5.75 hours! Famous golf writers of The Times, like the late Henry Longhurst, or Peter Ryde, would be turning in

their graves at such golfing sloth, despite the pleasant and oft beautiful layout of Royal Chiang Mai.

Winners: 6 GR's 'Bunny' Gray team. 'Bunny' later disqualified himself for some small misdemeanour of his, behind a tree – under rule 34 B (ii), or summat? So, the prize went to Johnnie Birt, 7 GR and his team of Heinz varieties! Were players of all sports as honest as golfers still, thankfully, seem to be it would be a world blessing.

Sunday 18 January was 'normal' golf with a handicap Stapleford at the Green Valley Golf Club – another good, well-kept paddock, with its ubiquitous flash clubhouse, pools and spas. The golf improved and several were shooting pars and the odd birdie. During much of the round, a vast, ugly, high-rise shell of unfurnished flats overlooked us. These, we were informed, had no entrance and when the owner (an Army general) was asked by the Golf Club how flat owners would gain access to the block, the General said, "Via the golf course". He was told where to 'get to', in the Thai vernacular. The club owner was, obviously, a far more senior general!

Winners: Men – David Pettigrew, 6 GR, with whom I played. A very steady, useful 10-handicap partner to have when there's good money at stake. He won comfortably with 38 points, showing that our standard was not quite up to Asian tour level!

Ladies: Pushpa Rai, 10 GR – just beat Christine Lees (w/o late Col Colin, 7 & 10 GR.)

Pushpa took time off from the Nepal "Senior Memsahib's Circuit", to make it to Chiang Mai. She hasn't changed much, since she was everyone's 'pin-up' in the QARANCs, when lucky Narendra won her heart, for himself and 10 GR. He was also there, as a golfing 'chaperon'!

Longest Drive: Jeremy Lees, 7/10 GR son. Spent several years as a Captain, helicopter pilot in the Army Air Corps, before becoming a teacher. He now owns and runs a successful school on the island of Koh Samui, where Johnnie Birt is very much a senior 'Laird'! Jeremy was, by far, the most beautiful golf player on parade, I'd say.

Shortest Drive: Anonymous – Nearest Pin: Heaven only knows? **Best Dressed:** MacHaggis in B of G tartan Plus-4s, 1930's style – 'priceless'!

After another good lunch, sponsored by "Aphno Paisa", prizes were graciously presented by Vee Green (w/o Brig Duncan Green CBE MC, late 10 GR). In case not known, the 10 GR Greens (a non-political party) are parents of Andy's

great wife, Pippa, who did a lot of 'silent' work behind the scenes – proving, yet again, the old axiom that, behind every good officer, there is always a good lady.

There was never time to stand around, as joyous soirées had been organised. On Saturday, it was at the very popular, tourist-packed, "River-side" restaurant; all on the best tables. The Tournament Piper smuggled in his 'pigskin piano' and used it later. As Andy put it: "I'll never forget the look of stunned mullets on the faces of the manager, staff, locals & tourists, when we were all piped out of the restaurant."

After the Tourney, on Sunday night, we were all bussed to "Watt Ghar" for what had been billed as a BBQ. We were sure the drivers had got the wrong place, for the vast garden was decked out with tables and chairs, all beautifully dressed, like those for a wedding reception. This was yet another 'bando' with the Amari Hotel's Dutch manager (ex-Kathmandu, Summit Hotel GM and Gurkha fan), who was there to oversee all details and the food. Not a BBQ for Oz 'thongs'! In the candle lit, semi-dark setting, the piper gave it a 'Thailand Tattoo' feel.

Andy invited a local friend along - Major Roy Hudson (90) who served with IA Engineers and RE, post war. During the retreat from Burma, in WW2, it was he who was ordered, whilst defending his position with 3 GR, to push the button and blow up the bridge over the River Sittang – with the catastrophic loss of hundreds of lives. I sat at his table, already commandeered by the younger Gurkha Engineers. What a fine lot of interesting, astute chaps they were too. I've always liked and admired Engineers – a bit like Infantry-wallahs, with more brain cells!

Golfing in Thailand is not like we know it in most countries. There are few courses where you can become a member and where members run the club. In Thailand, some 'fat cat' builds it, owns and runs it and charges big bucks to play – sometimes

very big – like £70, on Koh Samui, and that's before the obligatory (by law) caddie & tip (£8). It's no wonder Jeremy Lees (above) rarely plays and has a Handicap of 9, when he should be a Scratch, 1, 2 or 3 player. At St Andrews University, he blasted the 'Old Course' in one under par – off the back tees too! It's a pity that his beautiful swing and superb ball striking are going to waste.

Andy may be no Bobby Jones, or Ben Hogan, but when it comes to organization and planning, his 10 GR/MOD CV has put him into the Premier League. The arrangements for the event were almost faultless – from the hotel, golf courses, soirées, transportation and other 'afters'. His 'bandobast' outshone the quality of the golf (certainly mine), and, for that, we are all most grateful and glad we attended the Chiang Mai Gurkha Masters Golf Classic.

Due to some spare 'bakshees' from Aphno Paisa, we were able to send £317 to the Gurkha Welfare Trust.

Finally there is an INTREP (graded C3) that should be included, for those who need to know. It was noted in a nearby up-market massage parlour that, when explaining the reason for one's Chiang Mai visit, the Chief 'Mamasan' said, "Oh, you must be a friend of Kun Andy?" As his UK State Pension is frozen and STG/THB exchange rate is now 25% less, perhaps Andy had wangled himself yet another RO's job – possibly with M16?

Maybe some of us are already on video, in "M's" bunker, back at HQ? Hoki hoina?

[Afterword: We are informed by other brigade golfers that the author (aka George Mackenzie, 7 GR) was a low handicap player in his youth and particularly in Hong Kong in the Sixties. He also contributed, on a regular basis, to the Asian edition of Golf Monthly, in HK.]

Obituaries

Obituary List

The Editor records with regret the deaths of the following members of the Brigade between 1 January and 31 December 2009, together with earlier deaths not recorded in The Kukri 2008.

1 GR	A Hart Esq	18 January 2009
2 GR	Lt Col H G W Shakespear MC Maj I D Footit Capt A R G Morrison Capt R Lawrie Dr B C Davies Hon Maj Lalbahadur Kawar Capt (QGO) Nima Lama Capt (QGO) Thote Gurung MM Capt (QGO) Udar Gurung Lt (QGO) Rudrabahadur Gurung	13 April 2009 30 January 2009 4 August 2009 12 June 2009 2 January 2009 19 January 2009 25 August 2009 24 April 2009 26 July 2009 11 March 2009
4 GR	Maj G F Duckworth	November 2009
5 RGR	Lt Col M J G Martin MBE Maj H G Jenks	2 January 2009 31 July 2009
6 GR	Lt Col R R Griffith OBE Lt Col M Scrase MBE Maj R Crichton OBE Capt I Purvis MC AV J Edwards Esq Dr B Rogers Mrs V Fleming Mrs L McNaughton Mrs M Murphy	September 2009 27 October 2009 2009 17 August 2009 23 March 2009 28 July 2009 1 July 2009 30 October 2009 26 October 2009
7 GR	Maj Gen P Crawford GM Maj J Goudge Maj P Probyn Maj K Ross Capt J Gordon Capt J Harris T Haxby Esq J Hartley Esq C Lammers Esq Mrs P Grove Mrs D Hill (w/o E Hill Esq) Mrs E Williams	21 February 2009 7 October 2009 6 January 2009 27 October 2009 May 2009 24 September 2009 8 February 2009 30 January 2009 16 December 2008 10 May 2009 3 July 2009 4 March 2009
8 GR	Lt Col P Wallace-Jones Maj G E Henderson	15 February 2009 13 January 2009
9 GR	Lt Col W E Stannard	6 January 2009

10 GR	Maj B J Underhill MBE Maj (GCO) Angphurba Sherpa Capt (QGO) Narbir Limbu Capt (QGO) Sibaraj Rai WO I Gorey Rai Sgt Birkhabahadur Limbu Sgt Lokbahadur Limbu	28 November 2009 11 September 2009 12 September 2009 1 December 2009 10 September 2009 8 October 2009 13 November 2009
RGR	Cpl Kumar Pun	7 May 2009
QGE	Lt Col G N Ritchie Maj T Spring-Smyth Capt (QGO) J Tenzing Lepcha	9 January 2009 30 April 2009 25 February 2009
QGS	Brig M J Lance Lt Col G Wotton Maj J E Grigsby Capt (QGO) Ratnabhadur Limbu Capt (QGO) Surendra Vikram Capt (QGO) Tekbahadur Gurung Hon Lt Shyambahadur Pun	18 May 2009 6 March 2009 5 April 2009 29 April 2009 6 June 2009 17 July 2009 8 January 2009
QOGLR	Lt Col R J Davies	March 2009

Major General Patrick Crawford GM

Major General Patrick Crawford, who died on 21 February 2009, aged 75, saved the life of a brother officer after a helicopter crash in the Borneo jungle, for which he was awarded a George Medal.

In 1964, Crawford, then a captain, was the Regimental MO of the 1st/7th (Duke of Edinburgh's Own) Gurkha Rifles (1/7 GR), which was on active operations in Sarawak during the Confrontation over Borneo between British-backed Malaysia and Indonesia.

On 20 April, he flew in a helicopter with Major Eric "Birdie" Smith, DSO, and six Gurkhas to visit a company which was operating north of the Indonesian border. The landing platform was in a small clearing in dense jungle on the top of a ridge that dropped into a deep ravine.

The helicopter began descending from about 100ft and was short of the platform when the engine gave a cough and cut out. It dropped like a stone and there was a splintering crash as it slammed stern first into the ground, hung for a second on its crumbling tail and toppled over the edge of the ravine.

It somersaulted down the steep slope before its descent was arrested by a tree stump which punched a hole in the cabin, crushing Smith's right arm and breaking his hip. Crawford, bruised and badly shaken, helped the Gurkhas to escape through the broken-off tail section and, ignoring a shouted warning that the aircraft could go up in flames at any moment, clambered through the wreckage to Smith, who was hanging by his shattered arm.

He got under Smith to support his weight and for almost an hour, in the stifling heat and semi-darkness of the fume-filled cabin, he worked on the man's injuries. He had no morphia or surgical instruments and was praying that Smith would faint from shock or loss of blood (he remained conscious throughout).

First, Crawford applied a tourniquet and then, using a clasp knife which had been hastily sharpened by one of the Gurkhas, he carried out an amputation of Smith's arm. He dressed the wound, held the man up until a stretcher party arrived and then helped to improvise a hoist to lift him through the doorway, which was at a very awkward angle.

Crawford, who had refused to take a moment's rest or even a glass of water, was completely exhausted but he insisted on staying at Smith's side while the stretcher was carried up the hillside. He then flew with him in the relief helicopter to Simmanggang and Kuching. In the operating theatres in both places he helped the doctors to perform tidying-up surgery. He was awarded the George Medal.

Ian Patrick Crawford, the son of a doctor, was born in London on October 11 1933. He was educated at Chatham House, Ramsgate, before studying Medicine at St Thomas's Hospital, London.

He was commissioned into the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC) for his National Service and was on active service in Malaya and Borneo as MO to 20 Regiment RA and 1/7 GR.

An appointment at HQ Singapore District was followed by a spell as instructor at the School of Army Health. In 1972 he went to Australia as exchange MO and visiting lecturer at Queensland University. He advised the Australian Army on measures to avoid contamination by pesticides that were being used to get rid of locusts and did a three-month tour in the jungles of Papua New Guinea, working on improvements in water sanitation to reduce malarial outbreaks among the remote tribes.

The second of two stints at the MoD and an appointment at HQ I British Corps was followed by a move to the Royal Army Medical College, Millbank, as Parkes Professor of Preventive Medicine. The importance of preventive measures – the right clothing, good boots, a proper diet, clean water and adequate acclimatisation – was a passion with him. He acquired the nickname “drain sniffer” for his insistence on hygienic latrines.

Lieutenant Colonel Gordon Shakespear MC

Lieutenant Colonel Gordon Shakespear who died in April 2009, aged 88, won an MC on the Gothic Line in Italy in a battle in which he was severely wounded.

In September 1944 Shakespear, then a major, was in command of two companies of the 1st Battalion 2nd King Edward VII's Own Gurkha Rifles (The Sirmoor Rifles). On the night of 2 September he was given the task of capturing the fortified village of Auditore, which stood on the northern bank of the River Foglia in the Adriatic sector of the Gothic Line.

Reconnaissance revealed aprons of wire on all the approaches and pillboxes and deep dugouts. Shakespear's force moved off at 10pm. He manoeuvred them to the rear of the village without being detected and then led an assault on the strongpoint. The enemy was taken completely by surprise and fled with large losses. The following morning, when the village came under heavy artillery and mortar fire, he moved from post to post keeping up the morale of his men.

The next night, Shakespear led his companies in an attack on Monte San Giovanni, two miles north of Auditore. He attacked from the flank but, leading his men from the front, was shot through the neck and mouth. The Gurkhas swept on and drove the enemy from their heavily fortified and seemingly impregnable positions. He was awarded an immediate MC.

Henry Gordon Wyndham Shakespear was born at Shillong, Assam on 28 June 1920 and educated at Malvern, where he was head boy and played cricket, soccer and racquets for the school. In the match between the Young Amateurs and the Young Professionals at Lords in 1937, he scored 28 runs and took four wickets.

Shakespear went on to Sandhurst. He was a cadet at the outbreak of the war before following his father and his grandfather into the 2nd Gurkhas in 1940. After a spell at Dehra Dun and two years at the Indian Small Arms School, in 1943 he joined the 1st Battalion in North Africa.

[This obituary first appeared in the Daily Telegraph and is reproduced by kind permission of the Editor of the Obituary Column.]

After serving on the Defence Medical Services Directorate, he was appointed commander of the Saudi Arabian National Guard Medical Team in 1986. He finally served as the Commandant and Postgraduate Dean of the Royal Army Medical College.

Crawford was appointed an Honorary Physician to the Queen from 1991 until he retired in 1993. In 1997 he became chairman of the governors for the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Once settled in Sussex, he enjoyed golf and cabinet-making.

Patrick Crawford married, in 1956, Juliet James, who survives him with their two sons and a daughter.

[This obituary first appeared in the Daily Telegraph and is reproduced by kind permission of the Editor of the Obituary Column.]

While serving as adjutant, he took part in the Battle of Cassino before commanding “A” Company in the fighting northwards through Italy until reaching the Gothic Line.

After recovering from his wounds, he rejoined the 1st Battalion in Greece and India. Near Bombay, he was again severely wounded, this time accidentally, in the chest and stomach by an anti-tank grenade. Typically, he was playing football only a few weeks later.

Shakespear rejoined the 1st Battalion in Singapore and then commanded the Gurkha Boys' Company in north Malaya. After Staff College, Camberley, he returned to the 1st Battalion to command Support Company on jungle operations in Malaya, and in Hong Kong.

Between spells of regimental soldiering he held staff appointments at HQ 50th Division, Catterick, and at the School of Military Engineering, Chatham. When he achieved his lifelong ambition to command the 1st Battalion, he was injured again, this time on an exercise in Malaya when he was stung so badly on his face by a swarm of wasps that it was feared he might die.

Before the end of his time in command, he played a notable role in defeating the Brunei rebellion of 1962, for which he was mentioned in despatches.

After six months on attachment to the SHAPE Mission in Portugal and a staff appointment at HQ Southern Command, he moved to Dharan as AA&QMG at HQ British Gurkhas Nepal. He retired from the Army in 1972.

He excelled at golf. He was runner-up in the Army golf championship, and after leaving played for the Green Jackets' and the Old Malvernian Golfing Societies.

Gordon Shakespear died on 13 April, Easter Monday. He married, in 1948, Jean Bernard, who survives him with their son and two daughters.

Major J B Goudge

John Barnaby Goudge was born in Naini Tal, India, on 9 July 1921. His father was in the ICS and they came home to England when John was three. He was educated at King's School, Canterbury, where he did well in classics, cricket and rugby.

He joined up in 1940 and sailed to India on the 'Highland Chieftain', which carried many young officers destined to be in the Indian Army. He trained at the Cadet College in Bangalore and was commissioned into the 7th Gurkha Rifles in September 1941 and by February 1942 he was in action in the Martaban area in lower Burma, commanding D Company of the 3rd Battalion.

In March 1942 he replaced the Brigade Liaison Officer who had been killed. In April he was in action to secure the Sittang Bridge. He was sent ahead alone to recce a possible Japanese ambush, when he was surrounded by the enemy with machine guns pointed at him. Their officer came up to him with a phrase book and took his wallet, etc, asked John's age and then looked at a photo of his sister and said 'wife'. The officer then asked him to 'confess'. Meanwhile John saw the main body approaching and shouted to them to go back and said to the officer that he would ask them to confess and surrender. He then walked slowly back expecting to be shot, but he found his men and they moved on. Unfortunately the bridge could not be held and had to be blown up.

In order to cross the river John removed his boots and with a stout branch, swam across the 1200yds of water. There was a strong current towards the sea. He then walked to find out what was left of his battalion and he discovered many Gurkhas had drowned because they were unable to swim.

After some heavy fighting at Kokkogwa, John was hit by a bullet above his left elbow, breaking the humerus. In great pain, he was transported by boat to Magwe on the Irrawaddy for about a week, then by Dakota to hospital in Calcutta and

Major G E Henderson

Major Gordon Henderson passed away on 13 January 2009 at the age of 88. He is survived by Vera, his wife of 58 years, two sons and a daughter.

Gordon was born and raised in Regina, Canada. In the era of radio, the Toronto Maple Leafs were his hockey team and his boyhood “colours” were the Crimson Dagger Gang. He was a lifelong Roughrider fan, win or lose.

Gordon attended the Royal Military College, class of '37. He was the top gymnast in his class, in spite of breaking his wrist performing giant swings. After graduation, he decided to serve in India and was accepted as an Officer in the British Army. His ship was torpedoed and sunk off Ireland.

He made his way to serve with the 8th Gurkha Rifles and the 153rd (Gurkha) Parachute Battalion. He always had a special place for Gurkhas and was active in the Gurkha Welfare Appeal for many years.

later to a further hospital in Poona. When he had recovered he rejoined his regiment at Amritsar as Quartermaster.

In 1943 3/7th GR joined with men from other Gurkha regiments to form the 154 Gurkha Parachute Battalion, near Lahore and passed out as parachutists. John continued with 154 firstly as QM then as a company commander. Having had no home leave, he was given his first, thereby missing the action with the paras at Elephant Point near Rangoon in May 1945. On his return he was posted to Quetta, where he enjoyed a lot of cricket and rugby before demobilization.

After the war, John took up his place at Trinity College, Oxford and read History. Then he joined the Anglo Iranian Oil Company (which was eventually disbanded when the Shah was deposed, and is now partly BP) in Personnel, living and working in Iran.

On return to UK in 1952 he married Elizabeth and joined the Colonial Development Corporation in London, where they lived. In 1955 he became a father to Sarah. He read for the Bar in his spare time and was called as a member of the Inner Temple.

In 1958 the family moved to Dormansland, near Lingfield in Surrey and a second daughter, Katherine, was born.

John returned to BP again, working in London until his early retirement in the 1980's. He now had time to focus on his writing. He had many poems published and won prizes. He wrote family annals and biographic sketches for private circulation among family and friends, providing interest and enjoyment.

John was a keen gardener, and, in retirement, became a successful bee-keeper for twenty years.

He died on 7 October 2009, leaving behind his wife, daughters and three grandchildren.

After the war, he joined the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. He saw action in the Korean War at the Battle of Kapyong, where his battalion was awarded the US Presidential Unit Citation.

The family moved across Canada and was posted to Europe twice. After retirement from the army, Gordon became an investment advisor in Vancouver. He was with several firms for the next twenty years until his retirement in 1990. He was known as a manager who would give the young advisors the chance to prove themselves.

Gardening was Gordon's favourite pastime. He enjoyed golf and fishing. During one trip to Langara Lodge in the Queen Charlotte's, he remarked that, at 80 years young, his arms were getting tired from catching so many fish.

Major J R Probyn

Jeffrey Richard (Pinky) Probyn was born on 9 August 1922 in London. His father was a civil servant who joined up for the First World War in the Artist Rifles where sadly he was killed. Pinky went to school in Solihull. He advanced his age by a year and firstly joined the Home Guard in 1940, whilst awaiting call up. He was then posted to the King's Shropshire Light Infantry in Shrewsbury and put into the pre OCTU platoon as he had been in the OTC at school. In 1941 he was sent to the Bulford OCTU and was commissioned into the Royal Warwickshire Regiment which was then in Northern Ireland. In 1942 he transferred into the Indian Army and attended a course at Bangalore. He was then posted to the 7th Gurkha Rifles in Assam and eventually found himself at the Depot in Palampur. In 1943 he was sent to Egypt to join the reformed 2nd Battalion in their barracks at Mena outside Cairo. The Battalion was then put into the 10th Indian Division and carried out various internal security duties in Egypt, Palestine, Syria and Lebanon.

At the end of 1944 the Battalion was transferred to the 4th Indian Division in Italy. Here it took part in various actions on the Adriatic Coast before moving up to Monte Cassino. After the battle Pinky moved with the Battalion on to the assault of the Gothic line at Rimini. He was promoted Major at the tender age of 22.

Corporal Kumar Pun

Corporal Kumar Pun of the 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles (attached to Foxtrot Company, 2 RGR) and Sergeant Ben Ross of 173 Provost Company, 3rd Regiment, Royal Military Police were killed as a result of a suicide improvised explosive device during a patrol in Gereshk, Helmand Province on 7 May 2009.

Corporal Kumar Pun was born on 30 November 1977 in the Parbat district of western Nepal. The son of a British Gurkha, he was always destined to try to join the Brigade of Gurkhas and, after much effort, in 1996 he passed the gruelling selection.

Following the successful completion of recruit training he was posted to Church Crookham as a Rifleman in A (Delhi) Company, 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles. In A Company he deployed on overseas exercises in Malaysia, Kenya, Oman and Belize, and on operations in Kosovo and Bosnia. This was his first deployment to Afghanistan. In his last posting before deployment, he was a section commander in the Jungle Warfare Wing in Brunei. He was an excellent jungle soldier with unique skills that he passed on to the course students in his own humorous manner.

As Second-in-Command of a Multiple in Afghanistan he had considerable responsibility, both for the administration of the fifteen-man team but also tactically, leading men in a most complex and dangerous operational environment. He was a highly valued member of a team that had the critical task of training and mentoring the Afghan National Police.

The Battalion was then pulled out and sent to Greece (Patras) where they became involved with the civil war against ELAS the communist guerrillas. Pinky was ordered to advance across the hills to get behind the guerrillas and found that his objective was the local winery. Once the battle was over great use was made of this valuable find. It is said that various officers had a major hang-over after drinking too much of the local sherry.

At the end of the War the Battalion sailed from Salonika to Karachi but Pinky returned to UK and demob. Pinky was Mentioned in Despatches for his actions in Greece.

After the War Pinky became a Chartered Surveyor and Loss Adjustor. He eventually became President of the National Chartered Institute of Loss Adjustors and then finally the President of the European Association of Loss Adjustors.

Pinky was a staunch member of the 7 GR Regimental Association and took part in nearly all of the Reunions as well as representing the Regiment at various National Commemorations. Pinky was also a tireless worker for the Gurkha Welfare Trust and organised many functions to raise money for the GWT,

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He consistently proved himself to be a competent commander and mentor and through his own quiet and reassuring style became very successful at teaching the police. His calm and patient teaching combined with his expert knowledge left a mark on many of the policemen he mentored. The work he conducted without doubt has enabled the police in Gereshk to become more professional and in time more respected by the Afghan civilians.

Corporal Kumar was a first-class soldier who loved soldiering and embraced the challenges it posed. He was a very intelligent and capable individual who spoke a number of languages including English, Hindi, his native Nepali and tribal dialects. He was highly regarded and respected by all, a polite and quiet character who was a pleasure to be around. He was a good athlete and a fierce competitor on the sports field. His service to his battalion was characterised by the highest level of professionalism, loyalty and dedication.

He leaves behind his wife Parbati and two daughters, Klaudine and Petrina, who live in Dover, his parents, Dhanbahadur and Sukmaya Pun, a younger brother Santosh, and a younger sister Bindu.

Major Chris Conroy, Officer Commanding Foxtrot Company, 2nd Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles, said:

"Corporal Kumar was a man of unique character and virtue. As a soldier he was unstintingly professional, calm and respectful of all, never failing to help and always willing to volunteer."

A man of considerable experience he was the guide and mentor to many an Officer and Non-Commissioned Officer, his advice always considered, well-delivered and polite. As a father and husband he took great pride in his family and children and I know they were always at the front of his thoughts.

"Corporal Kumar was a key member of the company and the space left by his departure will be hard to fill. On operations in Afghanistan he was steadfast, brave and a true leader. He looked after his soldiers as if they were his own, caring for them and watching over their every move. He died doing the job he loved with his friends at his side and he will be greatly missed by all."

Mr Jim Edwards

Jim Edwards, who died on 23 March 2009 aged 73, was the co-founder of the World Elephant Polo Championships, which are held in Nepal each year.

Although there is some evidence that the game may have been played in India in the early 20th Century, the idea took off in 1981 when Edwards met the Scottish polo player and tobogganist James Manclark in a club at St Moritz. Manclark suggested that an obvious way to expand Edwards's eco-tourist business was to introduce elephant polo, and over a drink the pair devised some provisional rules. But Edwards thought no more about it until he received a telegram from Manclark some months later: "Arriving Kathmandu April 1. Have long sticks. Get ready elephants."

The first game got off to an uncertain start at Edwards's Tiger Tops jungle lodge in the Royal Chitwan National Park. The elephants were afraid of the sticks, the balls and the general chaos – the saddles tended to slip, so that their riders swung underneath their bellies.

But they proved surprisingly fleet of foot; and, as intelligent, sociable animals, they soon appeared to enjoy the sport (trumpeting loudly when a goal was scored), particularly after learning to stamp flat the soccer balls which were used initially. Ordinary polo balls were duly substituted, and a rule introduced permitting the elephants to kick the ball towards the goal. They were guilty of committing a foul if they picked it up with their trunks.

Human competitors also have to make adjustments. They must use a smaller pitch but longer sticks than those required by polo players on horseback. They also have to get used to their mahouts, who steer the animals by manipulating their feet, which are tucked behind the elephants' ears, and who may – or may not – understand what the players want. To ensure equality among the sexes, the men must hold their sticks in the right hand while women can use both hands.

The flair and organisational skill of Edwards and his partners, together with his enthusiasm as the No 1 player in his three-man team, the Tiger Tops Tuskers, attracted an increasing number of teams as well as crowds from around the world to the annual competition – though the conservationist

Commenting on the loss of Sergeant Benjamin Ross and Corporal Kumar Pun, Defence Secretary John Hutton said:

"Corporal Kumar Pun and Sergeant Benjamin Ross died at the spearhead of operations fundamental to the UK's mission in Afghanistan. These dedicated, professional and fiercely brave men lost their lives passing on their professionalism and skills to the Afghan National Security Forces. This is an immense loss to the families of Corporal Pun and Sergeant Ross, and a blow to the country."

Dame Daphne Sheldrick, who has worked with elephants for 50 years, has declared that "elephants are not designed to play polo – nor should they".

Among those who have tried their hand at the lavishly sponsored sport, which has spawned similar competitions in Sri Lanka and Thailand, are horseback polo stars such as the Mexican Antonio Herrera; Sir Edmund Hillary, the conqueror of Mount Everest; the Beatle Ringo Starr; and the comedian Billy Connolly. In 2004 the Duke of Argyll captained a successful Scottish team.

Albert Victor James Edwards was born at Gosport, Hampshire, on 24 November 1935, and went to school in Jersey, representing the island at badminton. He worked as a butcher's delivery boy and next as a messenger boy for the States of Jersey (the parliament) before doing his national service with the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment.

He was then employed by Lloyds Bank, first at Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent, and then in Stockholm. But after two years he met a friend who worked on a tea plantation in Assam, and urged him to see more of the world. As a result Edwards suggested to Saab that he drive one of its cars to India, via Iran and Afghanistan, stopping along the way to earn some publicity and drum up sales.

At the Swedish embassy in Delhi he met a brother of the King of Nepal, who suggested that he motor up to Nepal on the recently-opened highway. With two of the ambassador's children as passengers he duly set off, arriving ten days later at Kathmandu's only hotel, which was run by a Russian émigré. Edwards could not afford to stay there, but was allowed to pitch a tent in the garden; and, when it was established that he possessed a dinner jacket, he received an invitation to join a party at which he was introduced to the King.

Selling the car for a profit enabled him to pay his way for two years. He also worked for an American aid organisation, laying cables in remote areas and digging wells, and then started with the American ecologist, Chuck McDougal, a small business taking tourists on hunting and fishing safaris. A chance meeting with the chairman of Pan Am led to his being offered a management course with the airline in New York.

After a further three years working in the organisation's sales, marketing and public relations departments, during which he sent many American clients back to McDougal, Edwards returned to Nepal. With the aid of Edwards's brother John, in charge of operations, the three partners started to build up eco-tourism, abandoning fishing and hunting in favour of viewing the wildlife of the swamps and the Himalayan foothills from the backs of elephants. For a base, they bought and expanded a small hunting lodge, called Tiger Tops, which had been built by two Americans who had never returned to use it.

Edwards then used his contacts in Pan Am and the World Wildlife Fund to persuade the Nepalese government to turn the 360-square kilometer area at Chitwan, in which the lodge was set, into a national park in 1973. The following year he teamed up with Lt-Col Jimmy Roberts, the ex-Gurkha who had pioneered trekking in the Himalayas.

He then had a chance meeting with the explorer Colonel John Blashford-Snell, and they made pioneering descents of Nepal's Trishuli river, resulting in the establishment of the Himalayan River Exploration Company. Edwards's last major project was the setting-up of a permanent lodge on the route of the four-day "Royal Trek", which was specially designed for the Prince of Wales in 1980.

Mr Tony Hart

Tony Hart, who died on 18 January 2009 aged 83, used his immense creative range to sow the seeds of artistic interest in generations of children as a presenter of several hugely popular and long-running television series.

Whether using paints, clay, textiles, foodstuffs or a cast-off object of almost any description, Hart had the magical ability to produce competent, entertaining pieces of work at impressive speed and in an unpatronising fashion. His avuncular, mildly eccentric manner made him the ideal host for children of all ages; indeed, at the height of his popularity in the mid 1980s, Hart's request that viewers send in their own pictures to exhibit in "The Gallery", a large wall showcasing their efforts, generated 6,000 submissions a week.

In a television career which spanned more than fifty years, the majority of them spent on the screen wearing his trademark cravat, Hart demonstrated artistic techniques both elementary and advanced while never forgetting his motto "Show them don't tell them"

Norman Anthony Hart was born at Maidstone on 15 October 1925. His father was a local government official whose own artistic leanings were actively discouraged by his parents; his mother was an amateur singer. Their mutual devotion to the arts meant that they adopted a liberal attitude to their children's careers. "My father always said to me don't work in an office," Hart once recalled. "So not working in an office became very important to me."

After attending a London choir school with Dickensian attitudes to discipline (beatings routinely took place on

Edwards and his friends also formed the International Trust for Nature Conservation, a United Kingdom-registered charity with a mandate to support conservation initiatives around the world. His contribution to Nepal's tourist industry was such that Indira Gandhi once asked: "Why do we have to look to Nepal to learn how to manage wildlife tourism lodges?"

Jim Edwards was a man of great charm, generosity and self-deprecating humour, though he could display occasional shortness of temper.

Ever the keen sportsman, Jim Edwards enjoyed tobogganing and playing conventional polo at Ham; he was fishing in Iceland in 2004, and then in Karnataka, when he suffered two strokes.

He was married and divorced three times. After a brief first match he married, in 1970, an Icelander, Fjola Bender, with whom he had a son and daughter. His third wife was Belinda Fuchs, a Swiss zoologist, with whom he had two sons. His last years were spent with Tia Rongsen, from Nagaland.

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Sundays), and then Clayesmore in Dorset, the seventeen year old Hart applied to be an air gunner with the RAFA minor eye defect prevented him being assigned flying duties, however, so he followed in his father's footsteps and joined the Indian Army instead, training for a commission with the 1st Gurkha Rifles. It was throughout his four years in India that Hart first nurtured serious ideas of becoming a professional painter: dazzled by the colours and patterns of the subcontinent, he spent much of his off-duty periods at an art school in Madras.

Following India's independence in 1947, Hart returned to England and took up a place at the Maidstone College of Art, from which he graduated in 1950. He then moved to London where he worked briefly as a window display artist at a department store on Oxford Street before turning his hand to freelance graphics work for cinema, television and newspapers. He was happy to paint murals on restaurant walls in return for free meals.

A chance meeting with a television producer at a party in 1952 resulted in a BBC interview which took place over lunch. At the end of the meal Hart was called on to demonstrate his draughtsmanship by drawing a picture of a fish on the napkin which accompanied his coffee. The deftness of this sketch was enough to secure him a job.

Initially he worked on an early Eamonn Andrews show, before advancing to the position of graphics artist on the *Tonight* programme. Soon after he was engaged as resident artist on the children's show *Saturday Special*. He stayed on it for two years before moving to another programme for the young, *Playbox*, which ran until 1959.

Throughout this time Hart also worked on the original *Blue Peter* programmes, the first of which was broadcast in October 1958. In the weekly transmissions he told and illustrated stories, invariably about a little white elephant called Packi. His loose involvement with *Blue Peter* continued into the 1960s with the creation of the galleon which became the programme's well-known logo. Aware of *Blue Peter*'s enormous popularity, Hart asked for a penny for every time his design was used. His request was turned down and he was paid a flat fee of £100 instead.

Stints on *Ask Your Dad*, *Disney Wonderland* and *Stories in Pictures* followed, and led to Hart's first appearance on the long-running puppet programme *Titch and Quackers*, in which he operated the latter. Then, in 1964, came his breakthrough programme, *Vision On*.

Originally screened for the deaf, *Vision On* was a milestone in children's television and gave a platform to Hart's natural vivacity. Whether drawing a huge profile on an empty beach with the wheel-tracks of a motorcycle or making a 180ft picture of a tractor on a Sussex hillside using 144 roller towels, this quirky and sometimes surreal programme soon successfully stretched the boundaries of every child's imagination – regardless of their ability to hear.

Vision On ran for over twelve years and introduced the world not only to "The Gallery", but also to the groundbreaking talents of artists Peter Lord and David Sproxton, the former of whom went on to co-create the *Wallace and Gromit* series. By the time *Vision On* ended in 1977 it was being screened around the world and Hart's genial manner was winning international acclaim.

The following year, Hart was given his first solo vehicle, *Take Hart*. It too was an instant success whose overwhelming attraction lay in the presenter's inclusive approach and positive attitude at the drawing board.

Hart's desire to encourage by example and by humour meant work of all standards appeared on the wall of "The Gallery" – from children as young as four to that of older teenagers. It was during this series that Morph, a six inch Plasticine figure created by Lord and Sproxton, was born.

As his name suggests, Morph was capable of extraordinary and amusing feats of metamorphosis.

The cleverness of his creation was that the seemingly unintelligible language he spoke in fact made perfect sense and he and Hart could converse with each other. Morph was later joined in his adventures by his irascible friend Chas and a host of other miniature creations. Morph was granted two series of his own in the early 1980s and continues to enjoy enormous popularity.

Tony Hart was awarded his first BAFTA for the series in 1984. Unaware that he had won, he did not attend the ceremony because his wife, Jean, had not been invited to it with him. It was only as he sat at home watching the BAFTAs on television that he realised he should have been there, a fact that always amused him.

Hart Beat, a variation on the same theme as *Take Hart*, followed. It ran between 1985 and 1994 and continued to show "The Gallery" and to chart the fortunes of Morph. Mr Bennett, an accident-prone caretaker, was introduced as a character to add some comedy value. Hart was also helped over the course of these shows by a series of young female artists.

Throughout the 1990s Hart continued to present other television programmes, the most recent of which include *Morph TV* and *Smart Hart*.

In 1998 he was awarded a second BAFTA, in this case a lifetime achievement award acknowledging his contribution to children's television.

Tony Hart was active in a large number of charities throughout his life. Among the beneficiaries of his efforts was the Gurkha Welfare Trust to which Hart donated pictures which were later auctioned for "substantial" amounts of money.

Hart once described himself as "a loner who can't wait to get back to my squirrel's nest", referring to his cottage in Shamley Green, deep in the Surrey countryside, where he lived for many years. In the years after his retirement in 2001, his health began to fail and he suffered two strokes, which robbed him of the use of his hands. In an interview in 2006 he described no longer being able to draw and paint as "the greatest cross I have to bear".

Tony Hart married Jean Skingle in 1953. She predeceased him, and he is survived by their daughter, Carolyn.

[This obituary first appeared in The Daily Telegraph and is reproduced by kind permission of the Editor of the Obituary Column.]

Book Reviews

Britain's Gurkhas by Brig Christopher Bullock

Readers of this journal who are not either just out of nappies or in the last stages of senile dementia will remember Christopher Bullock as the Commanding Officer of 6 GR from 1978 to 1981 and as Brigadier Brigade of Gurkhas from 1991 to 1994. As CO 6 GR he took over a battalion that was comfortably ensconced in Church Crookham, running Bisley, taking turns at public duties and sending parties of soldiers to exotic locations such as London, Scotland, and, for the really adventurous, France and Germany. Hardly had he dealt with the numerous bits of paper assuring the system that he had personally counted every chair folding flat and button, denim, GS, that incoming COs are obliged to perjure themselves with, than on two days' notice the battalion was flown to Belize where the very nasty Guatemalan military dictatorship was not just rattling the sabre but had drawn it half way out of its scabbard. Christopher probably much preferred the jungles of Central America to the forecourt of Buckingham Palace (certainly this reviewer did), and in the event the Guatemalans, faced with what their newspapers described as the 'elite jungle fighters of the British Army', drew back at the eleventh hour, but it was during that tour that his quiet professionalism and self-effacing humour endeared him to a battalion that had always regarded those coming from other Gurkha battalions with suspicion, as well as showing (yet again) to the sceptics of the wider army that given the right leadership a Gurkha battalion could turn its collective hand to anything at no notice. Later, during the so-mis-called 'Options for Change' which cut the Brigade by 75%, from nine major units to two infantry battalions and three corps squadrons, which would have sent large numbers of soldiers back to Nepal with nothing or very little, a very senior staff officer in the Ministry of Defence said 'you don't have a problem recruiting – we don't have to give you anything'. Christopher, then a brigadier and professional head of the Brigade of Gurkhas, fought for, and got, fair redundancy terms, to the detriment of his own career. He spent almost all of his adult life with Gurkhas and when he writes a book you know that, unlike much of the myth, fantasy and sheer rubbish that can be found on the bookshelves, this one is by an author who really does know his subject.

This is a big book in every sense of the word, with a sweep that begins in Nepali pre-history and continues right up to the present day with contemporary operations in Afghanistan – a country which as the author points out has strong connotations within the Gurkha race memory. It is not, however, a mere litany of battles fought and medals won. The book also explains the relationship between the Gurkha and his British officers, that extraordinary symbiosis of people from opposite ends of the globe of very different cultures and religions, to say nothing of

the differences in language and eating habits. The Anglo-Nepal War, which began the association, is well covered as are the early years and, of course, the Indian Mutiny of 1857. It was the mutiny of most of the Bengal Army, followed by a rising by various disaffected elements and encouraged by those whom the East India Company had superseded or displaced that first brought the Gurkhas to the attention of the British as something more than just another Native martial race, and this is comprehensively described. The section on both world wars includes a delightful account of the difference between Gurkha and British troops when faced with discomfort as seen by a British tank commander on the advance to the Po in Italy in the spring of 1945. While accounts of Gurkhas in world wars have appeared in other works, although few by those with Bullock's insight, the fascinating account of Gurkhas' operational deployments up to the present (2009) has not appeared before, and even those who keep up to date with the present-day Brigade will find in it something of which they were not aware. Contrary to some public perception, the Brigade of Gurkhas is not just the infantry, and the book covers in detail the doings of the Corps Regiments. The Royal Engineers, Signals and Logistic Corps have always been well aware that they could not fulfil their operational commitments without their Gurkha equivalents, and the Gurkha corps units have never suffered from the dog-in-the-manger attitude of the British infantry, many of whose senior officers recommended in the run up to 'Options' the disbandment of all Gurkhas before a single British infantry battalion went to the wall. That those British battalions could not recruit, had appalling disciplinary records and were militarily ineffective mattered not a jot.

Internal developments in Nepal, including the Maoist insurrection, the murder of the King and much of the royal family, and the transition of Nepal from a monarchy to a republic are dealt with critically, yet with sympathy for that beautiful but troubled land, as is the recent campaign for Gurkha right of abode in the UK, and the revised terms and conditions of service consequent on the decision to move the Brigade from its organisation and structure derived from the British Indian Army to that of British units. The author makes the point that it is as yet unclear how the biggest change, the removal of the QGO commission, will affect the Brigade.

The illustrations in this book are an absolute joy. They are well chosen, give an excellent overview of life in the Brigade and in Nepal, and most have not been published before. The maps too are good – a refreshing change from so many works where numerous places mentioned in the text are not shown on maps.

We of course know that for all our men's many admirable qualities they are not perfect – nobody is – and Bullock does not shy away from the (mercifully very few) darker incidents. What does emerge, however, is that when discipline breaks down – the Hawaii mutiny being the obvious example – it is because their British officer has failed to understand, or has not bothered to try to understand, the sensibilities of his men. There will always be a place for a few seconded officers – and some have, if found suitable, subsequently transferred to the permanent cadre (including Bullock himself and this reviewer) – but Gurkhas must continue to be led by British officers who have been thoroughly immersed in the language and the culture of their men, and who are prepared to put their interests before their own.

Britain's Gurkhas must now be the definitive work on the subject: it is a marvellous book, very difficult to put down, and has the rare quality of being able to hold the interest of both the hardened Brigade veteran and of the interested civilian.

The Crown of Renown – by Lieutenant Colonel J P Cross

JPX (as he is affectionately known and his preferred nomenclature) after an adult lifetime serving with distinction in the Gurkhas, retired from the army in 1982 and settled in Pokhara, Nepal. It was here that what one might term 'a second career' commenced, that of prolific writing. His command of the Nepali language is, by common cause, both authoritative and unrivalled, such that Professor Turner asked him to bring his dictionary, *Comparative and Etymological Dictionary of the Nepali Language* up to date. But JPX's linguistic talents extended well beyond Nepali, speaking French and nine Asian languages with a degree of fluency that earned him the title: Most Admired Man of the Decade by the American Biographical Institute in 1993.

After numerous publications, both autobiographical and historical, JPX embarked on an ambitious project, namely that of writing a series of historical novels on Nepal. The overall theme would present the interaction between the major players, namely the British, Nepalese and Indian, told through their eyes. Such a project demanded not only a fertile imagination, coupled with a deep knowledge of the country of his adoption, but would have to reflect historical accuracy. The reader is rewarded with a plethora of primary source references duly reflected in the endnotes and, in each novel to date, JPX has succeeded in creating an epic.

The first novel, *The Throne of Stone* was published in 2000. It covered the period 1479-1559 and dealt with the establishment of the House of Gorkha which, in due course, was to become the royal family of Nepal.

The second historical novel, *The Restless Quest*, published in 2004, and to be republished in 2010, covered the period 1746-1815 that placed Britain and Nepal on a collision course and saw the start of the British/Nepal connection.

The third book, and under review, is *The Crown of Renown* that covers the period 1819-1857, commencing just after the

This is Christopher Bullock's second venture into print; it is by far his most ambitious, and it will be a huge success. He is a natural raconteur, scrupulously accurate but with a light touch and he has that uncommon ability to make even the most mundane aspects of military bean-counting come alive. That the profits from its sale are to be divided between the Gurkha Welfare Trust and the Gurkha Museum is even more reason to buy it and to recommend it to your friends.

Reviewed by Maj J G H Corrigan

[This review first appeared in the Journal of the 6th Queen Elizabeth's Own Gurkha Rifles Regimental Association and is reproduced here by kind permission of the Editor.]

Britain's Gurkhas is published by Third Millennium Publishing Limited, 2-5 Benjamin Street, London

ECIM 5QL ISBN: 978-1-906507-27-5 HB, ISBN: 978-1-906507-28-2-PB. Price £45 (excl P & P). Email: www.tmltd.com.)

1814-16 Anglo - Nepal war, a war narrowly lost by Nepal. The book title is derived from The Queen's Truncheon presented to the Sirmoor Battalion on 29 November 1863 at Lahore in respect of the distinguished services of the Sirmoor Rifles before Delhi. The Truncheon is now housed with The Royal Gurkha Rifles, descendants of Delhi's original Sirmoor Battalion. JPX has, in addition to the title, dedicated this volume to those hill men initially enlisted by the East India Company, or Kampani Bahadoor, as known locally. This enlistment led, in due course to the re-designation and creation of the 1st Gurkha and 2nd Gurkha Rifles. The history of these two regiments is covered extensively, in particular the role played by Badal Singh Thapa, initially a slave who served later in the Sirmoor Rifles with great distinction, indeed elevated to hero status and recorded as such in 2 GR history.

In the reviewer's opinion this is to date the jewel in JPX's crown of his thus far trilogy, in that it covers that most interesting period of British/Indian/Nepalese relationships that eventually led to the 1857 Indian Mutiny. The latter was followed by the demise of the East Indian Company that resulted in direct British control.

The Nepalese 'Empire' was far more expansive than the current boundaries. The Naya Muluk, the 'New Country' or 'New Nepal' was as a result of Gorkha expansion into areas that included Kumaon and Garhwal to the west. JPX weaves the description of Gorkha legends such as Bhakti Thapa, 'one of the bravest Gorkhas known' and a creator of the Naya Muluk, who was killed in action during the Anglo-Nepal war. Prithvi Narayan Shah exemplifies other important historical characters; immortalised as the current founder of Nepal who conquered the Kathmandu valley in 1768. Bhakti Thapa's progeny play an important part in the novel as the East India Company expanded into Naya Muluk's territory and clashed with both Sikh, Russian and Chinese interests.

Major William Sleeman, Commissioner for Thuggee and Dacoity, widely acclaimed as being responsible for stamping out Thuggee, is woven into the text. Thuggee, (robbery practised by the strangling of an unsuspected victim with a rumal or handkerchief) was far more widespread than originally thought, extending as far as what is now known as North-Western Provinces together with, in instances, numerous villages throughout India that were occupied entirely by members of the sect.

Further snippets of fascinating detail concern subjects about which little has been known or disclosed, but are historically correct, such as torture administered under the Nepalese laws of Manu to those classified as slaves and others held in Nepalese prisons during the early 19th century; gruesome to the extreme. The death penalty was always implemented by a variety of perfected slow torture techniques. Such was life in those times.

The story continues at a pace to detail the strife between Nepal and the East India Company until eventually a common boundary was established. It covers the Sikhs and Russian intervention into the perceived affairs of the East India Company.

General Elphinstone's disastrous 1841/2 defeat in Afghanistan was a turning point in both Nepalese and Sikh perception that the East India Company could indeed be defeated and that arguably laid the foundation for the mutiny of 1857 that followed, prior to which the 'troublesome' Punjab was annexed in 1849.

The cause of the mutiny is examined in depth, and the detailed history of Gurkha participation and fidelity remarkably retold. It is here that the glorious deeds of the forerunners of 1 GR and 2 GR are recounted. Throughout this riveting yarn, JPX has succeeded in presenting a story told through the eyes of the main protagonists. In the case of Nepal, the hill man's 'resilient stoicism and unquestionable prowess' shines through loud and clear.

Further published works by JPX are as follows:

English for Gurkha Soldiers (1955, 1957, 1962.)

Gurkha – The Legendary Soldier (Text only in English and Roman Nepali.)

In Gurkha Company, The British Army's Gurkhas, 1948 to the Present. (1982, 1986.)

Jungle Warfare, Experiences and Encounters. (1986, 2007, 2009.)

Gurkhas At War: In Their Own Words The Gurkha Experience: 1939 to the present. (2002, 2007.)

Autobiographical Trilogy:

First In, Last Out, An Unconventional British Officer In Indo-China, 1945-45 and 1972-76. (1992, 2007.)

The Call of Nepal, A Personal Nepalese Odyssey in a Different Dimension. (1996, 1998, 2009.)

A Face like a Chicken's Backside: An Unconventional Soldier in South-East Asia. (1996, 2003.)

Those who served in the Brigade will welcome the plethora of both Hindi and Gurkhali words that add to the originality and flow of the text. For those not proficient in either language, a detailed Thesaurus is added. The book is enhanced by maps that include the theatre of the First Anglo-Sikh war together with the Siege of Delhi.

In the words of Lieutenant Colonel Duncan Forbes, author, Nepali language and educational advisor:

If your book [The Crown of Renown] were written in Nepali you would surely be acclaimed as one of the country's greatest authors.

There can be no higher recommendation.

Living in the hills of Pokhara, now in his 85th year, JPX will no doubt continue to put pen to paper in between his twelve-mile daily walks.

He has completed the manuscript of Volume 4 that covers the period 1857 to the partition of India in 1947, titled *The Fame of the Name* and due for publication in 2011. Currently JPX is working on the final volume titled *The Fire of Desire* that deals with the troubled period of the division of the Gurkha regiments in 1947 through to the present time and, intriguingly, it covers the rise of communism in Nepal. Target date for publication is 2012.

Reviewed by Peter Quantrill

[The Crown of Renown is published by Hallmark Press. ISBN 978-1-906459-33-8. Price £19.95.]

[This review first appeared in the Journal of 7th Duke of Edinburgh's Own Gurkha Rifles Regimental Association and is reproduced here by kind permission of the Editor]

The Restless Quest (New Edition) by Lt Col J P Cross

This historical novel 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 developed a great respect for each other. This has resulted in a unique relationship that has lasted for nearly 200 years.

'...a gripping tale. Readers interested in the origin of the British Gurkha connection will be richly rewarded' -

General Sir Sam Cowan, KCB, CBE, Colonel Commandant Brigade of Gurkhas, 1994-2003.

Publisher's Synopsis

[The Restless Quest is published by Blenheim Press Ltd, Codicote Innovation Centre, St Albans Road, Codicote, Herts SG4 8WH. ISBN 978-1-906302-20-7. Price £15.00. (plus P & P £3 UK, £4 EU, £6.50 RoW if ordered by post from us). Tel: 01438 820281. Email: info@blenheimpressltd.co.uk. Website: www.blenheimpressltd.co.uk.]

The Scorpion Trap by Harold James

Burma 1942. The mingled stench of gunpowder and blood fills the air. Wide, gleaming eyes stare out into the trampled wilderness from behind trembling, trained rifles. A cacophony of explosions light up the encroaching darkness as thick black plumes of smoke choke the atmosphere. Nightmarish visions of bullet-ridden and dismembered bodies flash through their minds as they chance the unpredictable, turbulent battleground. At only 20 years of age, Captain Paul Cooper has been given the daunting responsibility of leading a Gurkha unit into hell – battling through the jungles and villages of Burma against the underestimated, vicious and relentless Japanese soldiers. Exhausted, outgunned and facing tremendously worrying odds, they must draw from the reserves of what they do have: courage, pride and a desire to live. For Captain Cooper, the only thing keeping him fighting and pushing him forward into the jaws of almost certain death is the hope that he'll be reunited with his sweetheart, Sue. But thousands of miles apart, with a war standing between them and

their happiness, is their reunion little more than a bitter-sweet fantasy in the midst of the cold, evil reality of war? Unnerving, authentic, and brutal, *The Scorpion Trap* is a first-class guide through the mind of a soldier.

About the Author

Harold James was commissioned into the 8th Gurkha Rifles in 1942 and the following year was seconded to 3/2nd Gurkha Rifles on Wingate's First Chindit Expedition behind Japanese lines in Burma, where he was awarded an immediate MC at the age of 19. After the war he became a press officer with the Automobile Association. His home now is in Kathmandu, Nepal, where he lives with his Nepali godson and family.

Publisher's Synopsis

[The Scorpion Trap is published by the Janus Publishing Company Ltd. ISBN: 978-1-85756-716-8. Price: £14.99.]

Whither the Fates Call a personal account of National Service in the British Army 1950-1952 by Keith Taylor

This is a true adventure story which in today's parlance might be described as a two year 'gap' year. From the day he entered the Guards Depot at Caterham, Surrey, to the day he disembarked from the troopship *Empire Pride* in Liverpool, from the Far East, the author wrote 208 letters home. These letters, meticulously kept in chronological order, together with numerous photographs, provide a unique record of one person's National Service experience in the British Army. This beautifully produced hardback of 400 pages is a fascinating story. Ranging from boredom to action in the Korean War as a junior infantry officer, the letters include vivid descriptions of arduous training at battle camps as far from each other as Dartmoor in Devon to Hara Mura in Japan, smuggler hunting on the Hong Kong/Chinese border, rowdy Officers' Mess nights,

leave in Ceylon via the Nicobar Islands in the Indian Ocean, an aircraft crash-landing in Manila and learning to manage men under stressful conditions.

The author recalls his experiences with a discerning eye, a sense of humour and a great respect for British National Servicemen to whom, along with his family, this book is dedicated.

Publisher's Synopsis

[Books can be ordered direct from the printer, Hart and Clough Ltd, Ezra House, West 26 Business Park, Cleckheaton BD1 9TQ, or by email www.garnerbooks.com. Price £25.]

THE COLONEL OF TAMARKAN

Philip Toosey and The Bridge on the River Kwai

by JULIE SUMMERS

Alec Guinness won an Oscar for his portrayal of Colonel Nicholson in *The Bridge on the River Kwai* but, as Julie Summers reveals in this brilliant and moving biography, his role bore scant resemblance to the facts. The real officer in charge of the bridge-building was her grandfather, Philip Toosey, and in *The Colonel of Tamarkan* she draws upon first-hand interviews with those who knew and fought alongside him as well as family archives to create a remarkable tribute to a forgotten British hero.

'... seldom have I been so impressed and moved by a story. It is the telling that gives him the justice and understanding that he so richly deserves.'

General Sir Peter de la Billière KCB KBE DSO MC

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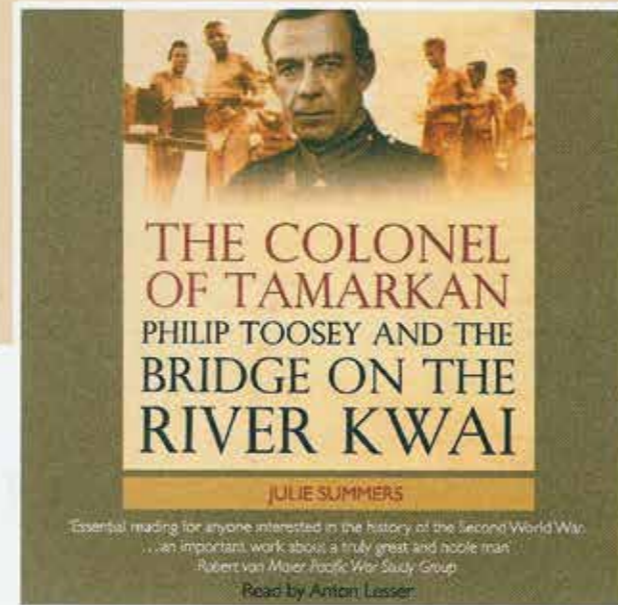
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