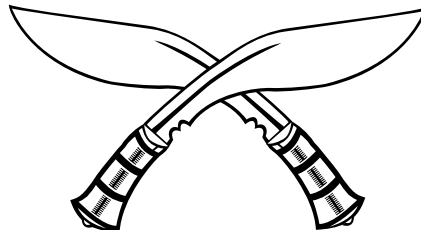


The Kukri



The Journal of
The Brigade of Gurkhas
2011



The Kukri

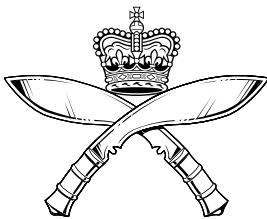
NUMBER 62

March 2012

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

The Journal of The Brigade of Gurkhas 2011



Front Cover
Queen's Gurkha Orderly Officers

Capt Dhyanshad Rai RGR
Capt Narayanbahadur Bhandari QG Signals

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HM The Queen inspecting the parade during her visit to The Queen's Gurkha Engineers at Maidstone on 24 February 2011

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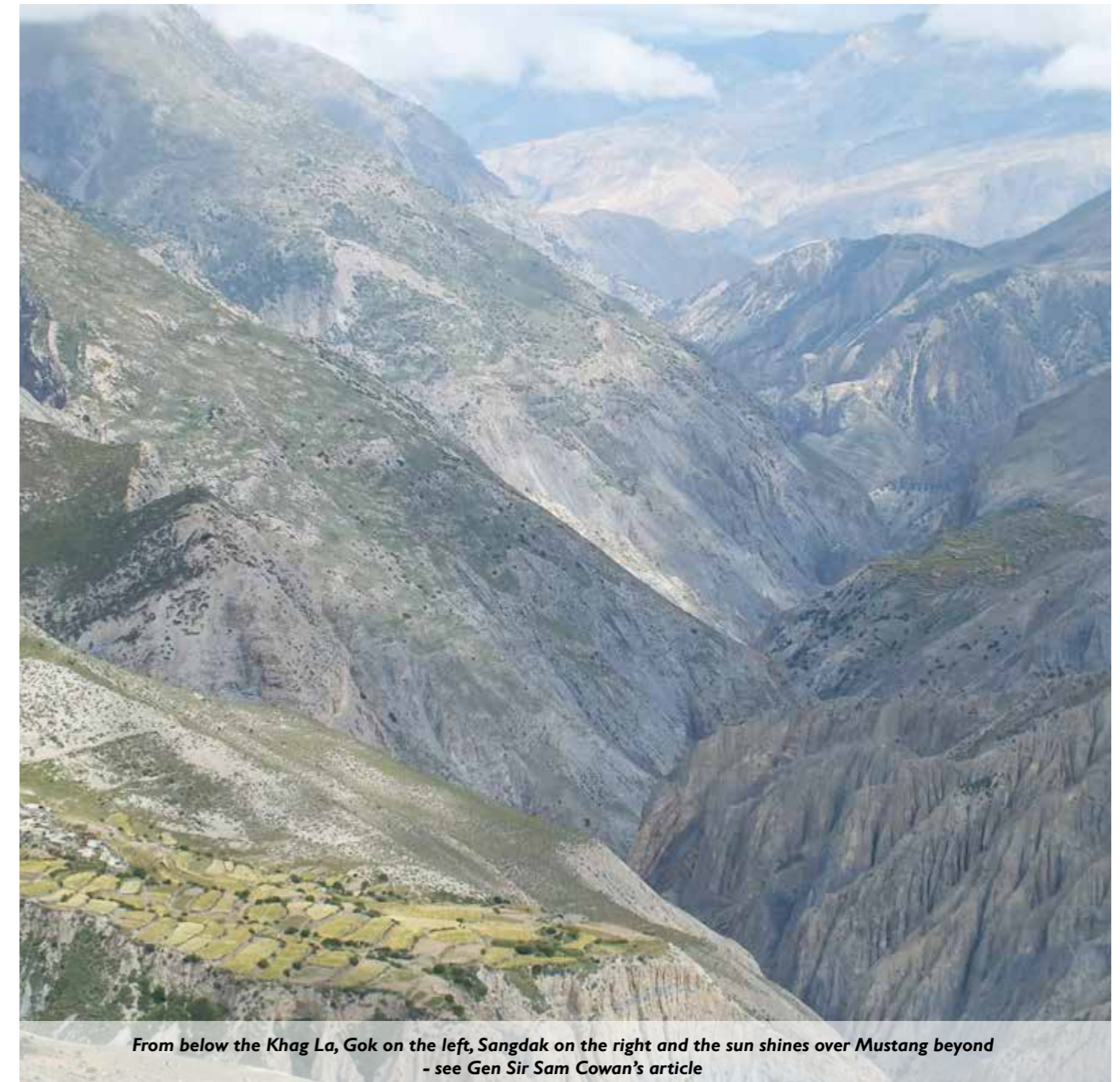
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*From below the Khag La, Gok on the left, Sangdak on the right and the sun shines over Mustang beyond
 - see Gen Sir Sam Cowan's article*

Foreword by Colonel Brigade of Gurkhas

The Kukri is a vitally important publication for the Brigade of Gurkhas and it is a great privilege to be asked to write a foreword. It provides an overview of every year of Gurkha service to the British Crown and is, as such, an invaluable record of our history. It is, however, more than just history; it puts the human face on the name Gurkha and, without bias, allows our officers and soldiers to put a voice to the tremendous work that they do in often very trying circumstances.

We have a story to tell and it is right that we do so, with due reverence and humility, as is our kaida. 2011 has been a very difficult year in a challenging security environment. The UK still wishes to remain a global player in a very uncertain world, for which it requires agile and adaptable armed forces. It is, however, facing significant financial and economic constraints which have led to a planned downsizing of the Regular Army to 94,000 by 2015 and potentially 82,000 by 2020. The Strategic Defence and Security Review and Future Army Structure 2020 will determine the contribution to be made by the Brigade of Gurkhas and we must continue to understand this vital context. Linked to this is redundancy. We are 700 overstrength against our liability and we have no option but to reduce our numbers. Failure to do so will result in imbalanced structures, slow or no promotion, and exceptionally difficult career management. These 700 personnel, however, are not just numbers, they are our brothers within the wide Brigade of Gurkhas family, and we have a duty to look after them and ease their transition into either a second career or on transfer to other parts of the Army where they can continue their service. I would like to thank the chain of command for all that you have done to assist us with this.

Finally, it is pertinent to reflect on our service with a simple message that outlines why our continued service is important to the British Army:

Gurkhas have served the British Crown in the East India Company, Indian Army and the British Army since 1815. The latter arrangement, initiated when the Brigade of Gurkhas was formed in British Service in 1948, is based on the terms of the Tripartite Agreement between Nepal, Britain and India which allows Gurkhas to serve in formed units under unique terms of service different to other Foreign and Commonwealth countries.

The Brigade of Gurkhas is an integral, adaptable and flexible part of the modern British Army. The Brigade provides a unique military capability based not just on its cultural identity and operational effectiveness, but the fact that it adopts a 'band of brothers' approach to its capability. It has six capbadges (Royal Gurkha Rifles, Queen's Gurkha Engineers, Queen's Gurkha Signals, Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment, Gurkha Staff and Personnel Support and the Gurkha Band) **who are all trained as infantry first**. Gurkha units are also fully manned.

Most importantly, Gurkhas provide an invaluable strategic manpower reserve for the British Army. This has been constantly tested since 1948, particularly in Malaya, Borneo and Hong Kong, but no more so than post 1997 and the withdrawal from Hong Kong. As one example, the Royal Gurkha Rifles provided three Gurkha Reinforcement Rifle Companies (GRCs) from 1996-2003, and two from 2006 to date. Their role is to reinforce undermanned British infantry units deploying on operations. In this 12 year period, they have deployed 18 times on operational tours in East Timor, Sierra Leone, Iraq, the Congo, Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia, the Falkland Islands, Belize and numerous times to Afghanistan. In addition, the Corps Units have all expanded considerably to mitigate undermanning in their parent Corps and have been on almost continuous operational service in the Balkans, Iraq, Afghanistan, the Congo and Libya. It is an impressive record that stands on its own merits.

Nevertheless, our contribution is only achievable because the Nepalese Government continues to support the recruitment of Nepalese citizens into the British Army **in formed Gurkha Units**, and there is no shortage of potential recruits. Recruit numbers can be predicted with accuracy and can also be adjusted up or down to suit the requirements of the British Army.

Furthermore, individual Gurkhas have been eligible to serve on transfer in the wider British Army since 2006 once they have served five years in the Brigade of Gurkhas. This enables Gurkhas who are in a very strong peer group within their own Gurkha unit to increase their promotion chances outside the Brigade. To date 519 have transferred which has helped manning in the wider Army.

We must, however, not be complacent and our approach to our profession must continue to be based on a simple precept; operationally we must be the best, and we must achieve this by harnessing our strengths which are our Regimental identity and our kaida - the heady mix of our military traditions, Nepali culture (*sanskritik*), and our unique Gurkha character (*chalchalan*).

We are unique, we must remain humble, and we must continue to excel to maintain our place in the British Army. We are all up to the challenge and we have a lot more yet to offer. Thank you all for your service, your personal and collective sacrifices, and the immaculate way in which you continue to undertake your duty.

Jai Hos Sathi Ho, Jai Gurkhali, Hami Jasto Kohi Chhaina
(There is nobody quite like us - we are unique).

Colonel I A Rigden OBE

Colonel Brigade of Gurkhas

Editorial

Gurkha courage takes many forms. There is the stubborn unconquerable valour that defends a vital position. There is the hot-blooded gallantry that storms an enemy strongpoint. There is the 'routine', day-to-day bravery in the face of the ever-present but often unseen dangers of active service. And then there is the indomitable fortitude that overcomes terrible wounds and still manages to face the future with an unbroken spirit. The 2011 edition of *The Kukri* has examples of all of these.

On 12 December 2010, Havildar Lachhiman Gurung VC died in hospital in London, a long way in space and time from the trench covering the jungle trail at Taungdaw which he defended against wave upon wave of fanatical and desperate Japanese in May 1945, his right arm smashed by a grenade and his two comrades lying wounded and helpless at his feet. On 20 April 2011, Lachhiman's next door neighbour in the Chiswick War Memorial Homes, Hon Lieutenant (QGO) Tulbahadur Pun VC, died during a visit to his home village in Nepal, reminding us of his capture of the heavily-fortified Red House at Mogaung in June 1944 in the teeth of the most shattering concentration of automatic fire. The journal contains tributes to both VCs, and reproduces their citations.

There is ample evidence here too of day-to-day courage, shown by our soldiers in Afghanistan, as they operate in areas fiercely contested by the insurgents, and thickly sown with improvised explosive devices. There are several excellent articles on the deployment of the 2nd Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles on Op HERRICK 14 - including a very crisp and illuminating overview by their CO, Lieutenant Colonel Fraser Rea, and some thoughtful and far-seeing reflections by Major Jamie Murray. There are also interesting accounts of The Queen's Gurkha Engineers' Commandos and of G (Tobruk) Company and 246 Gurkha Signal Squadron.

Current operations have resulted in some 50 members of the Brigade suffering grave injuries which have changed their lives. Among them, none suffered such grievous wounds as Rifleman Sachin Limbu of 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles, and none responded with more dauntless determination. He finally succumbed on 2 January 2012, after a fight lasting 18 months, but he set an example of cheerful stoicism which inspired - and will always inspire - those who knew him or knew of him. Tributes to him are published in this journal, alongside those to eight other gallant members of the Brigade who gave their lives between January 2010 and January 2012 and obituaries of a number of distinguished wartime officers who have passed away.

Balancing the record of sacrifice is the list of Honours and Awards, including the Distinguished Service Order for Lieutenant Colonel Gez Strickland, the Conspicuous Gallantry Cross for Sergeant Dipprasad Pun and the Military Cross for Rifleman Sunil Limbu.

Thus, courage past and present is a dominant theme in this *Kukri*. But there is much else besides. The usual authoritative and comprehensive review is provided by the Colonel Commandant's Report to the President of Nepal which

surveys the full range of issues bearing on the Brigade, from operational success to the regrettable matter of redundancies. This will be General Sir David Richards's last report before he hands over to General Sir Peter Wall at the end of March 2012. It will be for the next *Kukri* to express in full our gratitude for all that General David has done for the Brigade, and for the time and enthusiasm he has devoted to us, despite the pressures of being successively CinC Land Command, Chief of the General Staff and Chief of the Defence Staff. We extend a warm welcome to General Peter, the Chief of the General Staff, who knows the Brigade well from his service in The Queen's Gurkha Engineers.

We also welcome a new Colonel Brigade of Gurkhas, Colonel Ian Rigden, late 2 GR and RGR, who took over from Colonel David Hayes on 1 September 2011. *The Kukri* includes a foreword by Colonel Ian (and a short biography which underlines his impeccable credentials for the post of Colonel BG) and a farewell message from Colonel David, with an account of his departure on retirement and the sincere and grateful encomiums which he received.

There are in this edition - as always - first-class reports from the units of the Brigade covering all aspects of their life and work. Among these, British Gurkhas Nepal and the Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment have provided particularly absorbing and comprehensive chapters, while the newly-formed Gurkha Staff and Personnel Support Company features here for the first time.

Look also for reports of the Brigade's success on the ranges - notably Queen's Gurkha Signals at Bisley and a young RGR-centred team at the international combat shooting competition in Canada.

We have impressive chapters provided by the Royal Australian Regiment and the 2nd/1st Battalion Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment, which vividly convey the fine spirit and high operational quality of these allied regiments. We are fortunate, too, to have several tremendous individual articles. These include General Sir Sam Cowan's account of the astonishing journey which he and Lady Cowan made to the remote Northern Borderland of Nepal. There are several fascinating pieces by Lieutenant Colonel John Cross, among them a charming survey of his encounters during his morning walks over the years. We also have a review of *The Fame of the Name* - the fourth in the epic series of novels by Colonel Cross which trace the history of the Gurkhas.

As prefigured in the editorial to the 2009/10 edition, this *Kukri* covers the balance of 2010 and the whole of 2011. We are grateful to our contributors for helping us catch up and for providing such very good material. The deadline for the 2012 edition will be 14 December 2012. With further operational tours in progress or impending, with the Diamond Jubilee and the Olympics, and with all the other activities of the units of the Brigade, there will no doubt be much to report - and much to add to the record of Gurkha courage, prowess and esprit de corps which *The Kukri* attempts to maintain.



General Sir David Richards GCB CBE DSO ADC Gen, Chief of the Defence Staff and Colonel Commandant 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 GCB 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. It is with regret that this will be my last report as I come to the end of my tenure and handover to General Sir Peter Wall, Chief of the General Staff, in March 2012. It has been an honour to serve the Brigade of Gurkhas and I leave with fond memories of my time with Gurkhas and their homeland-Nepal.

The Brigade of Gurkhas has remained a key part of the British Army's deployable contingent on operations and the

military capability the Gurkha soldiers deliver is highly regarded and valued. On the current operations in Afghanistan - the British Army's Main Effort, I am delighted to report that all members of the Brigade of Gurkhas continue to achieve success in very challenging circumstances. In 2010/2011, 15 out of the 20 deployable Gurkha sub units have manpower either currently deployed or have returned from operations in Afghanistan and other parts of the world. However, as operations in Afghanistan transitions from primarily counter-insurgency to stabilization, we will continue will continue to press for the Brigade of Gurkhas



A Gurkha Infantry patrol in Afghanistan in August 2011

to play an active part - linking strongly with the generally acknowledged cultural and language affinity that Gurkha soldiers can bring to training and partnering. One potential avenue is the manning requirement of the Afghan Officers and Non Commissioned Officers Training Schools post transition.

The human cost of operations is very evident to the UK's general population and in Nepal. The Brigade of Gurkhas has sadly now lost 11 soldiers since the conduct of operations in Afghanistan and has 49 soldiers seriously wounded in action. It is with deep regret that I reflect on the tragic death of a Gurkha soldier during the past year whilst deployed on operations in Afghanistan. Rifleman Vijay Rai, of the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles, died on 15 October 2011 as a result of enemy action when the checkpoint that he and his team were protecting in the Nahr-e-Saraj district of Helmand Province came under insurgent small arms fire. Rifleman Vijay Rai's body was repatriated to Nepal to enable the last rites to be carried out by his family in his home town of Dharan in Sunsari district. A through-life welfare support package is available for our Wounded-in-Action and to the families of our soldiers Killed-in-Action. We take responsibilities in this area very seriously and will look after them to the best of our ability.

The UK Government's Strategic Defence and Security Review announced in October 2010 outlined the requirement to restructure the British Army to a Whole Army Strength of 94,350 by 2015. A second target has now been set of a

reduction to 82,000 by 2020. As part of the initial British Defence restructuring, the British Army announced on 1 September 2011 the measures to reduce the Army by 7,000 men and women. It will include over 5000 redundancies in four tranches over the next few years to 2015. As part of the first tranche, 146 Gurkhas have been affected and additional reductions are currently subject of further work. The Brigade of Gurkhas has been growing in size since the introduction in 2007 of their new Gurkha Terms and Conditions of Service which allows them to serve for longer, up to 22 years. The Brigade of Gurkhas is therefore 750 personnel over its given establishment. This reduction in Gurkha manpower has therefore been anticipated for some time. All affected personnel are given 12 months notice and will be given a programme of resettlement into civilian life.

Notwithstanding the requirement to restructure the Army, Gurkha Recruiting remains strong. In 2011, more than 7500 applicants applied from which 176 male recruits were selected at our Recruiting Depot in Pokhara. Recruit numbers are likely to reduce to 126 in 2013 and 2014 until the excess Gurkha manpower can be reduced; however, we anticipate a significant increase to over 200 a year post 2015 when our structures have been re-balanced. We will brief your Government of any adjustments required well in advance. We wish to ensure that we maintain a balanced manning structure within the Brigade of Gurkhas and therefore our recruiting targets will have to be more flexible than in the past.



Gurkha Recruits Passing Out Parade

We recognize that our continued recruitment is with the goodwill of your government reflecting the long standing and proud relationship of friendship between our two countries. We are extremely grateful for your continued support.

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 GTACOS Implementation is scheduled to conclude in 2012. Overall implementation is progressing well albeit during a challenging period of high operational tempo and media interest both in the UK and Nepal regarding Gurkha pension and immigration issues.

The families of serving Gurkhas can after a period of time 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 who have settlement will now pay the same tuition fees as their British counterparts.

In my report last year, I updated you on the Judgement announced by the UK High Court on the Gurkha Pensions Judicial Review held in October 2009. I would like to draw your attention to the outcome of an appeal heard at the Court of Appeal, on 13 October 2010, which have again found comprehensively in the UK Ministry of Defence favour thus underlining its position on Gurkha Pensions. 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.

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 last 18 months have seen a substantial surge of retired Gurkhas coming to the UK under the 2009 UK Settlement rules. It allows all Gurkhas who served in the British Army between 1948 and 1997 for more than 4 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 and statutory support if they require it in UK.

As Chairman of the Gurkha Welfare Trust, I am pleased to report that the Trust, through its field arm the Gurkha Welfare Scheme, remains at the forefront in the provision of welfare support to ex-Gurkhas and their dependants who are in need in Nepal. In Financial Year 2010/11 the cost of this support exceeded £12,000,000, 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 9,000 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 has recently completed the construction of its first residential home in Kaski, west Nepal. The home provides residential care for up to 26 individuals who are in circumstances of very real distress. A second home is planned for construction in Dharan, east Nepal, to be complete by Spring 2013. Trustees continue to see this area of activity as an essential response to a new and emerging need. The intention is that the homes will provide a dignified environment centred on a culture of respect and care for the elderly to those in conditions of very real distress.

The Trust continues 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. The Gurkha Welfare Centre in the UK acts as an initial point of contact for all those seeking help and assists with the coordination of both welfare and statutory support. However, the Trust does not 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



Residential Home at Kaski

In conclusion, the Brigade of Gurkhas' reputation remains high in the British public and has been re-enforced by the Gurkhas' performance and valued contribution to our military operations around the world. I am delighted to reassure you that despite ongoing change and high operational tempo, the Brigade of Gurkhas remains in extremely good heart and morale is high. 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
January 2012

given much devoted help to Gurkhas in need. This will enable the Trust to retain its focus on its abiding priority: the provision of welfare support in Nepal.

The Trust's extensive activities in Nepal and increasingly in UK 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.



General Sir David Richards presenting Operational Service Medals for service in Afghanistan to soldiers of the 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles in January 2011

Honours and Awards 2010/2011

Queen's Birthday Honours List 2010

MBE Maj B McKay AGC (SPS)

New Year's Honours List

GCB Gen Sir David Richards, KCB CBE DSO ADC Gen
MBE Maj J P Davies RGR

Queen's Birthday Honours List 2011

MBE 21168184 LCpl Ambarbahadur Khadka RGR
MVO Capt Chinbahadur Thapa RGR
Capt Devkumar Gurung QGE
MSM Capt Diwan Limbu QOGLR

Operational Honours & Awards List

DSO Lt Col G M Strickland MBE RGR
CGC 21170401 Cpl Dipprasad Pun RGR
MC 30085704 Rfn Sunil Limbu RGR
MiD Maj S W M Chandler RGR
Capt P A Houlton-Hart RGR
Capt Shureshkumar Thapa RGR
221171210 LCpl Nabin Rai RGR
30048314 Rfn Maniraj Gurung RGR
QCVS 21168949 Cpl Manoj Gurung RGR

JT COMD Commendations (Afghanistan)

Capt R A W Roylance RGR
Capt EV Simpson RGR
Capt Tarabahadur Pun QGE
21170654 Cpl Govinda Gurung RGR
21169581 Cpl Kamare Budha RGR
21171045 LCpl Khagendra Gurung RGR
30048367 Rfn Binod Gurung RGR
21171363 Rfn Hanock Thapa RGR
30048386 Rfn Praveen Rai RGR

Comd Task Force Helmand Commendation

21169692 A/Sgt Govinda Gurung RGR
21171247 LCpl Ale Magar Suman RGR
21171866 Rfn Amrit Gurung RGR
30085121 Rfn Manbahadur Thapa RGR

Roll of Honour

Operational Casualties in the Brigade of Gurkhas

January 2010 to January 2012

The Royal Gurkha Rifles

Maj J J Bowman	13 July 2010
Lt N Turkington	13 July 2010
Cpl Arjun Purja Pun	13 July 2010
LCpl Gajbahadur Gurung	27 January 2012
Rfn Remand Kulung	12 August 2010
Rfn Sachin Limbu	2 January 2012
Rfn Suraj Gurung	2 October 2010
Rfn Vijay Rai	15 October 2011

The Queen's Gurkha Engineers

Spr Ishwor Gurung	13 August 2010
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Operational Awards - Citations

Distinguished Service Order

Lieutenant Colonel Gerald Mark Strickland, MBE

The Royal Gurkha Rifles Commanding Officer Afghanistan, Apr - Sep 10

Despite suffering significant casualties, Lieutenant Colonel Strickland has fought an unrelenting battle to stabilise a key rural area of central Helmand. Strickland and his Battlegroup have achieved a remarkable success in tipping the balance against the insurgents thus giving Afghan Governance a real opportunity for success.

Based in what was the most challenging of areas, comprising of scattered settlements and few roads, whose inhabitants were easy prey to insurgent intimidation, the police had little control and the government no influence. Displaying flawless judgement he identified the key villages he needed to hold and

then fought an aggressive campaign to seize control of them and build and secure roads between them to establish freedom of movement for the population.

Through all the setbacks and many challenges he faced, Strickland motivated his men with a steely sense of purpose. They did not falter. As he built check-points and roads he patiently reached out to the local communities and won over their support. The expansion of government control of his area was slow and gradual but it was irresistible and within months Strickland achieved his goal: the local insurgents began to feel intimidated.

Conspicuous Gallantry Cross Acting Sergeant Dipprasad Pun The Royal Gurkha Rifles Alpha Mortar Fire Controller Afghanistan, 17 Sep 10

Acting Sergeant Pun's platoon had been manning two checkpoints in the east of a remote village. This isolated outpost had been attacked regularly since being established, with grenade attacks being the preferred enemy tactic.

On the evening of the day in question, Pun was one of four men left in the southern compound because the platoon had pushed out a patrol to dominate the road to the east in readiness for the next day's parliamentary elections. All were taking turns to man a single sangar position on the roof in the centre of the compound. Pun was on duty when he heard a clinking noise to the south of the checkpoint and had the presence of mind to gather up two radios, which would enable him to both speak to his Commander and to call in artillery support, his personal

weapon, and a General Purpose Machine Gun. Realising that he was about to be attacked, he quickly informed his Commander on one of the radios, and fired a weapon launched grenade at the enemy. Pun single-handedly fought off an enemy attack onto his lightly manned position. In the dark he took the enemy head on as he moved around his position to fend off the attack from three sides, killing three assailants and causing the others to flee. In doing so he saved the lives of his three comrades and prevented the position from being overrun.

Pun could never know how many enemies were attempting to overcome his position, but he sought them out from all angles despite the danger, consistently moving towards them to reach the best position of attack.

Military Cross Rifleman Sunil Limbu The Royal Gurkha Rifles Rifleman Afghanistan, 21 Jun 10

Despite sustaining injuries to his legs and hands from shrapnel during a direct enemy mortar attack, resulting in injuries to several of his team, Rifleman Limbu seized the initiative and staggered forward through the area to drag his Platoon Commander into the relative cover of a nearby compound.

Limbu then exposing himself to the continuing intermittent and highly unpredictable weapon launched grenade fire, returned to the area to reach an Afghan interpreter who was also hit, removing him to safety. It was only once he was satisfied that the other casualties were safe that he succumbed

to his own injuries, which by this time were so serious that he could no longer stand. The fire fight lasted over forty minutes, and it was not until the enemy were beaten back by an attack helicopter that Sunil and his other wounded colleagues could be evacuated, and he could receive surgery.

As the most junior Rifleman in the patrol, Limbu acted with extreme courage in the face of a critically dangerous situation at great risk to himself, and despite painful and serious wounds. His actions prevented his Platoon Commander and interpreter from receiving further injuries and energised his team into evacuating and treating the remaining Afghan Army casualties.



Cpl Dipprasad Pun RGR, Lt Col G M Strickland RGR and Rfn Sunil Limbu RGR

Operations

2nd Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles

Op HERRICK 14 - Commanding Officer's Overview

By Lt Col F J Rea, CO 2 RGR

As I look back on Op HERRICK 14, I thought I'd start by trying to summarize the exam question at the heart of the police mentoring task and central to why the UK has troops still deployed. Within the next two years, the UK will remove all combat troops from Helmand. This means handing over security to the Afghan Police in the protected communities, a process that started in Lashkar Gar in July 2012. Before this happens, the Afghan Security Forces must become capable of delivering security without the assistance of the 6000 UK, Danish and Estonian troops currently deployed there. The departure of so many ISAF troops and capabilities will leave a security gap. Preparing the police to close this gap was our challenge and it will continue to be the question faced by future Police Mentoring and Advisory Groups (PMAGs) as we approach 2014.

Of course 2 RGR contributed much more than just police mentors. Initially selected to be the PMAG for Op HERRICK 14, the Battalion's manpower bill was relatively modest. It amounted to 200 personnel, which was then to be augmented by attachments from the Royal Military Police, Royal Signals and Intelligence Corps. This allowed us to generate two additional ground holding rifle companies. A Company was then attached to 1 RIFLES, to occupy Patrol Base (PB) 1 in the Nahr-e-Saraj District. B Company joined 45 Commando. They were to be based in and around PB Chilli, in Nad-e-Ali.

Lengthy pre-deployment training (PDT) in UK meant our journey to Afghanistan was a difficult one; challenging, frustrating and rewarding in equal measure. The UK focus (for a Brunei-based battalion) meant long periods of family separation. Looking back, the conditions we lived in were more austere than most Helmand PBs and the food was certainly not a patch on what would be produced throughout the tour. It was an irony not lost on many that the last people to stay in Rolleston Camp on Salisbury Plain for so long were Iraqi internees from the Gulf War. Although enthusiastic, the organizations whose job it was to prepare us had little or no knowledge of the police mentoring task or how best to train for it. This meant an evolving, and ever changing, build up programme. A C2 arrangement stretching from Plymouth to Arbroath, through Folkestone and Germany, back to Brunei added to the complexity and the friction.

Despite these obstacles, as PDT drew to an end I was more than satisfied that the end result was a fit for purpose PMAG and a training pipeline that looked certain to improve significantly for our successors. We leant into the training with open minds, 'josh' and a willingness to learn. In return,

the reception and welcomes from both 3 Commando and 7 Brigades were tremendous. In spite of the conditions, what the long hours in Rolleston did achieve was to bring the Battalion together. Dashain that year, in tents on a muddy football pitch at Rolleston, was one of the most enjoyable on record. The morale, the confidence and the trust that would pull us through difficult times in HERRICK 14 was there. We were hitting the line of departure, with more to give and we were ready for Afghanistan.

Focusing firstly on the PMAG, the challenge of building a new police force for central Helmand was a huge and daunting task. What we lacked in policing experience was made up for in industry, initiative and the natural cultural affinity of the Gurkha soldier with the locals. The Afghan Police Force has a chequered past but is improving rapidly. They now have leaders emerging who are keen to tackle their own problems and it was our job to help steer them in the right direction, give them a nudge when they hesitated and rein them back should they become a little too ambitious. For Gurkhas, blessed with patience, professionalism and good humour, it was a role for which we were ideally suited.

On HERRICK 14 the approach to the PMAG task had to change. A rapidly filling police taskiel (their manpower cap) meant reduced recruiting headroom. We were no longer able to just keep recruiting more police, growing their force and increasing counter insurgent 'boots on the ground' to meet the threat. The police had to start becoming much more efficient and effective with what they already had. Shifting the mentoring focus from quantity to quality was at the heart of our approach during the tour. Moving from recruiting, training and deploying additional numbers of policemen to developing an organisation that was more resilient, more operationally effective and that will be able to stand on its own two feet beyond 2014 was our goal.

This shift in focus didn't mean that the recruiting and training of new police was at an end. There remained an inevitable natural turnover of police manpower and sadly the police continue to suffer a heavy toll of casualties in the front line of the insurgency fight. The team in the Regional Training Centre (RTC), headed up by Major Dave Lee, was exceptionally busy. Over 1300 trainees graduated over six months, feeding both Helmand and Nimruz Provinces. The team at the RTC had an eye very much on the future and how they could contribute to the Transition process. They began the process of preparing Afghan instructors to run the training themselves and establish the centre on a permanent footing. A particular highlight by

the end of the tour was the influx of large numbers of NCOs; developing an experienced and capable leadership spine that will mitigate the impact of our departure in 2014 is a significant campaign milestone. Equally important was getting students moved out of aging tentage and into permanent purpose-built accommodation and classrooms. By the end of the team's six months the diversity of courses available was increasing and it looks set to be an institution that will endure long after we are gone.

For the rest of PMAG, our focus was on improving every aspect of their organization, developing their leadership and improving their accountability, both to the public and amongst themselves. This wasn't root and branch reform, merely fine-tuning and improving an Afghan system already in place. Everything we did was with one eye on Transition and putting Afghans into the lead. We aimed to mentor every aspect of provincial, district and precinct level police business and this mapped across neatly to Battalion, Company and Platoon level within 2 RGR. This meant that the PMAG team, though small, was spread across the whole of Task Force Helmand.

How did we do? Well, it's difficult to mark one's own homework without being too biased. What I say to the Gurkhas is that trying to track the progress of the police in our six months is like watching your own child grow up. When you live with that child every day, it is sometimes difficult to spot the gradual changes. When you step away and then come back, the difference you notice can be startling. It has been like that with the police. Yes, there is a long way to go and there are still many problems to be addressed. I am the first one to admit that the Afghan National Police Force is far from perfect. However, for the first time across many parts of Helmand, the police are not being seen as part of the problem. They are being recognized and welcomed by the locals as part of the long term solution. Since 20 July 2011, the Afghan Police, not ISAF and not the Afghan National Army, have had responsibility for central Lashkar Gar and their security remit will continue to expand towards 2014. They have shown a growing appetite, ability and confidence to plan and operate independently and determine their own direction of travel (even if it is often difficult to guess which way they are going!). The emergence, success and validation of the PMAG-mentored Operational Coordination Centres (OCCs) and the work of the Police Advisory Teams has been critical to this progress. Police decisions and behaviour can still infuriate but seeing them impose their sovereignty and move firmly into the lead is a real marker on the road to campaign success.

On their administrative and personnel side, after six months work on police numbers, transparency and accountability, we now have a firm grasp of their force generation capacity. This is as boring as it sounds but has become critical information whilst we plan the resourcing of the 'HOLD' of future planned ops. In many cases this has proved a reality check on ISAF ambitions. The police ID card system has been re-energized and all recruits now leave the RTC with a card in hand - an essential check on corruption. Their pay system has improved, and in some cases has been overhauled, driving down another means of illicit income generation. As we left, a Helmand-wide

police manpower audit was taking place that will rid the police of potentially hundreds of 'ghosts' who appear on the police payroll but not in the checkpoints.

The weakness of the Afghan logistic chain is widely recognized. In fact their system works but is unbelievably fragile. Its success rests on the shoulders of a single man in each police district. Someone with a huge sense of irony must have coined the term 'Trusted Agent'. Their behaviour is erratic (I am being kind here) but has improved with cajolement and coercion. With it, so has the resilience of their G4 system. Our successors still have much work to do and we pushed through increases to the PMAG structure to thicken up the 20 Brigade mentoring construct. There has been real progress on police infrastructure plans, an unglamorous but critical part of tying down the ANSF 2014 security vision that we are working towards. The Police Advisory Teams (PATs) facilitated the handover of over 20 checkpoints to ANP, freeing up more than two companies worth of troops for reinvestment elsewhere. Widening the police provincial reach through improved communications and the development of a SWAT capability was also in our sights, encouraging the police to take a more provincial and ambitious view of what they will be able to do and hold once we leave.

As you can see, the PMAG portfolio was fairly diverse but a fascinating challenge nonetheless. Delivering the mentoring effect, the PMAG team was exposed to just the same 'routine' risks as the Combined Forces but also lived with the very real shadow of the insider threat from the people we were there to help and develop. It is a danger that we sadly know all about in RGR and, tragically, two USMC police mentors were killed by their mentees in Lashkar Gar early in the tour. We say that cultural understanding is our first line of defence against this danger; a close second is close quarter pistol handling drills.

Elsewhere across the province, the Gurkhas of A & B Company made outstanding contributions to the counter insurgency fight in two very different areas of operation. They have detailed their exploits much more effectively in other articles of this journal so I will only summarize their efforts here. In Nad-e-Ali, B Company effectively suppressed the insurgency for the duration of the traditional summer fighting season. In a tribally complex and geographically dispersed AO, they were relentless in their approach and tempo and did not give the enemy the oxygen or the space to operate. Due to their efforts, the locals are now seeing the tangible benefits of the Afghan Government and are beginning actively to reject the insurgency in their villages. In Nahr-e-Saraj, A Company inherited an Area of Operation that was one of the most 'kinetic' and dangerous in Helmand. They sat right on the edge of one of the remaining Forward Lines of Enemy Troops left in Task Force Helmand. Often unsupported, they were used to keep the insurgency bottled up in an area known as Ops Box EEL to allow major Task Force-level operations to take place elsewhere. They had to cope with particularly truculent local police and army commanders and deeply impressed the 1 RIFLES Commanding Officers who they worked for. It was a tragedy and a huge blow to everyone to lose Rfn Vijay so close to the end of their tour.

For many Gurkhas under my command, this was their fourth or fifth time in Afghanistan. Without a doubt, their work benefited from this level of experience and by the strong ties that the Gurkha soldier seems to establish quickly with his Afghan counterpart. Shared interests, languages and humour have made the job of mentoring easier as friendships were made, in some cases re-established, and hardships shared. The other big force multiplier was the fantastic support of our families and the rear ops team that we left in Brunei and the UK. For everyone involved, and with most of our pre-deployment spent in UK, it

Op HERRICK 14 Reflections

By Maj J C Murray, OC B Company, 2 RGR - Combined Force Nad-e-Ali South

B (Gallipoli) Company, 2 RGR deployed to Afghanistan in late March 2011 as a Ground Holding Sub Unit, as part of 45 Commando. The Company deployed to Nad-e-Ali (South) (NDA-S), a vast expanse of green and canal zones, flanked by deserts. A Summer tour, the Company conducted over 1,000 foot patrols focussed upon defeating the insurgency, whilst expediting reconstruction and deepening the hold of the Afghan Government in an area traditionally home to malign, anti-government influences.

This article, written from Patrol Base Chilli, Nad-e-Ali, first appeared in the RGR Regimental Newsletter in October 2011. Whilst it has been updated, the thesis remains the same: parts of Afghanistan are on an upward trajectory - aided principally by the depth of understanding of the country as a whole - yet slow progress, gains which are reversible and Afghan/Pakistan political inertia writ large all serve as very real restraints to a satisfactory outcome in the country.

Afghanistan, and the attendant difficulties across the campaign, remains, much to the chagrin of many across Whitehall and beyond, at the front and centre of current military thinking. Whilst senior officers urge our community to think beyond the campaign - notably as the Army transforms - the stark reality is that there is unfinished business in theatre that, notwithstanding ever-changing definitions of success, must be completed. This article reflects on Afghanistan in the round - and is written following multiple deployments to theatre including a stint as an Afghan analyst in MOD. Perhaps more importantly, it is written from Afghanistan - where, for readers of The Kukri in particular, it has been abundantly clear that Gurkhas are a force multiplier. I am unashamedly biased. It is absolutely clear that our men, in some shape or form, have much to offer here, both now and in the future - a fact that, because of who we are, we are obliged to prove at every turn.

Much has been written about Afghanistan, by me and others before. After all our, and in particular 2 RGR's, recent involvement in this country dates back to late 2001. Over 50% of B Company, 2 RGR are on their fourth tour of duty (for 45 Commando that figures reads first tour). Thus our recent Regimental history is crammed full of anecdotes, tour updates and high-octane tales from the front. And rightly so given the human cost the Gurkhas and others have endured in this part of the world.

has felt like a 12 month tour. We are immensely proud of what we have achieved and the progress we ushered in. But, as we handed over the police mentoring baton to 1st Battalion The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment and A and B Companies did the same in their AOs, I think we were definitely ready to come home. It continues to be a huge honour and privilege to be in command of 2 RGR and to have had the opportunity to lead Gurkhas on operations. Whatever the future holds, having seen the Battalion handle everything thrown at them in Afghanistan, I am confident that 2 RGR is ready for the challenges ahead.

More broadly, writing on Afghanistan as a whole has increased exponentially since Helmand became the focus of the UK's contribution to NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in late 2005. This ranges from doctrinally pure yet bamboozling articles on 'Shade Shift' (don't ask - I don't get it either), through lyrically-compelling articles on 'Accidental Counter-Insurgents', to the bottom-feeder tales of combat exploits found in all bookshops. All have their place and all reach a particular audience.

As an adjunct to this essay, I thought I would share with you what I consider to be one of the benefits that such a wealth of material has provided. As a result of the sheer volume and depth of such correspondence, the Afghan hinterland, in academic terms, has also deepened - and dramatically so. A bold statement for sure, but one that I believe gives some cause for hope for the future. Bold because of the horrific human cost of this knowledge, but promising because with such knowledge comes strength through understanding. Whilst it may be a truism that we in the Armed Forces, collectively and often overtly, chastise ourselves for not understanding Afghanistan, it is equally true to state that we now know more about this country, what makes it tick and what will never change, than we have ever done in our modern history. There is no place for Rumsfeldian slips in this article, but the point is valid and remains, in my experience, true across all of the important coalition players. Does this matter? In the short-term probably not - it certainly does nothing to appease the near pathological pessimism which afflicts the mainstream media, and then by default the British public. It certainly doesn't prevent the rush to simplicity by so many analysts and commentators who apply a uniform assessment to a country which is anything but uniform. Yes, this vast compendium of knowledge may, at the tactical level, assist in avoiding obvious pitfalls, yet it clearly depresses us at the same time; the deeper we dig, the more we discover we don't know.

But, and it is a big 'but', should our departure from this most complex of countries lead to a return of those who mean us harm on an international stage, I would argue strongly that our ability to deal with such a threat, given our knowledge of the human and physical terrain across this country, has also increased exponentially. This is the

strategic viewpoint and my reason for building confidence in this campaign in a geo-strategic sense. A generation of analysts be they academics, officers or diplomats, have done nothing other than study this country, and more importantly, its external influences in a vocational setting.

Collectively we know who the most important power-brokers are, where they live, where they draw strength. We know the geography of this land better than we ever have before. The external influences from Iran, Pakistan and the northern states are better, if not fully, understood. I would go as far as to say that we have a stronger idea of where any potential terrorist camps, cabals or just compounds are likely to be. This, combined with technological advances for the delivery of both soft and hard power, creates a position of some power which was simply not the case during the invasion of 2001. Witness the attrition of the Tehrik-e-Taleban Pakistan (TTP) for an example of cost-effective, remote targeting - with or without consideration to sovereignty. Notwithstanding such issues and the important yet oft-perfidious role of external actors in Afghanistan; most notably Pakistan's insincerity and inconsistency, this hard-earned knowledge of Afghanistan is, I argue, contributing to a safer future in line with our strategic defence principles. Such knowledge should enable, at least in part, the international community to deal with a transnational terrorism originating from Afghanistan - which is after all the reason we are here in the first place. But before this article degenerates into a geo-strategic ramble and I get rounded on for my own rush to simplicity by the famed 1 RGR academics, I must return to my dilemma. What to write? Do I add to this compendium and provide, as so many have before me, my two penn'orth of advice on how to succeed in Afghanistan tactically, operationally or strategically; or do I take the easier road and outline what B Company has been doing - and doing so well - in this our latest foray into Helmand?

So here it is. Imaginatively entitled 'Reflections', this article looks back at what has been an immensely challenging yet rewarding Op HERRICK 14 for the Gurkhas of B Company, 2 RGR who have soldiered superbly in what is colloquially called 'Full Spectrum Counter-Insurgency (COIN)'. My words may or may not add to the library of knowledge I have highlighted above. Instead this piece is designed to publicize our endeavours - and hopefully to go some way to counter the virtual tidal wave of bad news emanating from Afghanistan. I will conclude by highlighting a strange new trait by senior officers, politicians and others who are now, on the record, increasingly comparing Afghanistan to Northern Ireland. This in turn will lead to a slightly inevitable conclusion that this insurgency, just as was the case in Ulster, will only conclude with a negotiated peace settlement of some sort. There is no alternative.

To describe Full Spectrum COIN it is not necessary to do more than cast a glance at a typical week at the office for B Company in Afghanistan. Such a week involves a combination of all of the following events; framework patrolling (in previous language we called this 'standing patrols'); shuras with Village Elders; the facilitation of an 'Influence' event such as a Veterinary Engagement or a Female Health Initiative; religious outreach events; Afghan Security Force training events ('Partners Training Days'); deliberate night ambushes (now known as 'lurks');

deliberate company-level operations to clear insurgents from areas of interest; short-notice intelligence-triggered searches of suspected compounds; violent engagements at fixed ISAF locations; the delivery of government aid to the people; the finding and destruction of Improvised Explosive Devices (IED); the embedding (deep partnering) with nascent local police forces; and the identification and handling of Taleban fighters who wish to reintegrate into mainstream society. This, in a nutshell, is Full Spectrum COIN. Sounds familiar? The new three-Block War - quite probably. But what does this mean to us? Well, when combined with the need to lead, command, manage and sustain the force, what it really means is that a Ground Holding Sub Unit is right at the point of main effort (the decisive level), constantly wrestling with competing priorities, within a context of limited resources and challenging logistics. In other words, it is the men of a Rifle Company Group who are right at the tip of the spear; delivering the full range of effects from soft to hard, from humanitarian to combat, with and on behalf of, the Afghan Government, and always with an Afghan Security Force member close to hand. The result - complexity - and the need for the agile, intelligent application of the forces at our disposal. Each man is a sensor, each in his own right Krulak's Strategic Corporal. And each must understand his role in the campaign - not to exacerbate violence but to deal with it proportionately; to cope with, understand and manage Afghan inertia; to attempt to break the Afghan psychosis that a summer's fighting is inevitable; not to give an inch to the malign actors, but constantly to shift position to the mood of the locals amongst whom he lives and breathes; not to forget that outside a seemingly benign shura meeting, danger lurks nearby; and above all to apply the most remarkable amounts of tactical patience; not to take what is seen or heard at face value; not to over-react to an event; not to let his guard down; and constantly to tailor, in a nuanced fashion, the message. These are challenges which stretch the most capable officers - yet they are being asked daily of young Riflemen straight from the hills. For the Company HQ staff this means a constant tempo of challenging, complex and high-pressure 'serials'. For the men it means that this tour is unlike any of the tours of Afghanistan that have gone before (six in the case of the indomitable B Company CSM). Some context is required to explain this more fully.

B Company are responsible for a significant chunk of Afghan real estate here in Nad-e-Ali. Stretching some 9 kms by 8 kms; this 72 km square mass includes swathes of the infamous Green Zone, innumerable canals and ditches, the longest stretch of the NEB Canal and a sizeable chunk of desert - which is where the Taleban today coalesce. Other non-geographical challenges also exist. First, our operational centre of gravity is also the District centre of gravity inasmuch as it houses the largest centres of population in the District, including the District Centre (the 'Capital'); and second, because it is also home to four separate groupings of Afghan Security Forces, each of which are 'partnered' by B Company. Our area of operations is home to an estimated 25,000 people, tribally heterogeneous but bound together as Pashtuns - many of them xenophobes. Meanwhile, the Company regularly faces the omnipotent and oft-corrupt elected Government representatives and of course the presence of a tenacious insurgent, who, for his part, is seeking to reverse his seeming downward decline.

Layer on endemic corruption, opiates, smuggling, and the not insignificant detail of the UK's draw-down in three years, and the exam questions get tougher. And last, but by no means least, throw in the impact of the climate; wind, dust and excessive - near crippling - temperature, and the scene is set for a story which could rival any of those that grace the bottom shelves. Whilst this tour has so far failed to reach the 'kinetic' heights of those that have gone before, it has posed a set of monumental challenges for those charged with navigating such complex terrain.

The good news is that our training progression absolutely and unquestionably prepared us for these challenges. Yes, pre-deployment training (PDT) is a treadmill which gets steeper the further into it you progress. The burn bites as you hit the Final Test Exercise (FTX), as Commanders seek to balance the nights out of bed conundrum and the evident need to peak on time. For B Company this progression favoured the former - nights out of bed and separation due to our unique Brunei base saw extended periods away from home. But experience has shown us that some set periods of leave, be that Christmas or pre-deployment leave, work wonders and thus it was with high confidence that we departed Brunei, after nearly four months away from home, in the right physical and conceptual frame of mind.

During the Op HERRICK 14 tour, the Gurkhas of B Company conducted over 1,000 patrols, 33 company-level deliberate operations and an uncountable number of meetings and casual engagements with the people amongst whom we lived. We searched nearly 2300 compounds and enrolled, bio-metrically, 1000 fighting-age males. We arrested 31 of those suspicious individuals including some high-value targets, courtesy of the wizardry of our colleagues in the Special Forces. We worked alongside the United States Marine Corps on a deliberate operation deep into the desert to clear an area of insurgents - Texans and Gurkhas on the same wavelength, if not the same altitude. We were shot at and had mines laid in our paths. But we persevered and the Gurkha rose to each and every challenge with a professional panache that was remarkable. The fears that some of our younger generation are not up to it were well and truly put to bed. Well led, trained and resourced the Gurkha soldier today is as potent and professional as ever before.

As highlighted earlier in this piece, Nad-e-Ali today is drawing comparisons with operations in Northern Ireland - a reflection on the similarities of COIN principles in any such campaign, but perhaps more importantly a reflection on the progress that has been made in this District in particular. Less than two years ago Nad-e-Ali was a contested space, the most kinetic in Helmand and a virtual war-zone. Today the bazaars are open, the schools are functioning and the tentacles of government authority reach further and deeper than they ever have done before. Many of the attached ranks in my company group, and I myself, were lucky enough to serve in Ulster, albeit in different capacities. But it is not only these men who are likening the current operation to those Northern Ireland days; it is almost everyone of that generation, from senior visiting

officers to the officers and men of the Commando who served in the Province. So what draws the comparison? The context of each operation is completely different, as is the operational background. Even the most hardened Unionist or Republican couldn't hold a candle to a Pashtun in xenophobic terms. Afghanistan is, to paraphrase Dr Fox, 'a medieval' country - the less flattering commentators comparing it to the 'dark ages'. No one in my recollection called Ulster the dark ages - even on the darkest of days. The comparison is then surely not valid?

But to the soldier it is. The relentless, near monotonous, need to patrol - in a framework sense - is exactly like it was in Ulster. The effects we aspire to achieve are the same. Our need to understand the human terrain, what makes it work and what are the existential factors which are playing out, are as important here as they were in NI. The presence of corrupt, near mafia-type organizations, where violence and intimidation are the key tenets of success, is comparable. The need to police - and to be seen to be policing - is as important here as it was there, be that in partnership with incumbent security actors, or subordinate to the local forces. The need to engender support amongst the population, and to be a force for good acting on behalf of legitimate authorities, are also favourable comparisons. This is all good common sense stuff, particularly for those who understand COIN. Yes, Afghanistan is a country capable of immense violence in the name of religion. But an ideologue is an ideologue - and dealing with him in either country requires the same application of the same principles. People always. This mantra is succeeding in Nad-e-Ali. The people have tasted peace and security and they like it. And just like it was in NI, it is those people who will play the most important part in this country's future. It has been increasingly obvious to me and others that it is their role that will be the decisive one in ensuring security. Today, those same people have nearly rejected the insurgent; they tell us where the IEDs are and they indicate when things are not right. In short, they are the true counter-insurgents - not us. If this is sustained - and crucially, if nascent Afghan government structures can shake off the crippling inertia - then a turning point in this campaign is truly upon us. It is here that two obvious comparisons with Northern Ireland are not valid.

First, the Government of Afghanistan remains bedevilled by inertia - and prone to significant inadequacies. From corruption to open perfidy, the itch of developing the Government is set to last. The further up you go, the more bleak the outlook. Whether Karzai will force a constitutional change for a third term as President in 2013 - a famed Loya Jirga being required - or whether a credible alternative, a benevolent Pashtun or a northerner who appeals to the Pashtun, can be found remains an exam question which vexes the most dedicated of analysts. In Northern Ireland this was never a problem. And second, time is well and truly against us. The draw-down is real and happening. In my previous life as an Afghan analyst, we commissioned a study from King's College; the question 'how long does it take to defeat an insurgency in a failed state'. The answer: 15 years. Taking 2006 as the start of the insurgency in Helmand at least it is clear we are at risk of our ending our engagement here five years early. And thus the comparison to Northern Ireland

ends abruptly. Strategic patience wins in insurgencies. Sadly, that patience is not evident in the minds of international or domestic policy-makers today.

Beyond the obvious similarities at the tactical and operational level, the greatest comparison, given more time, lies ahead. And that comparison is the development of a negotiated peace settlement - the reintegration and reconciliation of malign actors. There is much interest in this subject; indeed a near volte face has occurred since my previous assignments to Washington and Tampa to discuss this very subject with our US allies. It is our American cousins who will after all either be a bulwark to such talks, or will initiate, supervise and navigate what is a political minefield. Whether our foes here in Afghanistan wish to entertain the idea of such discussions and possible

settlements remains to be seen. But what is sure is that the insurgent is not the same beast as he was in the past. The patina of ideological credibility is waning - faster than the insurgent leadership can keep up. The further removed the ideologues become, the more exposed the part-time fighters are - and the more prone to external and influence factors they become. With the crucial factor of time, and all other indicators of people resisting the insurgency, Afghan forces becoming more capable and Government emerging from self-induced inertia, there is real hope for success in Afghanistan. Perhaps here, the hinterland of Afghan academia will help - or at the very least, the international community can settle with the fact that international terrorists will find it (even with the help of a Taliban-aligned government should they succeed) much, much more difficult to take root in this benighted country.

Op HERRICK 14 - Photographs by Alex Schlacher





Training the Next Generation of Afghan National Police

By Maj D Lee, OC CSS Company

For the duration of Op HERRICK 14, 2 RGR provided a small, but important Afghan National Police (ANP) training element based in the Regional Training Centre. During the deployment, the men of 2 RGR, pre-dominantly drawn from CSS (Cassino) Company, trained hundreds of recruits and serving Afghan staff alike, across the full spectrum of police tasks and - in doing so - added energy and impetus to a crucial programme which came under scrutiny from national capitals. Yet, it was the skills of the Gurkha soldier that shone through - multi-lingual, culturally attuned and with a depth of Afghan corporate experience, the men of 2RGR made a lasting difference, noted and applauded by the multitude of high-level military and political visitors, the various command chains and, more importantly, the Afghans themselves.

Introduction

The question has often been asked why soldiers are training indigenous police forces. This question is one that, for the men of 2 RGR, came into stark focus as Op HERRICK 14 loomed and elements of the Battalion prepared to deploy in that very role. And so it was, that as part of the ongoing process of building the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) capability a composite grouping from across 2 RGR headed by CSS Company were tasked with the training of the Afghan National Police (ANP) at the Regional Training Centre (RTC) approximately 5km outside the provincial capital Lashkar Gah. Although viewed by many as a key principle of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) exit strategy, after ten years of conflict, one may be forgiven for asking why the now trained and fully operational Afghan National Army could not deliver such training instead of ISAF troops. After all, reinforcement of such success may provide an 'Afghan to Afghan' solution to an Afghan problem. What do soldiers, and in particular, infantrymen understand about training policemen to provide security for the people of Helmand - arguably one of the most dangerous corners of the world? Yet - we are where we are - and so it came about that men of 2 RGR deployed to train and deliver policemen onto the streets of Helmand. For the purposes of this article, I shall not attempt to delve any further into the rationale for such a decision. However, I shall attempt to highlight the professionalism, adaptability, suitability, and immense achievements that this composite grouping brought about on Op HERRICK 14.

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Recruiting

With much emphasis placed on the quantity of ANP required to police Afghanistan, much work has already been conducted to achieve the 134,000 recruited nationally. Over 7,000 of these personnel are currently employed or being shown to be paid in Helmand Province. Unfortunately many of them have received little or no formal professional training, many are illiterate, and sustaining such a force is particularly problematic in most areas of Helmand. With a predicted figure of the national requirement being 157,000 by 2014, this will see hundreds more having to be recruited across the region. Those recruited direct from the civilian population used the mantra 'serve their country'; this was a common theme amongst many if not all. Encouraging as this appeared, the reality is that there was previously no other alternative, except poppy farming or fighting, for the men of Helmand to earn a salary to support the wider family. Thus many had the common sense to see a window of opportunity to receive an education of sorts and to be part of a growth industry - albeit an extremely dangerous one - the Afghan National Police.

On arrival, all trainees were biometrically enrolled, drug tested, clothed in a well-fitting uniform, bedded down on individual bunks, fed three times a day, and given an opportunity to pray five times a day in the onsite Mosque. Thereafter, the men were placed into platoon-sized ethnic groupings with a programme of instruction delivered by a culturally-sensitive mix of both military and civilian personnel, with the majority being the fighting soldiers of 2 RGR. The transition over an eight week period, from simple farm-boy or his equivalent to a policeman that his country could be proud of, was stark.

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Training

There are many concepts to delivering training. However understanding the audience in Helmand is probably the most fundamental if anything is realistically to be achieved. It was

quickly identified that many ANP trainees had never previously undergone any formal structured training. On the ground, all instruction was delivered via Afghan interpreters who perhaps would have made ideal policemen as many had been at the RTC since its formation in December 2009. Instruction was often by a young Gurkha JNCO or Rifleman whose first language was Nepali but who was skilled at communicating both verbally and physically to a fellow Asian on the same continent. An ideal mix - with the professionalism of the young Gurkha being mentored by his seasoned SNCO platoon commander - this passage of previous experience from Iraq or earlier Afghan tours was a major asset. Yet, in this instance it was policemen that required to be trained and not soldiers. Therefore a different approach was required which brought the challenges into more focus. More importantly it became apparent that the 15 Afghan permanent staff, of whom none had any instructional qualifications, were initially reluctant to assist in either administration or teaching the trainees. All were officers who had graduated from the Officer School in Kabul and viewed their assignment to the RTC as very much a third-rate job. Their inability to converse with the predominantly Pashtu audience did not enhance the situation. Without the skill set of 2 RGR personnel and an ability to converse either in Pashtu, Urdu, or Hindi the task would have been virtually impossible. With only 15 Afghan permanent staff and their lack of training experience, training programmes were restructured in order to get the best from the students without detriment to the set Programme of Instruction (PoI) directed by NATO Training Mission Afghanistan (NTM-A) in Kabul:

- **Week 1:** Administration / Induction / Medical / Drug Test / Literacy Assessment.
- **Week 2:** Literacy / Drill / Weapon Training / Physical Training.
- **Week 3:** Literacy / Drill / Policing Skills / Physical Training.
- **Week 4:** Policing Skills / Search / Police Station Defence & Routine / VCP Drills.
- **Week 5:** Military Survival Skills / Marksmanship / Patrolling / Planning / Orders.
- **Week 6:** Literacy / Tactics / Afghan Law & Constitution / Physical Training.
- **Week 7:** Live Operations / Assessments / Physical Training.
- **Week 8:** Literacy / Attestation / Graduation.

The structure of the programme allowed the opportunity for the trainee to firstly 'learn how to learn' thereby gaining confidence in his own ability. The initial literacy assessment was the key to the streaming of those few who were already literate from those who were not. This method allowed personnel to develop within their learning grouping without

being allowed to become lost in the midst of those who would answer everything, and once given the opportunity they quickly relished the challenge of personal development. Whilst the students were undergoing training the Afghan staff conducted formal training delivered by Defence Instructional Technique (DIT) instructors. This allowed the Afghan staff to have the confidence to contribute to weekly training meetings and discuss how things could be improved, bringing greater cohesion to what was very much 2 RGR doing almost all of the 'Heavy Lifting' in all aspects. In addition it allowed the limited ability of Afghan staff to be mentored correctly in an attempt to develop their confidence in front of their fellow Afghans. This was a slow, and at times painful, process but one that is very much a necessity for the Afghans themselves as the clock ticks towards an Afghan-lead. All changes were fully endorsed by NTM-A as best practice - a significant accolade to the endeavours of the 2 RGR team.

The successes of trainees whilst under their final assessment - such as conducting live VCP operations on the primary access route into Lashkar Gah were essential to establishing confidence within the ANP. Such confidence led to the understanding of the sensitivities of stopping and searching females. In addition finds of drugs and alcohol also led to arrests with evidence and paperwork provided for subsequent prosecution by Afghan authorities. Perhaps the most significant success for the trainees was when a new ANP patrolman prevented an attack on the court house within Lashkar Gah District Centre by a suicide bomber, utilizing correct escalation of force procedures which resulted in lethal force being used. His swift and assured action saved the lives of many others. He had recently been trained at the RTC by 2 RGR. And here, when all is said and done, is the impact of ISAF. Soldiers can train policemen - and whilst it may not be a comfortable experience which fits into our vision of what infantryman do for a living - it is an essential piece of a comprehensive counter-insurgency strategy. The creation of a standing force, by whatever means, is a priority task line - and one with which future deployments will doubtless become more involved as other operations in theatre draw-down. For Op HERRICK 14, for their part, much credit should go to the 2 RGR training team for overcoming the traditional stereotypes and dealing with the minefield of cultural sensitivities, and for their unfailing excellence in instruction; their patience as well as their persistent mantra of doing the right thing.

Way Forward

Looking forward, training should remain under constant review, with more focus afforded to Afghans delivering the product. Many valid concerns remain at the operational and strategic levels; doctrine, lay-down, pay are all front and centre issues for the policy-makers to address now. What is clear is that there is still much work to be done by many before

Afghanistan is in a firm enough position to recruit, train, develop and sustain a national or even sub-national police force. What is critical is that we continue to support by whatever means we can both the training and the mentoring of that force and that we remain willing to accept Afghan decisions on Afghan problems. Support for the RTC in most areas was extremely forward-leaning from an Afghan perspective. The issue over command and control is perhaps its Achilles heel. The proposed combination of two provinces as a Regional Zone as opposed to Helmand specific will require delineation between Provincial and Regional Command - a challenging prospect in an institution bedevilled with inertia and opaque command structures. Wherever that command lies then there will need to be a further delineation of the Operational and Training Budget which currently sits firmly in the Operational area. With an NTM-A Training Bill of US\$12.5bn per year the programme as a whole is, unsurprisingly, of keen interest to those that fund it. What will be the budget once the recruitment target of 157,000 has been reached? Who will sustain the inflow/outflow, further professional development, wage bill etc? Infrastructure within the RTC is now firmly in place, and provides the ANP a first class conducive learning environment that has permanency. This is viewed as the Stage 1 of the Institutional Development with a further £11.6m infrastructure development under way. That said, buildings are exactly what they are; there is now a

much greater requirement to ensure that the correct Afghan personnel fill that infrastructure. The withdrawal of combat forces from Afghanistan has been widely publicized, but there is now a further responsibility on the International Community to ensure that it replaces those combat forces with the appropriate personnel to mentor correctly the key Afghan positions within the institution that 2 RGR have assisted in developing.

'I've seen a big improvement in the standard of policing in that time. The police are a lot more proactive now. Instead of waiting around for an incident to occur, they are now actively patrolling and engaging with the local community.' Inspector Adam Morris, Paid Kalay Police Station.

The quote above would be recognized by those that receive the outflow of trainees that have passed through the RTC. With the continued efforts of the Police Mentoring & Advisory Group, the situation is certainly improving. The energy and momentum must be maintained, but further politics will no doubt play a key part. However the building blocks are in place and the people of Helmand and Nimruz provinces deserve the opportunity to live in an environment that is free from the experiences of the past 40 years - with the added hope that the next generation of ANP have a life expectancy that is substantially more than it is at present.

Always Choose the Most Difficult Path

By Capt S Meadows, Operations Officer B (Gallipoli) Company



WO2 (now Capt) Ramkumar Rai protecting the people and winning friends in the process

B Company 2 RGR deployed as part of 45 Commando to Combined Force Nad-e-Ali (CF NDA) as a ground holding sub unit during the period March - October 2011. The area is dominated by dense green zone fed by large irrigation canals and flanked by a vast expanse of desert. Historically the summer months have seen a sharp rise in fighting and casualty rates, but as the summer continues the local populace of Nad-e-Ali are rejecting the insurgency and slowly turning to the Government. B Company is now beginning to reap the benefits of previous hard work, through a combination of cultural awareness and strict application of an operational design. Can I? Should I? Must I?

Nad-e-Ali (NDA) is fast-developing into an Afghan success story. A little over a year ago, the District was a contested space, with a cycle of violence comparable to any of the most unstable areas of Helmand. Yet today the green shoots of recovery are clearly evident and growing - violence has dropped to a manageable level, the bazaars are functioning, as too are

schools and development projects. This has come about due to the rigid application of Counter-Insurgency (COIN) principles in a campaign context, and a healthy dose of patience on behalf of the Government, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and the local inhabitants.

NDA is a confluence of district-level political, economic, development and security activities. The south of the district is dominated by the Canal Zone; a multitude of irrigation channels, built by USAID in the 1950's and 1960's in order to develop further the agriculture within the area through more structured irrigation. This led to an 'American Wild West' style land grab as people from across Afghanistan claimed ownership, which in turn has resulted in a complex, heterogeneous mix of tribal affinities and relationships. The western and northern part of the area of operations is bounded by a vast expanse of desert, and has limited irrigation and poor quality soil. The disenfranchised people that live there make a living from

the production of vast quantities of opium poppy and are largely aligned with the insurgency. This area is commonly known as the dashte.

On handover B Company 2 RGR took over command of six checkpoints spread across a vast area of canal and green zones, as well as desert. During Op HERRICK 13 this had formed two smaller areas of operations under the control of two separate Company HQs. Immediately upon handover, both areas of operation merged to form a single Company area of operations. The Company deployed with 116 all ranks from 2 RGR but with all attachments and detachments the Company group regularly reached 150 men.

Within B Company's area of operations the insurgent intent is to try to carry out influencing and harassing operations from the western dashte. These operations include small arms attacks onto isolated patrol bases and checkpoints as well as illegal vehicle checkpoints and taxation of local nationals in the western dashte and to a lesser extent the Canal Zone. The insurgents are also attempting to deny ISAF freedom of movement along known facilitation routes, by seeding improvised explosive devices; this has already been seen on key lateral routes from the Canal Zone into the dashte. The insurgency can be viewed as waning but still under the influence of insurgent-aligned locals and malign actors. Many of the key leaders in the area of operations are believed to have links, past and present, to the insurgent hierarchy, adding a political dimension to the operating environment.

To co-ordinate successfully activity across a diverse and geographically large area of operations and attempt to apply an operational design, it has been important to focus activity and ensure all patrolling multiples are working to a common goal. Thus, both in pre-deployment, and during the operation, the onus has been placed on all ranks on understanding the intent; the why rather than the how B Company are operating. This operational design - in others words a framework of activities - has been particularly important given the dispersed nature of the operation and the need for hitherto unseen levels of mission command from young commanders.

Protecting the People

The previous COMISAF, Gen Petraeus, repeatedly stated that 'the people are the Objective; protecting them is the mission, focus 95% of your time building relationships with them.' Gurkhas are extremely well suited to operating amongst the people in Afghanistan due to rich cultural affinities and language similarities. To connect with the population B Company initially established a matrix of shuras (an Afghan term for a meeting) across the area of operations that enabled the locals to know a time and location when they could communicate with ISAF in an informal environment. Where possible the shuras were conducted on neutral ground to encourage more participation. Furthermore the Company immediately developed a Human Terrain & Intelligence Collection Plan focused firmly on the people not the insurgency. One of the key enabling factors was

the tempo of patrolling and thereby local national interaction; the intent being no more complex than persistently getting out amongst the people and meeting with them.

• OC B Company Intent & Operational Design

To apply relentless pressure on the insurgents whilst reinforcing the Government of Afghanistan's influence to deepen the HOLD and expedite the BUILD of our Area of Operations including Nad-e-Ali District Centre and its environs. We seek an irreversible momentum by giving the local people the confidence to reject the insurgency in all its forms and place their trust in the Afghan state. All our efforts will focus on setting the conditions for, and when appropriate facilitating, the TRANSFER of lead security responsibility to the host nation security forces.

This will be achieved by the following effects:

PROTECTING the local population - where they work, where they live and the spaces in between;

PARTNERING the Afghan National Security Forces -mentoring, enabling and developing capacity and capability in a supporting role;

DEFEATING the insurgent when he unmasks;

DISRUPTING and DENYING his freedom of action and manoeuvre;

PROTECTING the Mission

Correct application of force and minimising civilian casualties has also been a critical consent winning activity. B Company follows the principle of Can I? - Should I? - Must I? This has meant commanders must consider not only the effect that opening fire has on the insurgent but also on the local nationals and on our influence. Young commanders on the ground have often made the call not to return fire onto an insurgent firing point because it will achieve a negative impact and possibly cause civilian property damage and potential civilian casualties. This has in turn earned the respect of the local nationals and further denies the insurgent his previous powerbase and propaganda opportunities.

• TORA GORGA Ti 31 Female Health Initiative - 26 - 29 May 2011

Over a period of three days B Company utilised the Female Engagement Team (FET) and two integral female medics to conduct initial low-level female engagement within Shin Kalay. This is an area that historically has been overlooked, as the insurgency has been the focus of activity. Interacting with the local women and providing basic medical care and training fosters a feeling of trust. Furthermore this

event culminated in a District Health Initiative that saw the NDA(S) District Health Officer and the Senior Medical Officer from 45 Commando conduct a female educational health clinic within NDA District Centre that not only provided good support to local national women but also facilitated Government outreach to its people.

It is also important to understand the influences that the local nationals may be under; by understanding the human terrain of a particular area it will be easier to define what level of insurgency can be expected within this location. Furthermore on a political note it is important to understand the bias of the District Community Council representatives, as these are the people who will control the Afghan Government outreach programmes such as wheat seed distribution.

• Op TORA GORGA Ti 26 DASHTE F2U

The northern dashte is a known insurgent staging area and movement corridor. Afghan National Police reports had stated that there has been a re-infiltration of an insurgent grouping into the northern dashte. B Company sought to find, feel, understand and disrupt/deter insurgent activity and influence the population in order to protect the 'hold' and 'build' of the Canal Zone, whilst partnering the Afghan National Security Forces throughout. At first light on D Day, three partnered multiples deployed and sequentially cleared and searched 18 compounds and conducted a mini shura with local wakils. B Company Officer Commanding undertook a shura on D+1 to continue to influence and reassure local nationals. This was a partnered operation; planning, war-game & rehearsal of concept drills all took place with the Afghan National Police in attendance - and contributing.

Throughout Op HERRICK 14 the Military Stabilization Support Team (MSST) has been a central pillar to the operational design at company level. Previously 'hot stabilization' had played a key role in shaping local national support for ISAF and the Government. Particularly cash for work schemes were utilized to employ fighting aged males post poppy harvest to keep them gainfully employed. However, as the cultural understanding has improved it has become clear that in some cases these schemes made local, time-honoured methods such as communal canal maintenance collapse. As a result, the financial support offered by the MSST is now limited almost exclusively to damage caused by ISAF. The dependency culture that had previously been nurtured has now seen a sharp cessation in funding almost overnight; akin to a hosepipe ban in the UK during the summer months. This, in turn, has led to a re-calibration of the process of winning and maintaining consent. The assets available to a ground holding sub unit are numerous, but it is critical to facilitate Afghan Government buy-in rather than utilize the integral ISAF assets. In this way the dependency culture is slowly waning and it is the Government, not ISAF that is becoming the bridge between the people. B Company has therefore utilized the extensive shura network to empower the local nationals and the Government. One key point here is

that patience really is a virtue; ideas for outreach and utilizing Government agencies must be developed over time to receive local support and in that way outreach will be successful and continue to embolden the Government. All development in Helmand and Afghanistan is a slow process.

Partnering the Afghan Security Forces

B Company has the full spectrum of ANSF from the nascent Afghan Local Police (ALP) to the professional Afghan National Army (ANA). The Afghan Uniformed Police (AUP), for their part, range from the sublime to the ridiculous. In the north of the area of operations checkpoint commanders are both proactive in their approach to the insurgency and continue to push their men forward to the Regional Training Centre. A number of checkpoints in the south however continue to demonstrate evidence of substance abuse and manning often falls to critical levels; at times as low as three patrolmen. The Afghan National Civil Order Police have proved to be both professional and a hindrance. They rotate every three months into new areas in a bid to curb corruption. However this means, for local nationals and ISAF alike, that, by the time strong working relationships have been formed, a rotation occurs. The Afghan National Army are professional, but lack mission command and therefore are only content to assist with operations once this has been cleared through the Commanding Officer, thus delaying time sensitive Ops. The NDS have proved a real force multiplier throughout although their methods are certainly more robust than others. All of the branches of the ANSF, despite varying levels of professionalism, are themselves counter-insurgents in their own right.

Due to the plethora of ANSF B Company has within its boundaries, it has been difficult to assist all Afghan partners equally to continue with their development. Due to this it was decided to attempt to mentor and train those that needed it the most. Hence ALP in Loy Bagh from the initial conception through to current improvements has taken considerable time and effort from a patrolling multiple. However, this has produced a conscientious and enthusiastic band of men, who despite many shortcomings are proving to be every bit the counter-insurgent.

Defeating the Insurgency

'Non-kinetic' effects such as stabilization and development are extremely important to achieving the end state, but first and foremost ISAF are in Afghanistan to provide security. B Company has interpreted this as conducting a mixture of deliberate and framework activities in order to keep the insurgent at bay; to break the summer season of violence (and consequently the Afghan locals' near psychosis that such violence is inevitable); and to assist in the creation of much needed space for the Government to breathe, develop and act.

During the first three months of Op HERRICK 14, B Company have conducted over 1,000 patrols across the full spectrum of operations from daily administration runs to clearance patrols into known insurgent firing points and



Friends and partners OC B Company, Maj Jamie Murray with the District Chief of Police at the transfer of Checkpoint Shingul to Afghan Uniformed Police; a key aspect of the Operational Design - transferring lead security responsibility to the Afghan National Security Forces

numerous Company-level Operations. This tempo of patrolling has been the key to success in defeating the insurgency. Furthermore intelligence-focused, special forces-partnered operations have enabled B Company to target known insurgent facilitators. This has further denuded the insurgent of the command structure that is necessary to operate in a more fractious environment, when support for him is dwindling in every respect.

both the local nationals and insurgents, and reassure the locals in the Canal Zone thereby deepening the hold across the area of operations.

• **Op TORA GORGA Ti 32**

Historically insurgents used various crossing points on the Nahr-e-Bugra canal, followed by east/west lateral routes to enter/transit the area of operations. The emplacement of improvised explosive devices on main supply routes suggested that insurgents were becoming emboldened and were seeking to disrupt friendly forces' freedom of movement regardless of civilian casualties, whilst undermining Government ascendancy. As a reaction to such activities B Company conducted a series of simultaneous night lurks to 'own the night'; deterring and disrupting any insurgent movement and thereby seizing the initiative. These were simultaneously partnered, covert night lurks over a period of four days in the Canal Zone, to influence

During Op HERRICK 14, B Company conducted over 28 deliberate Company-level operations covering the full plethora of COIN activities. The activity has been focussed through a fusion of intelligence activity and through the intimate knowledge the patrolling multiples have of the areas in the immediate vicinity of the checkpoints. Local nationals will now regularly walk into checkpoints and provide information on improvised explosive devices, insurgent movements and other illicit activities; not for financial gain, but through an understanding that the information provided will be acted upon to increase their security.

Historically the high risk of improvised explosive devices has meant that ISAF did not undertake as many night patrols due to the difficulty in identifying ground sign. Fortuitously the threat of improvised explosive device laying within NDA (S) area of operations is lower than many others and this has enabled B Company to dominate the night through both framework and targeted operations. Surprise in Afghanistan is extremely difficult, if not impossible to achieve. By conducting simultaneous night covert and overt activity followed by

early morning 'soft knocks' onto known insurgent bed-down locations B Company has achieved surprise frequently. The message that this creates for local nationals of the perceived security situation, and the doubt placed in the insurgent's mind, are the keys to success.

Wet Feet or No Feet is an adage utilized by B Company for taking the hardest route during patrols - always go into the ditch not over the bridge to avoid the risk of improvised explosive devices. However, it can also be applied in an operational context; there is always an easier route in Afghanistan. A good example of this would be attempting to run a medical outreach shura; the easy option would be to use the Battlegroup Senior Medical Officer and run the shura, but the reality is that without consulting with the Government representative, the District Health Officer, it will only succeed in furthering local perceptions of Afghan Government insufficiencies. It is also having the patience to assist the Afghan Security Forces on operations, accepting the fact that their compound searching will not be as thorough as ISAF's. But understanding this will, nevertheless, further demonstrate to the local people that it is an Afghan providing security.

• **Op TORA GORGA Ti 34 Enable TF 196
Raid to Detain & Seize - Shin Kalay**

Following repeated intelligence feeds, B Company mounted a cordon and search operation on a known insurgent facilitator. Multiples departed the checkpoint in protected vehicles and moved to contain the compounds of interest. Once contained B Company conducted a thorough search of all compounds. The Persistent Ground Surveillance System had conducted a 'soak' of the target area for 24hrs and continued to support throughout. When the Company was moving onto the objective a fighting aged male in white dish dash (believed to be NOOR MOHAMMAD) was seen frantically running, attempting to escape the compound; when it was clear there was no alternative the bravo moved to the south-east of the compound and did not re-emerge. The searching multiple when entering the compound were informed by the owner, without prompting, that NOOR MOHAMMAD was located in the south east corner of the compound. The multiple moved immediately to the area and found one fighting aged male concealed under a table and blankets in the corner of the room, matching the description provided by surveillance. The fusion of a range of intelligence sources, and multiples on the ground enabled a successful detention operation to be conducted.

Conclusion

The provision of a co-ordinated operational design has enabled all members of B Company-group to understand why rather than how all activities are focused. This overarching planning has enabled a multi-layered approach from the

very beginning of B Company's tenure in Nad-e-Ali and a coordinated implementation of the full range of Counter-Insurgency principles. Today, the area stands on the cusp of transferring lead security responsibility from ISAF to the ever-more capable Afghan Security Forces; undoubtedly the design that has been applied, coupled with the outstanding work on previous HERRICKS, has expedited this success.

**Counter-Insurgency Training Team
Advisory Embed**

B Company hosted an 'embed' of independent observers from the Regional Command Centre (SW) Advisory Team. The key point from the summary of ways to improve partnering was a simple acronym: Give - Take - Train. This is the United States Special Forces approach. 'Give' each Afghan National Security Force patrolman a purpose on every patrol. 'Take' everything that is possible from the ground and from the man who was given specified tasks - patrol debriefing in its purist sense. Finally, 'Train' - Identify what training is most needed, conduct joint lessons and, crucially, aim to get partners teaching themselves - a 'train the trainer' construct. Ask the ANSF to teach ISAF; on culture, religion, Afghanistan and Tactics, Techniques and Procedures - this will go a long way to building self-esteem and mutual respect. Humble beginnings go a long way in Afghanistan.

In order to defeat the insurgency B Company has implemented a simple yet effective operational design; conducting a diverse range of activities both deliberate and framework - thus enabling the Company to deepen the hold on the Canal Zone. The cohesive effect of following the operational design has ensured that the local nationals no longer see ISAF with their Afghan National Security Forces partners as the harbingers of trouble; but rather look to the future and see a blossoming security situation. Nad-e-Ali is fast becoming a location set to transition to Afghan lead security; the farmers are planting their third crop for the first time in many years, and children are playing safely in the fields. ISAF have ensured that the ANSF are well placed to continue to provide security and the people now realise that supporting the Afghan Government is the key to a stable future.

Generating Counter-Insurgents Quickly - The Afghan Local Police in Loy Bagh, Nad-e-Ali

By Lt James Lawson, Platoon Commander 5 Platoon, B Company, 2 RGR

During Op HERRICK 14, an Afghan Local Police (ALP) was formed to the south of Loy Bagh, a Protected Community in B Company, and 2 RGR's area of operations. From inception to deployment, B Company were heavily involved in the process and spent five months mentoring, training and supporting this new, local police force who have now taken their place alongside the other security actors, charged with protecting the people of Nad-e-Ali.

Introduction

The Afghan Local Police (ALP) are an extension of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) designed to augment and expand designated Protected Communities and to be employed in gaps where other uniformed Afghan or ISAF counter-insurgents have yet to deploy. Loy Bagh (LBG), as one of Nad-e-Ali's (NDA) five such Protected Communities with a population of nearly 5,000, is ringed by Afghan National Police security posts which protect the residents who reside within. The 'Kalay' (or village) is almost entirely Noorzai, and so too are the police that protect it. Consequently, the situation in the community is calm and generally peaceful. The Noorzai monopoly and the presence of some extremely powerful elders with far-reaching influence, has led to a political rather than a violent insurgency.

Nonetheless, to the south of the Kalay an insurgent seam-line exists - just outside the influence of the Government forces, and just outside the designated area of the Protected Community. This line was for all intents and purposes an insurgent transit corridor from where the enemy could move freely, emplace improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and launch attacks against Afghan or ISAF. In late 2010, it was very clear that some counter-insurgents were needed to fill this gap; the answer was the creation of an ALP under command of the enigmatic yet powerful elder Haji Agha Mohammad (HAM). This essay intends to explain to the reader the challenges and frustrations, the areas where the ALP may have a successful impact on the security of the community, and ultimately their role in the future security transition of NDA to an ANSF 'lead'. The essay will conclude by stating that whilst such projects are fraught with difficulties, the balance of reward outweighs the risks. The ALP bring counter-insurgents to where they are most needed, and provide potential recruits to the Afghan Uniformed Police (AUP).

Background

In NDA, the Loy Bagh ALP came to the fore in January 2011 when the District Governor held a shura at his compound in Lashkar Gah on the 14th of that month. The shura involved prominent figures within the NDA community ranging from

leading Wakils (elders) to District Community Council (DCC) representatives. The proposal was for community members to form a force so as to effectively police their own communities and thus form a stop gap where more traditional ANSF forces were not in a position to do so. The concept of the ALP was that of a uniformed and armed local force, drawn from within its community and thus having ties to it, capable of policing its immediate environs.

The Spoilers

The Loy Bagh ALP proposal was, at first, strongly resisted by prominent local figures on the basis that this new 'force' would be similar to that of an 'arbakai' (a militia made up of a single tribal background) and would lead to government legitimized militias. Prominent NDA elders, closest to the District Governor (DG) were the strongest resistors. It was assessed that these elders were worried that a local police force might effectively disrupt their own business transactions and possible links to other malign actors. Perhaps witnessing the momentum the project was gathering across Helmand, the prominent Loy Bagh figures then acquiesced following strong leadership from the DG.

Leadership and Recruitment

The question then arose of how to recruit suitable individuals to join the ALP, the original proposition being that each DCC representative would supply ten suitable candidates who would then attend a two week training programme. This idea never came to fruition and so the quest to find someone to front the project continued. This is the point at which the enigmatic and charismatic Haji Agha Mohammed came to the fore. HAM originally came from the south of Loy Bagh and offered both his services and those of a number of his men who had left some four years previously due to insurgent activity.

HAM initially offered 27 men with a range of ages, the youngest being 12 (one of his sons) and the eldest 45. It also transpired that these men were largely from HAM's extended family.

Basing

After significant confusion over compound ownership and basing issues, HAM and his men were forced to deploy temporarily into a site which was a previous family home. Such confusion delayed the project significantly. This delay placed the B Company mentors in the awkward position of having to mentor a force with no suitable base from which to operate. A far from ideal alternative was found in a compound

owned by HAM, a distance away to the south-east of the site originally intended. The mentors for their part were forced to build temporary force protection measures on the compound's roof - chosen for the arcs that it provided from a difficult position to defend and for the protection that it offered from the 'enemy within', the unknown factor of 27 armed men of whom we knew very little.

Thereafter a chicane and small outpost were constructed on the vital ground of a prominent road junction, known as VD Spot 17. This work went some of the way to constraining HAM's aspirations as well as those of his men to travel further afield and go beyond his remit. After some two months a more permanent checkpoint was built, partly winterized but fit for the occupation of the force.

Deployment

The initial deployment of HAM and his men started well, with ALP members being seen to be acting professionally and to be carrying out drills as taught, chasing suspected insurgents and patrolling regularly. This energetic start unsurprisingly plateaued but following some robust partnering, deep embedding and much effort from ISAF, the ALP then reached a steady and professional state. Positive actions such as the unprompted evacuation of a wounded Afghan police patrolman caught in a Taleban ambush as well as the find of several IEDs, and the diligent manning of additional check-points at short notice, all point to an upward curve in the ALPs capacity and capability.

Motivations

The motivations of those involved in the ALP project remain unclear. There is of course the financial incentive provided by the scheme - but given the perceived risks involved this is seen as a minor attraction and far from the only reason. The initial pessimistic judgement that there must be more to the good intentions of merely securing their community, such as extortion or bribery, have thus far proved unfounded. There is however still much to be answered; only three to four men have families in the area even though many claim that they have uncles and aunts within Loy Bagh. All the men have seemingly rehearsed answers to ISAF questions on their reasoning/motivations for joining the ALP. There is a chance that these men are willing to put their lives on the line for genuine reasons: a burning hatred of the Taleban and a growing confidence that the Government will prevail in the campaign against the insurgency. Afghans are hedge-bettors - and if this assessment is true - HAM and his men have bet on the Taleban losing. In turn if this is true, HAM, ever the opportunist and businessman, may be shaping the ground for the inevitable opportunities and rewards which power will bring, once ISAF begins to de-couple from Helmand. Nonetheless, this ALP is doing exactly as it was hoped - it is preventing the insurgency from exploiting a seam-line, it is protecting the community, and, crucially, it is now in a position to begin to provide recruits for the wider AUP. This, in short, is mission success.

Partnering

The mentoring aspect of the ALP deployment has, like all else associated with the ALP, been fraught with positives and negatives. The one key aspect to the B Company involvement in the mentoring piece was the Gurkha soldier and his language affinity, cultural awareness and softer approach to this type of task than would otherwise have been the case in a British infantry unit. Relationships were quickly built by shared interests and nuances, Bollywood being a particularly good bridge-builder. The mentors were usually eight men in strength, led by a Multiple Commander and assisted by a 2IC. In addition to this the mentors had the assistance of an interpreter and, usually, two Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP) based out of PB Chillli, B Company's HQ North of the Kalay.

Mentoring, from an ISAF perspective, has a number of issues that can make the process an experience equally frustrating and rewarding. This is true of more traditional or regular ANSF and is further amplified by working alongside a force, such as the ALP, that has received only basic training and that is only loosely aligned to the state. The first task for the mentors was to establish exactly what the ALP patrolmen had been taught in their two-week syllabus in training and then to expand their horizons and competency in these fields. It was essential that the mentoring took on a similar vein to that taught to the AUP but in, if at all possible, an even simpler form. It was thus B Company's task to watch, partner and revise what had been taught and where possible further the ALPs expertise in their new vocation. Initially this took the form of a number of revision lessons on basics such as weapon carriage and handling through to medical training, detainee handling, vehicle check point (VCP) drills including person/vehicle searches and evidence handling. The mentors were impressed by the ALP's competency and initial enthusiasm in some lessons, the restraining of a detainee being particularly popular. There was, however, the inevitable waning of enthusiasm that led to lessons being all but deserted in some instances.

The ALP, like other ANSF, were found to be best taught in a practical fashion and to retain information better this way; games and prizes were found to be a great motivator. The ALP mentoring piece has had many ups and downs but it has proved rewarding for the mentors to see a force from its infancy develop into a very workable, 'Afghan good enough' solution.

Risks vs Rewards

Local perceptions have been mixed and were initially very guarded on the subject. The ALP's professionalism by Afghan standards, as well as the character that is HAM, has gone some way to resolving many of the potential issues stemming from the project. But there are still some who are against the project; these unnamed locals are largely perturbed by the ALP working alongside ISAF. The other strongest argument against them is that there remains a risk that the ALP could become a militia force who will abuse their recently gained prominence and power to the detriment of the locals. This objection is not wholly unrealistic and has shown itself in the 'temporary

confiscation' of people's phones and possible taxing of locals transiting the CP. That said, an ISAF/ANCOP led shura convened at PB Chilli shortly after the ALP's deployment has shown a largely positive consensus toward the ALP with HAM being described as 'a good man' - within the Afghan context there has been little to dispute this. Moreover there was concern that the largely Noorzai population of Loy Bagh would also not take kindly to what was thought a largely Achakzai ALP organisation. This has also subsequently proved unfounded on our part, whether this was due to the ALP being of a cross-tribal background, or whether it is just less of an issue than ISAF thought is still uncertain.

For his part, HAM is a shrewd individual, playing the power brokers in an effort to gain further support for his men. He has, however, shown glimpses of an underlying alter-ego that shows itself in an argumentative and sometimes violent nature in the presence of OC B Company, mentors and the suitably oblivious AUP. For example in mid May, HAM described a previous quarrel with inhabitants of Noor Mohammad Khan (NMK) Kalay 'some years ago'. In response to one of HAM's family members being beaten by a NMK resident, HAM personally visited NMK and beat that individual, shaving off his beard (an extremely insulting gesture in Pashtun culture). HAM then went on to speak of how the issue had been 'resolved', with HAM and importantly armed members of his ALP visiting the individual, offering 400,000 Pakistani Rupees and goats. HAM alleges that peace is now guaranteed. However, there is little doubt that his armed police did much to ensure this; the fact that HAM's force is effectively state-sponsored undoubtedly added further weight to this issue being 'resolved'. Yet it is important to note that this vignette is a one-off - the initial fears that tribal-based disputes were about to become the *raison d'être* of the ALP have all but diminished. There has been no further evidence of such activity.

At present there is a working relationship between HAM and the District Chief of Police (DCoP), Omar Jan. This is largely a result of HAM's realizing that the DCoP is an essential stanchion to his project and his ultimate success of returning to the area in a strong position. This is also pure Afghan pragmatism shining through. HAM, a seasoned and politically astute campaigner, realises he is tied to the AUP, whether he likes it or not. He needs them simply to exist. It

is this fact, more than the others put together, which result in a positive assessment of the ALP project as a whole, and the Loy Bagh ALP specifically. By being visibly tied to the legitimate government the risk of the return of powerful tribal militias has been mitigated. Today the ALP are, for all intents and purposes, merely an extension of government - and not a strongman's militia. Yes they are tribally based, and yes they have a local sphere of influence, but, importantly, they are part of the panoply of state actors charged with protecting the people. Should tribal motivations and actions become the norm, the DCoP remains in a strong position to take decisive action and to rein in any wrongdoing. In short, a check and balance remains in place, thus mitigating the risk of internecine tribal events.

Conclusion

The Loy Bagh ALP benefits the local community on a number of levels but at the same time it remains a challenging and controversial concept. No-one wishes to see more guns on the streets, particularly in the hands of those motivated more by tribe than by state. However, despite several teething problems, the LBG ALP are firmly on the up; HAM's fervent commitment to the project, an undertaking that comes with much personal risk to himself, exemplifies the attitude shown by the members of the ALP as a whole. Furthermore, more broadly, the ALP have filled a security gap within NDA; an area previously rife with Taleban influence. They will, in the short term, separate the locals from the insurgents and deny the malign freedom of movement and influence. For their part, the Taleban despise the ALP, but have so far been unsuccessful at intimidating this new force in their midst.

In conclusion, the Loy Bagh ALP, with all the risks attached, are counter-insurgents and are functioning as such in an area where the insurgents previously acted with near impunity. Today, the rewards of the ALP outweigh the risks. They are a locally-aligned force with multiple links to the area and more importantly to the people. And more importantly still, they are another lever to be used as this part of Nad-e-Ali moves quickly towards transitioning to the security responsibility of Afghans rather than ISAF.

Police Advisory Teams - Lessons Learnt and Best Practice

By Captain J E Arney C Company

The Key to Security

Developing the Afghan Uniformed Police (AUP) is arguably the most important task in the operations to achieve lasting security within Task Force Helmand (TFH). The Afghan National Army will ultimately withdraw to the peripheries whilst it will be the AUP who remain at the epicentre; providing security to local communities and maintaining law and order. 2nd Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles formed the Police Mentoring and Advisory Group (PMAG) for Op HERRICK 14. The PMAG is responsible for mentoring the AUP across TFH. Within the task force area there are numerous Police Districts, which are sometimes broken down further into Precincts. The Police HQ is in Lashkar Gah and is mentored by the Operational Coordination Centre Provincial (OCCP). The PMAG aims to develop and mentor the AUP at an institutional level. Operational Coordination Centre District (OCCDs) will specifically target mentoring the District HQs; whilst Police Advisory Teams (PATs) target the "Tolay" commanders and mentor their command and control over Check Point (CP) commanders. The PATs also provide continuation training in the CPs and provide vital situational awareness and 'ground-truth' back to the OCCDs and OCCP. If requested, the PAT can assist the Coalition Forces (CF) on partnered Ops and conduct "deep mentoring" over a period of time in an AUP CP, should the CF or AUP identify a problem.

Partner vs Mentor

The CF are the partners of the AUP. In fact everyone is a partner; or should be striving to be. Partner the AUP and the rewards will be vast; but if they are left un-partnered it will be disastrous. The CFs will live alongside the AUP: patrol with them; plan and execute Ops with them; eat with them and ultimately be friends with them. However, the CF often have other pressing issues to concern themselves with: partnering the ANA; shuras with locals; money for local projects; security of their own bases; and operational objectives they must work to achieve. Therefore it is crucial that we have appointed mentors (PMAG) to target the Afghan Police at a higher level. This is a dual mission that is intrinsically linked: the CF partner security whilst the mentors develop the institution. The mentors have the luxury of solely focusing on the Police and becoming the subject matter experts. The OCCDs and PATs have individuals within their team tasked to mentor the Afghan Police through their training and development; furthermore the PATs have Military Police attachments who can provide the training and expert advice on anything from Vehicle Check Points to community engagements. Over the course of our seven months mentoring the AUP, a lot of lessons have been learnt and best practices found. It is crucial that those deploying to Afghanistan, whether partners or mentors, understand the problems encountered and the best methods to tackle them. These lessons learnt are mainly taken from the PAT level,

making them especially relevant for those ground-holding 'multiples' living with or working alongside the AUP.

Auditing

At first the PATs would conduct routine audits of AUP CPs, trying to account for AUP manpower and audit serial numbers for weapons, radios and vehicles. Whilst it is beneficial for the PHQ to know what the truth is; it also sometimes proves to be counter-productive. If you arrive at a CP unannounced and ask the CP commander to lay all his weapons out, understandably he starts to get annoyed. He doesn't fully understand why you need all this information. Too much auditing can frustrate the AUP and take the PAT away from more pressing priorities such as training the AUP and developing their command, management and leadership. With this in mind it is recommended that occasionally you arrive at a CP without an agenda other than to have a cup of chi and a long chat about life in general. This not only develops relationships, but also gets the AUP to open up to you. More often than not, in these relaxed visits, you come away with more valuable information. Furthermore, the AUP are constantly moving personnel around their CPs, so to keep on top of manpower orbat is like a dog chasing its tail. Once you've visited all the CPs within your Area of Operations and got the AUP orbat recorded, it is guaranteed that it will have already changed. So the solution is to get the AUP commanders to account for manpower and equipment themselves. Traditionally the AUP company commanders maintain this information in their head only and not on paper. Therefore the PATs developed new photo orbat boards in HQs. These boards resemble a company 2iC's board. It is kept simple, written in Pashtu and reads from right to left. The board is broken down into CPs, photos and then small columns where the number of weapons (AK's, PKM's, etc) are recorded as well as columns for vehicle numbers, radio numbers and ammunition.

Success has varied in different districts, but with careful explanation, encouragement and monitoring the board can work. Firstly the board encourages daily sitreps from the CP commanders. Secondly it promotes continuity. Should the company commander go on R&R, move jobs or in the worst case die, then his subordinates can take over, see the board and understand the 'lay down' within that area. The important thing to remember is that our time is short here; so we need the AUP to start taking responsibility now and increase their understanding before it is rushed or too late.

Joint Ops

Doing joint Ops and patrols with the AUP could be mildly nerve-wracking at first, because their patrolling methods are

unorthodox and differ considerably from the Brecon/Counter Insurgency (COIN) tactics that we are taught. They will nearly always walk in single-file, with little or no spacing at all. They will more often than not walk straight through vulnerable points (VPs) in rural areas (crossing a small mud bridge rather than crossing through a wadi). Their reaction on seeing someone suspicious is to run towards them without letting you know what they have seen or what is going on. So, to a degree, an element of blind faith is required by mentors and partners alike. However, whilst you do occasionally have to follow their lead and accept this risk, there are ways to mitigate it. Firstly, try to ensure that you have communications with the AUP commander on the ground. Give your interpreter and the AUP commander a radio so you can have direct comms with the AUP should they run off. This will provide you with situational awareness and reduce the risk of fratricide. The AUP always like to lead from the front - a positive fact that should be encouraged. Try to negotiate that your lead section/team are also at the front with them. Ideally place your 'Vallon' men and best Pashtu speaker in this lead element. They can then grip the AUP to avoid VPs; make them slow down or tell them if they aren't going the right way. Although their knowledge of the ground tends to be much better than yours; their route selection tends to be the fastest way rather than the most tactical. If you are ever unhappy; then don't follow the AUP to show bravado. Take your time and do the drills you have been taught; the AUP understand that you do things differently and if they see you looking for ground 'sign' or 'taking a knee' when you stop then they may emulate that in the future.

Counter-IED.

AUP Counter-Improvised Explosive Device Incendiary practice is also very different from our own and is often very dangerous. There have been numerous incidents across Helmand where the AUP have tried to dig-out or dispose of an IED on their own. Normally they do this successfully. But their lack of C-IED expertise and equipment often causes the IED to detonate causing unnecessary casualties. They deal with the IEDs themselves due to a lack of understanding, misplaced bravery and impatience whilst waiting for the ISAF C-IED teams. PATs and CF must conduct C-IED training in its basic form - teaching the AUP how to locate IEDs and not how to dispose of them. Emphasise to the AUP how important it is to cordon the IED, call for assistance from C-IED teams and wait patiently for the experts to arrive. Afghan Police C-IED teams are currently being trained and this will, one hopes, hopefully provide a lasting solution.

Corruption

There are reports of AUP corruption almost weekly. Examples include taxing vehicles on roads, stealing from shops and taking money from contractors. The CF must report any incidence of corruption to the PMAG in the first instance. Ministry of Defence Police personnel attached to the OCCDs will then seek to obtain more information and get the AUP

commander to punish those AUP involved. Corruption is unfortunately quite common practice and will often never be fully understood or dealt with; it is a friction that you have to work with and regrettably occasionally bypass in order to focus on more pressing issues.

Training

Arguably the most important job of the PATs is to perform continuation training on the ground. The AUP don't appreciate the importance of continuation training like we do. They believe that having been taught a subject at training centres is enough to last them their career. Try to liaise with the AUP company commander to get him to organize his own training programme. He can then get different AUP in from each CP to his HQ a few times a week. The PAT can then teach them in one location, which has proven to increase concentration levels and participation. When you arrive unannounced at a CP with the hope of doing some training it is often turned down. And who can blame them? They are busy doing their day-to-day work and there may only be a few AUP in the CP. Centralized training, organised by the AUP is the way ahead.

When you are giving lessons, keep them short (30-40 minutes), give praise even if unwarranted and offer rewards (for example a digital photo of the best trainee standing next to his AUP Ranger). Structurally, lessons are best taught by explaining, demonstrating and practising. Show the AUP good and bad examples of how to search a person; handle a detainee or conduct a VCP. PMAG is now working towards the future and establishing 'Train the Trainer' packages. Capable AUP NCOs will be sent on the course and afterwards will conduct their own training in their respective Districts. The PATs and CF alike can assist where necessary.

Keep the ball rolling

Working with the AUP is frustrating, yet fun and rewarding. The importance of mentoring the AUP cannot be emphasised enough - their strength and professionalism will determine the future security of Afghanistan. Do not arrive and set yourself goals that would require a huge change to the AUP; these will more than likely fail and only leave you demoralized and irritated. The key is to keep the ball rolling; maintain their momentum and 'be there for them'. On the ground it is possible to feel that you aren't developing them as much as you would want; but you are. The AUP are now realising that ISAF will be leaving and they are reaching out for our knowledge before we go. Furthermore, just being here gives them the breathing space to figure out things for themselves.

Remember,

"It is better to let them do it imperfectly than do it perfectly yourself, for it is their country, their war, and our time is short".

G (Tobruk) Company I MERCIAN

Op HERRICK 12 - Operations in a Multi-National Environment

By Maj N J Aucott, OC G (Tobruk) Company, I MERCIAN - Combined Force Nahr-e-Saraj North

G (Tobruk) Company, 1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Cheshire)- Gurkha Reinforcement Company 2 - operated in the Green Zone in Nahr-e-Saraj North under the command of the Danish Battlegroup (DANBAT). Becoming D Company, DANBAT, the company group was required to maintain influence over the population in a vast area of Green Zone. The exposed nature of the geography, combined with the 'summer fighting season', ensured significant 'kinetic activity' and an IED threat comparable to Sangin. With responsibility to operate from four, and later five, discrete bases, the challenges were numerous.

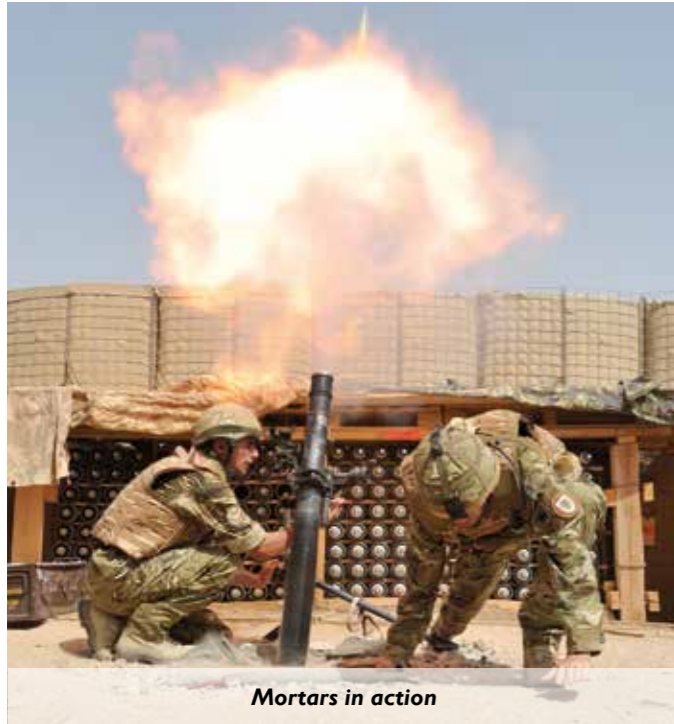
This article examines the operating environment in which the Company enacted its mission, examining the unique multi-national component. It highlights the ability of the Gurkha to adapt to, and interact with, a range of complex issues and how the company worked in line with General McChrystal's approach of 'courageous restraint'. Whilst it identifies that multi-nationality often raises complex and competing priorities from the tactical to the political level, the ability of the Gurkha to work in this environment at the tactical level was fundamental in alleviating some of these frictions.

To a military planner, the dispositions would have been thought laudable, but the deployment on Op HERRICK 12 had all the hallmarks of evolution; having to make forces fit into what had occurred previously. For G Company, this was not the first task it had received, the initial proposal being that they deploy to the Northern area of Musa-Qala as part of the I MERCIAN Battlegroup. In the planning for this in the run up to Christmas, the Company continued to conduct its mandated training as well as trying to extrapolate as much information as it could from the Fusiliers Battlegroup that had been there during the summer of 2010. However, events overtook us and although there was an interim prospect of conducting the handover of the Area of Operations (AO) to US Marines, this was prudently done prior to any UK Relief in Place (RIP) occurring. When it became apparent that I MERCIAN would not deploy as a Battlegroup, the Company was quickly identified to work as part of DANBAT. A meeting in London with the in-theatre OC soon realized a sound understanding of the deployment ahead.

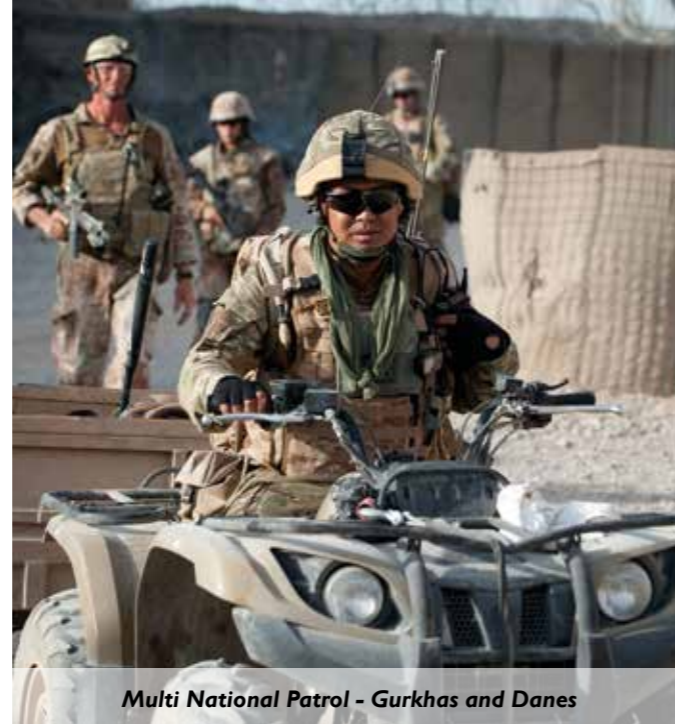
The company had taken some risk in its training, and whilst it had accomplished the mandatory training with excellent results, elements such as driver training had been compromised



G Company members with GM, Pundit and RSM IRGR after the Temple Service in FOB KHAR NIKAH



Mortars in action



Multi National Patrol - Gurkhas and Danes



Rfn Suraj on a joint patrol with the Afghan National Army



The Three Nations

for the benefits of company cohesion, a factor which would pay dividends during the tour. This was in large part aided by the attachment of a 1 MERCIAN Fire Support Group (FSG) and mortar line, the FSG being utilized as the 'mobile' element of the Company, although the original concept was that FSG elements would be embedded with the platoons.

The Company had taken some risk in its training, and whilst it had accomplished the mandatory training with excellent results, elements such as driver training had been compromised for the benefits of company cohesion, a factor which would pay dividends during the tour. This was in large part aided by the attachment of a 1 MERCIAN Fire Support Group (FSG) and mortar line, the FSG being utilized as the 'mobile' element of the Company, although the original concept was that FSG elements would be embedded with the platoons. This provided the first aspect of multi-nationality within the Company; Gurkhas working alongside British soldiers with the focus during Pre-Deployment Training (PDT) to create a unique company identity in which British soldiers were assimilated into a Gurkha company, working to its ethos, to become part of a cohesive whole. By adhering to strict, but common military standards the Company thrived in supporting this ethos which kept it distinct from other companies. Extreme attention was paid to the basics, addressing utilization of weapon systems, standard operating procedures (SOPs), wearing of Combat Protective Equipment (CPE) and the threat from Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). Other efforts to include the British soldiers in messing prior to deployment were relished and sought further to reinforce this cohesion.

Upon deployment, the result was a highly agile company, capable of responding to changes quickly and with little disruption as a consequence of the interoperability and commonality that had been achieved. Ominously, change occurred sooner than anyone could have expected.

The dispositions of the Company were complex and presented unique challenges. Having evolved over a number of iterations of Op HERRICK, the configuration would never have been 'planned' in such a way. The initial requirement was to man four bases - a main Forward Operating Base (FOB), two Patrol Bases (PBs) and a Command Post (CP) guarding the ingress from the desert area to the Green Zone. As Nahr-e-Saraj's northern-most element East of the River Helmand, it was a further 24km north until the next coalition forces base in the Musa-Qala AO. Whilst the main focus of the Company was on protecting the population, the task of defeating the insurgent was exacerbated by his ability to operate and plan uncontested in this area, and subsequently mount attacks on our northern boundary. In this way, the Company was expected to act as a 'breakwater' to prevent the insurgent from infiltrating with ease further south and especially into the key area of Gereshk..

An additional aggravation occurred due to the fact that the southern PB, known as Zumbalay, was not only mutually unsupported from the other bases, but also geographically so disparate that link up between the force elements was

impractical. PB Zumbalay was initially manned by Danish soldiers under command of D Company, DANBAT. However, in order that they could conduct operations on the West of the River Helmand, my predecessor had reluctantly agreed that we could cover this task during the 'leave freeze' whilst the British companies were still at full manning during the final and initial weeks of deployment. It had been suggested that we might even receive this Danish element back as we conducted the RIP. Such hopes were soon dashed, however, during an initial meeting with the Danish CO, the result being that the Company had to be re-configured with less than eight hours notice to continue the Zumbalay task. Once again, the flexibility the Company had developed in training paid dividends and 12 Platoon were subsequently assigned the task to man the base for up to six weeks until the Danes returned.

It is worth examining this issue, as this third element of multi-nationality, by way of being under Danish command, proved challenging at the Company Headquarters level. Having utilized his Danish troops to reinforce bases on the West of the River Helmand, CO DANBAT was in the unenviable position of having to balance scarce Danish resources and political pressure emanating from Copenhagen. Although there had been discussions with CO DANBAT to ascertain when we might expect to see this Danish element attached back to the Company, the response was luke-warm. With the British having manned this base for a number of months, difficulties appeared on the horizon. The end of the 'leave freeze', six weeks after initial deployment, was fast approaching and difficult discussions occurred to try and regain command of the Danish Platoon. The consequences of not having them meant that a diminished 12 Platoon would be in a position where it could not employ mutually supporting multiples, but also the initial expectation of manning this austere base for only six weeks soon emerged as a standing task with no prospect of rotating troops from other bases.

This is the reality of multi-national operations. There will be times when national pressures will mean that frictions arise but there is a balance to be struck. Ultimately our role was to ensure that the direction of CO DANBAT was conducted in accordance with his intent. Developing animosities based on national lines would have been simply unhelpful and whilst there was a requirement to emphasize in the strongest terms the implications of these decisions, the decisions were ultimately the CO's and, as his subordinate unit, we were required to implement them to the best of our ability. From our perspective, a significant degree of 'national empathy' was also required in order to understand the motivations of, and the political pressures on, the Danes. By ensuring relationships were well developed with them, frank and professional dialogue was possible without descending into partisan positions. Although it changed little regarding the dispositions of the Company, the development of the relationship paid dividends in resultant key discussions about whether Danish equipment would remain in PB Zumbalay. The consequence was that the Danish CO instructed his staff to continue to support the PB with the provision and maintenance of Danish equipment, a decision

taken in no small part as a result of the commitment we had shown towards integrating as part of DANBAT and developing those relationships.

As a mixed Gurkha-British Company working under Danish command there was a small group of embedded Danish soldiers, notably in roles such as Civilian Military Co-operation (CIMIC), an Electronic Warfare (EW) capability and, on occasion, a Joint Tactical Air Controller (JTAC). The Company ensured that any attached elements conformed to the standards and ethos developed in training. It was revealing to see not only the realization from external elements about why we operate to the standards we do, but also the pride with which they emerged themselves in this new identity, working to our practices. Indeed Danes working in other areas had heard of the Company's strict adherence to standards in the FOB and, when querying it, met no firmer advocates of such a policy than from the attached Danes themselves.

No comment on multi-nationality would be complete without the fourth element with which we worked, the Afghans themselves. They fell into three distinct groups; the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), the civilian population and the insurgent. The first two were by far the most important. If multi-nationality presented challenges, then nowhere was that more acutely felt than working alongside the ANSF. Many comments have been made about the unique ability of the Gurkha soldier to work alongside Afghans and the Company further reinforced this view. From the beginning, the Company sought to ensure that the Afghan National Army (ANA) Toley (Company) was fully embedded. Although occupying distinct

areas of the FOB, a careful balance was struck to ensure that both we, and they, had the requisite space to conduct our respective national business as appropriate, but also that those communal areas such as the gym and welfare facilities were accessible to all. Further enhanced by the ability of some Gurkhas to communicate directly with some ANA soldiers, the Company were able to forge strong relationships that proved a sound foundation for subsequent joint patrols.

At the planning level, the Toley Commander was consulted on future patrols, and the Company and Toley soon settled into a pattern of co-ordination, each fulfilling particular elements of an operation. As an example, house searches were made possible by ensuring that this was ANA-led with minimal advisory roles assigned to the female Royal Military Police (RMP) sergeant, who also served to ensure appropriate dealing with female civilians. Whilst planning itself was not a forte of the ANA, officers, particularly at the platoon commander level, were keen to engage and were regularly present in the operations room to discuss executing operations.

The numerous challenges associated with operating alongside the ANA should not be downplayed. On what seemed the whim of any given day, the ANA would adopt entrenched positions stating, for example, that they were not prepared jointly to man the western PB, known as Bahadur, unless we could meet the impossible demands of providing fresh rations to the location. Likewise an outright ultimatum was posited that standing patrols would cease unless each man could be equipped with a head torch and a hydration system; another impossible demand. On each occasion, and at all levels, these

issues had to be worked through with tact and diplomacy, a much underrated skill of the modern Gurkha. Almost always, the real rationale behind such a demand was something other than the initial complaint, not to mention that the parameters of the problem would constantly change in a uniquely Afghan way. With patience and empathy, however, it was possible to understand the motivations of these key partners who were having to balance their own challenges such as the requirement to get pay or leave to their soldiers, or having to deal with dire manning situations which exacerbated their problems. Only through the cementing of strong relations, founded in trust, were we able to understand the issues that these proud people would not readily expose.

The main focus of our operations was protecting the Afghan civilian population, attempting to disconnect them from the insurgent. The Company had inherited a solid foundation from the Yorkshire Regiment company and, as part of that, relations with the civilian population were at a very good level. Underpinned by an intensive patrol programme that was focussed on the delivery of projects through the Danish CIMIC officer, combined with the numerous 'walk-ins' to address local issues, this ensured that the commanders within the Company Group knew the local population well. These relations were fostered through the occurrence of regular shuras, with the ANA providing the food. We were able to build on the work of the previous company in fostering a community spirit which regularly interacted with the Company to inform us of insurgent activity, including IED placement. Whilst the motivations were varied, and often self-centred, the overwhelming desire was to restore peace to the area, in order that they could trade in Gereshk. One key component of doing this was to ensure continuity in conducting our business in the way that the previous company had done. By recognizing that the people were the focus, the Company was operating in line with counter-insurgency (COIN) doctrine and the subsequent follow-on Irish Guards company continued in a similar vein. Resisting the temptation to focus on the enemy was the key, and is still a trap into which many commanders fall. Fundamental to this approach was ensuring that we only patrolled those areas we could dominate. There was little point in patrolling into villages where we could not protect the population, only to become embroiled in protracted engagements from which no good could come.

Combining all of these multi-national elements together enabled the Company to deal with the insurgent himself. Weekly patrol planning that was CIMIC-led meant that we were able to identify key areas where we could be effective whilst ensuring that we did not set patterns. The sheer volume of patrols meant that, as much as possible, the Company was able to saturate the ground and, whilst we could not guarantee 24 hour coverage, the layered employment of base surveillance, patrols and

Unmanned Air Vehicles (UAV) ensured that it was very difficult for the insurgent to infiltrate the AO. When attempts were made to do this, the Company responded in a controlled but highly aggressive fashion. In working in line with McChrystal's concept of 'courageous restraint', the Company ensured that the correct weapon system was employed to provide the most 'efficient' effect whilst ensuring that civilian casualties would not be incurred. This was not always synonymous with the lightest weapon system. Indeed, a team on the end of a command wire IED resulted in the Company using precision guided munitions to deal with the target. Snipers were able to get into positions of over-watch to deal ruthlessly with the enemy when they engaged patrols, and mortars were also fixed on known firing points with the Mortar Fire Controllers (MFC) giving a running commentary on where the patrol was and where it was likely to be engaged from next. This ensured that the mortar line was constantly adjusting as it covered patrols, capable of putting rounds into the air in matter of seconds. This latter method became so effective that insurgent reporting indicated that they knew they only had 30 seconds to initiate contact and extract before mortars would be landing. A simple map appreciation of their exfiltration routes meant that we simply adjusted onto these 'rat runs' to catch the insurgent as he was trying to escape.

In all circumstances, the insurgent was simply stopped as soon as he tried to engage the patrolling multiples. In this interpretation of 'courageous restraint', appropriate weapon systems were utilized that simply closed contacts in a matter of minutes with minimal collateral damage. Aided by the local population to detect and exploit IEDs, enemy activity was largely nullified. Even during the most audacious insurgent attack which co-ordinated a simultaneous action on five separate targets, the Company was able to pre-empt the assault, re-tasking a patrolling multiple to disrupt the engagement. The population often reaffirmed Battle Damage Assessment (BDA), and on one occasion a local civilian, who we had worked closely with, was even seen wearing the dead insurgent's hat.

The ability of the Company to operate so effectively was the consequence of ensuring that all of the different multi-national elements were working in concert with one another. By recognizing the strengths of all of the different components, understanding the needs of the people and ensuring that there was a commonality of effort, the Company was able to operate to good effect. The Gurkha company, and the traits of humility, understanding, acceptance and professionalism, alongside language skills and a capacity to deal effectively with the enemy, acted as the backbone upon which this multi-national force was built. The co-ordination and ethos of such an organization is a difficult one to orchestrate and the problems that arise are many, but, when it works, its effect is truly powerful.



Sgt Dugendra, Cpl Him and Rfn Yalamber during CIMIC Shura Ops

The Queen's Gurkha Engineers

Gurkha Commando Sappers - Operations in a Multi-National Environment

By SSgt Khadka Gurung and Sgt Sanjay Thapa

The short history of Gurkha Commando Sappers began in 1996 when the first Gurkha Sapper passed the arduous All Arms Commando Course and received the coveted Green Beret - the hallmark of all Commando-trained soldiers. Since then, more and more Gurkha Sappers have earned their green beret and the ranks of The Queen's Gurkha Engineers 'dagger wallah' have grown to almost 80 and continue to increase. Gurkha Commando Sappers have now been a permanent feature of 24 Commando Engineer Regiment based at Royal Marine Barracks Chivenor for over five years, serving with distinction on three separate operational tours and several other overseas deployments with Commando Forces.

In 2006 QGE was asked to send a section of commando-trained Gurkhas to serve within 59 Independent Commando Engineer Squadron in support of 3 Commando Brigade Royal Marines (3 Cdo Bde RM). The Section arrived in North Devon and almost immediately deployed to Norway for winter warfare training inside the Arctic Circle. The entire Section performed well on what is regarded to be an extremely arduous course in tough conditions and quickly settled in amongst their new colleagues from both the British Army and the Royal Marines. Exciting new training opportunities such as this, combined with operational deployments to Afghanistan as part of 3 Cdo Bde RM, proved to be highly attractive and there was a sharp increase in the number of QGE Sappers volunteering to serve with Commando forces. At the time of writing there are currently over 30 QGE Commando Sappers based in RMB Chivenor.

Since the formation of 24 Commando Engineer Regiment in late 2007, Gurkha Commando Sappers have deployed across the globe providing engineer support to 3 Cdo Bde, including Norway, Canada, Belize and the USA. Importantly a QGE Commando toli has also served on three extremely demanding operational tours of Afghanistan on Ops HERRICK 5, 9 and 14 respectively.

Our experiences on each of these three tours have been very different. Op HERRICK 5 was highly 'kinetic' with sappers providing 'full on' close combat support alongside their Royal Marine colleagues. Sappers frequently 'went noisy' with Explosives Method of Entry (EMOE), using bar mines to gain access to Afghan compounds, which is now known as Assault Breaching (AB). We operated deep inside insurgents' strongholds and fought through to deny, destroy and neutralise their network, command structure, Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and weapon caches.

The tempo on Op HERRICK 9 was equally intense and QGE Commando Sappers provided exceptional close engineer support enabling the Brigade to live, fight and move. After several 'close calls' the intensity of HERRICK 9 was brought home to all when, unfortunately, two members of the Regiment sustained life-changing injuries although both have since recovered well. In recognition of their outstanding performance and distinguished service in Afghanistan throughout Op HERRICK 9 the following QGE personnel were presented with operational awards:

- Corporal Mohan Thapa - Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service (QCVS)
- Staff Sergeant Khadkabhadur Gurung - Commander British Forces Afghanistan (COMD BRITFOR) Commendation.
- Corporal Bhabendra Moktan (now SSgt Clerks of Works RE) - Commander British Forces Afghanistan (COMD BRITFOR) Commendation.

In 2009, in preparation for deployment on Op HERRICK 14, the Brigade deployed to the United States of America on Ex AURIGA; a combined amphibious exercise alongside the US Marine Corps based in Camp Lejeune, South Carolina. QGE Commando Sappers trained alongside Combat Engineers from the US Marines, many of whom would be based in the Upper Gereshk Valley (UGV), in and around the town of Sangin throughout the summer of 2011.

On Op HERRICK 14, 24 Commando Engineer Regiment provided the nucleus of the Task Force Helmand Engineer Group operating in support of 3 Commando Brigade across central Helmand. Alongside additional Field Squadrons from 32 Engineer Regiment, 24 Commando Engineer Regiment provided engineer support to both 42 and 45 Commandos RM respectively in the Nad-e-Ali district of Helmand Province. Op HERRICK 14 was notably different from both HERRICK 5 and HERRICK 9; the Area of Operations (AO) had changed dramatically with the Task Force now focused upon holding the more populated areas of central Helmand with US forces having assumed responsibility for the UGV. Generally the AO was, in parts, less 'kinetic' than previous tours and the focus of the entire Task Force was now very much on securing the support of the civilian Afghan population. The Brigade Commander summed this up very neatly in his mantra for HERRICK 14; "People first, insurgent second". The days of bar-mining through Afghan compounds were well and truly over and every action taken by the Task Force had to be assessed in terms of the potential collateral

damage on the civilian population. The Afghans became the focus of our efforts with the insurgent a close second. This is not to say the tour was any easier than previous deployments; if anything it became even harder to meet the insurgent on the battlefield whilst keeping our focus firmly on the civilian population - a true test of courage, professionalism and moral conviction for any soldier.

Thankfully the Regiment and the QGE contingent returned home safely at the end of September 2011 after seven months of hard but ultimately successful work in Afghanistan where once again the combination of Gurkha and Commando ethos had proven to be unstoppable on the battlefield. Despite not serving together as a Commando Troop the QGE toli performed to the highest standard in a variety of roles from providing close support and artisan skills within the Field Squadrons, technical recce and design as part of the Construction Design Cell and even within the Brigade Reconnaissance Force (BRF) taking the fight to the insurgent.

The QGE Commando experiment has been phenomenally successful and Gurkhas are now an integral part of Commando Forces within 24 Commando Engineer Regiment. Gurkhas can now be found in every part of the Regiment from the Field Troops to Support Troop, HQ Squadron, Resources and Recce Troop. We are truly 'ubique' within the Commando world.

For all the success of the QGE Commando Sappers, none of it would have been possible without the steadfast

and resolute support of the Gurkha families who have been instrumental in QGE success at RMB Chivenor. We recognize that initially it was very hard for the families to leave the well-established community in Maidstone and we are forever grateful for their sacrifices in making a home for us all in North Devon.

Upholding the finest traditions of QGE history, the pass rate of QGE Sappers on the All Arms Commando Course remains extremely high and we have taken home a number of very special awards over the years, including several Commando Medals and Commandants' Certificates on numerous occasions. Even the small number of QGE 'Dagger Wallahs' who have not yet served within 24 Commando Engineer Regiment can be proud of having earned their green beret - no doubt they are all better soldiers for having done so.

Last but certainly not least, it has been an absolute pleasure for us to be a part of such a unique and professional unit as 24 Commando Engineer Regiment and we hope this special relationship can continue for many years to come so that future generations of QGE Sappers have the chance to experience what we have started. The ultimate combination of Gurkha ethos and Commando spirit, the Khukuri and the Dagger, is a truly unique force multiplier and the relationship that now exists has been forged on the battlefields of Afghanistan. With Commando Forces being an integral part of the UK's rapid reaction forces, we can only hope that Gurkha Sappers continue to be represented in the years to come. United We Conquer. Jai QGE!

Queen's Gurkha Signals

Life in a Forward Operating Base

By Sgt Dipak Gurung

246 Gurkha Signal Squadron, part of 2 Signal Regiment, deployed to Afghanistan on Op HERRICK 13, in August and took over the Helmand Information Communication Services Signal Squadron (HICSSS) role. The Squadron had troops and detachments scattered throughout Helmand Province. The Squadron Headquarters and a Troop were based in Camp Bastion and a Troop was in Lashkar Gah. Forward Troop had its Information Communication Service (ICS) detachments deployed out to Forward Operating Bases (FOB) and Patrol Bases (PB) at Juno, PB2, Gereshk, Shawqat, Shazad and Sangin.

The Shazad ICS Detachment commanded by Sgt Dipak Gurung also comprised Cpl Min "Bhale" Gurung (RSE), Cpl Naresh Rai (CSEng (T)), LCpl Liam Megson (CSEng (I)) and LCpl Yam Gurung (CS Operator). The detachment supported the 3rd Battalion The Parachute Regiment Battlegroup (BG) Headquarters, part of 16 Air Assault Brigade, in Combined Forces Nad-E-Ali (North). Originally the detachment supported the Theatre Reserve Battalion, 2nd Battalion the Duke of Lancaster's Regiment.

The ICS provided by the detachment to the Battlegroup included the Mission Secret (MS) network and Blue VoIP phones provided through the 'OVERTASK' system, using a VSAT satellite bearer. A SWE=DISH satellite bearer also provided Promina Red and Black voice and data services. FEPS generators supplied power for the Communications "SPECTRE" cabin, the HQ building and most of the FOB which was looked after by the ICS electrician Cpl Min. The detachment also had responsibility for 1st Line Technical Support to the OVERTASK Remote Access System (ORAS) sites providing Mission Secret services to the front line in PB 'Khamar' and PB 'Wahid'. A Direct Line Of Sight (DLOS) system called Project KESTREL was also installed in Shazad to improve the bandwidth and speed of MS network traffic, but was still being engineered to become fully operational.

The everyday jobs included maintaining and sustaining ICS services to the Battlegroup around the clock, which was done exceptionally well with minimal manpower. Usually the crew was involved in fixing issues on users' computers and phones as well as on the servers, satellite bearers and power supply. The detachment handled Statement of Requirements and Requests for Change, and wherever possible delivered capability. Manpower was also provided for force protection of the FOB.

Life in ICS Shazad settled into a good routine. Accommodation was in an 18 x 24 tent. Boilers were installed so we had hot showers. Toilet facilities were very basic and limited to 'desert roses' (polyethylene pipes spiked on the

ground) and disposable silver bags. Amenities were basic, even though the base was expanding into an FOB. There was 'wifi' internet in the welfare room and Iridium hand-held Paradigm phones were used for welfare phone calls. There was also BFBS radio reception and a television in the communal area where we could relax during any free time.

It was an interesting tour working in a forward location. Although we settled into a regular pattern of life, we remained vigilant and ready to react to insurgent fire and the threat of attack. We respected our infantry comrades at the checkpoints who were involved in difficult and dangerous situations daily. Small-arms fire was very frequent in FOB Shazad with the insurgents actively targeting the helicopters when they were landing and taking off. The locals also enjoyed shooting the surveillance balloon that carried a number of high-powered cameras that were used for observation.

When we first arrived, there was no perimeter for the camp and locals could walk in and out freely. However we have established an all round HESCO perimeter built by a troop of 69 Squadron The Queen's Gurkha Engineers, part of 29 Regt RE. Sadly, when building the camp perimeter, a young sapper, Ishwor Gurung, was killed in action when working on top of a 30-foot tall "super" sangar roof.

Usually, the checkpoints in and around FOB Shazad were fired on by the enemy every day. The roar of gun fire from the artillery battery next door, Apache helicopter fire and GPMG bursts reverberated throughout the day and night.

The spirit in the detachment was constantly buoyant. We received lots of mail and parcels from home. Furthermore, we were visited by the CO, Lt Col Knott, and our OC, Maj Dagless. Our thanks go to the welfare charities for sending us free goodies and in particular to Mrs Dagless (Maj Dagless's mother) for continually supplying us with delicious home-made shortbread.

ICS Detachment Shazad did well. The support to both Battlegroups was outstanding and we kept it going until we handed over to 3 (UK) Divisional Signal Regiment. No matter how vulnerable our position in a forward location, everyone's morale was high and we were keen to keep providing close support to our comrades in the front line. Jai 246 GSS!

246 Gurkha Signal Squadron on Op HERRICK 13

By Cpl Surendra Limbu GSPS

Op HERRICK ...summer, with the stifling heat of the scorching Afghani sun; winter, freezing and bitterly cold; the occasional sandstorms ... such was the weather we endured over the period from August 2010 to January 2011 in Afghanistan. Yet, whatever extremities and hardships we were forced through, whether of work or weather, we survived them with sheer professionalism and the strong bond of kinship we had built among ourselves over the course of the deployment.

246 Gurkha Signal Squadron, as part of 2 Signal Regiment, was deployed to undertake the challenging role of providing Communication and Information System (CIS) support for the UK forces in Helmand Province. In accordance with the prevailing Theatre plan, on deployment, the Squadron HQ and Bastion ICS Troop were stationed in the Joint Operating Base (JOB), Camp Bastion. This was the bigger portion of the Squadron's strength. The remainder were scattered in small detachments to Main Operating Bases (MOBs), Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) and Patrol Bases (PBs), covering quite a large operational domain. The Squadron, after assuming responsibilities, made an impressive start in achieving its goals. Every individual in the Squadron was full of vigour and enthusiasm from the very start of the tour; immensely keen to embrace any challenges that might come their way.

Like the rest of the Squadron's personnel, I, as the Squadron HR Administrator, was in a similar challenging position with regard to providing administrative services to the Squadron, although experience from my first Op

HERRICK in 2007/08 did help ease my mind. There was, too, a well-established administrative office - the J1 Cell, Bastion Joint Operating Base. Nonetheless, the duty of providing staff and personnel support to one's own Squadron invariably lies with the Squadron HR Administrator. Hence, I provided administrative support to the Squadron in Theatre just as I would in barracks. The only different aspect was dealing with elements exclusively attributable to operational deployments. These comprised personnel's entitlement to Unpleasant Living Allowance (Operational), Unpleasant Working Allowance, Operational Allowance and Rest and Recuperation. Of all the aforementioned entitlements, R&R called for the exploitation of knowledge and experience I had from my first tour. It required me to issue comprehensive instructions in order that it ran smoothly. Thus, I can claim that administratively I did play my part helping maintain the morale of the Squadron.

In conclusion, the operational tour was a great opportunity in itself for the Squadron in terms of professional enhancement and productivity. At an individual level too, it was an opportunity to help all Squadron personnel to realize their potential and add knowledge and experience to what they had already achieved in barracks. The completion of the tour without hitches was a remarkable achievement for the Squadron, in that we did not suffer any casualties, were highly successful in fulfilling the tasks placed upon us and accomplished the primary mission of the Regiment in an outstanding manner; all of which is testimony to the significance of Queen's Gurkha Signals in the British Army.



A 246 GSS Communications Detachment in Op HERRICK

The Passing of Two Gurkha VCs



Havildar Lachhiman Gurung VC, 8th Gurkha Rifles, 1917-2010

It is with great sadness that we record the death of Havildar Lachhiman Gurung VC on 12 December 2010, in Charing Cross Hospital in London. Until he was taken ill with a chest infection the previous month, Lachhiman had been living with his wife, granddaughter and grandson at the Sir Oswald Stoll Foundation's Chiswick War Memorial Homes, alongside Honorary Lieutenant (QGO) Tulbahadur Pun VC and his family.

Havildar Lachhiman VC settled in Britain in 2008, in the London Borough of Hounslow, where he was made a Freeman of the Borough. His funeral was held in Hounslow Civic Centre on 22 December, in the presence of his widow and family members. Despite the severe winter weather, a very large congregation attended. This included civic dignitaries, the Nepalese Ambassador and Military Attaché, senior officers of the Brigade of Gurkhas, representatives of the Victoria Cross and George Cross Association and many serving and retired Gurkhas.

Havildar Lachhiman's coffin was carried into the Civic Centre by a bearer party from 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles. After Buddhist prayers, eulogies were delivered by the Mayor of Hounslow, the Ambassador of Nepal, Colonel Brigade of Gurkhas, Lachhiman's son Mr Resham Lal Gurung and a representative of the Gurkha Army Ex-Servicemen's Organisation. A I RGR bugler sounded Last Post and Reveille,

and wreaths and floral tributes were laid on behalf of the family, the Nepalese Embassy, Hounslow Council, the Brigade, the Gurkha Brigade Association, the 8th Gurkha Rifles, the VC and GC Association and many associations representing the retired Gurkha community in the UK.

After the service, Havildar Lachhiman VC's body was laid to rest in Chiswick New Cemetery, near his last home, in a family ceremony at which a I RGR piper played a lament.

The tribute to Lachhiman VC delivered by Colonel Brigade of Gurkhas is reproduced here, as is an extract from 'The Story of Gurkha VCs' which gives an account of the action in Burma in May 1945 where Lachhiman won the Victoria Cross.

In expressing condolences to the family on behalf of all ranks of the Brigade of Gurkhas, the Colonel Commandant, General Sir David Richards GCB CBE DSO ADC Gen, referring to Lachhiman's VC citation, wrote:

"One cannot conceive of bravery of a higher order than this. His epic heroism continues to inspire the Brigade of Gurkhas today - and, I know, his old regiment, now the 8th Gorkha Rifles, and the Indian Gorkha Brigade."

Tribute by Colonel Brigade of Gurkhas

Eulogy to the late Havildar Lachhiman Gurung VC, 4th Battalion 8th Gurkha Rifles, by Colonel David Hayes CBE, 22 December 2010.

Deputy Lord Lieutenant, His Excellency the Ambassador of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal, Honorary Lieutenant Tulbahadur Pun VC, Field Marshal Sir John Chapple, the Mayor of Hounslow and Chairman of the 8th Gurkha Rifles Regimental Association.

On behalf of Britain's Brigade of Gurkhas, the Gurkha Brigade Association and the Brigade's official charity the Gurkha Welfare Trust, I commit our sincere condolences to Havildar Lachhiman's Memsahab Mrs Mana Maya Gurung during her days of mourning. Alongside our messages of sympathy to her we also extend our condolences to Lachhiman's wider family of sons, Colonel (Retired) Shiva Dutta, Resham Lal and Krishna Bahadur, grandson Chitra and granddaughter Amrita.

Havildar Lachhiman VC of the 4th Battalion of the 8th Gurkha Rifles, died in the capital of the nation he served, and had adopted in his later years as his home. Nonetheless, as do all Gurkhas, he maintained a devotion and respect for his homeland of Nepal.

We are all privileged to have either known, or known of, Lachhiman VC. The holders of either the Victoria Cross or George Cross are scarce in number. They are unique as individual members of the exclusive VC and GC Association, which is itself revered for both the bravery it represents, and for the humility in the manner it conducts its affairs.

A very privileged few have the experience of meeting the holder of a Victoria Cross. Even fewer have the privilege of paying their respects at a VC's funeral. The diverse nature of our nation's society transcends numerous national boundaries and indeed religious faiths. Our broadly-based congregation here today, represents the freedoms fought for by soldiers such as Havildar Lachhiman.

The United Kingdom and Nepal are two nations bound together in a unique bond of mutual trust, honour and true friendship. Both of our nations produce good soldiers, and within the Gurkhas they are exceptionally so. The people of



LCpl Johnson Beharry VC PWRR and LCpl Matthew Croucher GC RMR lay the VC & GC Association wreath



Field Marshal Sir John Chapple GCB CBE DL laying a wreath on behalf of the Brigade



Hon Lt (QGO) Tulbahadur Pun VC 6 GR laying a floral tribute to Havildar Lachhiman Gurung VC



Lt Col ET Horsford MBE MC, last Chairman of the 8 GR Regimental Association, laying a wreath

both our nations hold great respect for a gallant soldier. Here is the paradox. Holders of the Victoria Cross are ordinary men who do not wish to stand out in society. Their mark of distinction, two simple but ennobling words 'For Valour', embodies the true definition of 'hero' in its most pure sense.

Born of a humble but noble family in the remote high hills of the Himalaya, Havildar Lachhiman's life's journey has brought him through immense physical, and psychological, military experience of danger, to his final resting place later today in Chiswick, West London. Near is his home provided by the Sir Oswald Stoll Foundation, and where his wife has a home for the rest of her life.

It was a journey of courage of the most intense degree, established on a selfless commitment to others, and the high ideals of military service and values. Lachhiman's exceptional deeds on that night of 12/13 May 1945 have been published elsewhere in Regimental histories and national obituaries of quality. The facts have not been, or needed to be, embellished - they stand bold as a report of selfless, steadfast and undiluted ferocious courage - no quarter expected and no quarter given.

Such acts of bravery are held high in our nation's values. However, they carry all the more distinction as they provide a platform for inspiration; that is the legacy of all VCs. Their courageous actions live on in the minds, and significantly, the acts of those sailors, soldiers and airmen whose service comes thereafter. That is how it has been for our Brigade in its campaigns since Lachhiman's action - in Malaya, Borneo, the Falklands or Timor, to the more recent campaigns of Iraq and Afghanistan. It is now in Afghanistan that our Gurkhas fight with pride, vigour and bravery alongside their British and Commonwealth comrades.



All of that is epitomized in the presence here of one of Lachhiman's fellow VCs, Lance Corporal Johnson Beharry VC, and Lance Corporal Matthew Croucher GC. They represent the valour of their fighting generation, and are paying their respects here with us today.

A Gurkha Major of the First Battalion the Royal Gurkha Rifles recently reported to me on his return from Helmand Province. His young recruits had joined the battle just 18 months since they left Nepal. He described the fighting environment. It was complex, technologically challenging, and fast. An environment of fear and gallantry, requiring modern, nimble thinking, agile and robust Gurkhas. His young recruits had excelled in all the tasks required of today's modern soldiering. He emphasized both the foundation and sustenance for their bravery. It is the warrior blood which courses through their veins. It is the same blood as that of the generations of Gurkhas who have served before. That indomitable spirit is Havildar Lachhiman's legacy. It is for that spirit we should give gratitude to him, and by which we should remember him.

Havildar Lachhiman's concern for his fellow ex-Servicemen lives on, in the work of the Gurkha Welfare Trust of which he was a most loyal supporter. His warrior spirit lives on in those young Gurkha soldiers who serve in our proud Gurkha Regiments of today's Brigade of Gurkhas, in the service of the Crown.

And for that, and Havildar Lachhiman's soul, we thank the Gods of all our faiths.

Jai Lachhiman VC,
Jai Gurkha.

Lachhiman Gurung's Victoria Cross - Burma, 1945

An extract from 'The Story of Gurkha VCs' published by the Gurkha Museum.

Lachhiman Gurung was born at Dakhani in the Chitwan district of Western Nepal. As with most Gurkhas, his actual date of birth is not known but his probable year of birth is 1917. He enlisted into the 8th Gurkha Rifles on 30th December 1940, and was fortunate to be recruited because he was just under five feet in height and, in peacetime this would have meant rejection. Having passed his recruit training, Lachhiman was posted in March 1945 to the 4th Battalion, 8th Gurkha Rifles in Burma.

In May 1945 the 4th Battalion was part of the 89th Indian Infantry Brigade in 7th Indian Division, advancing south along the River Irrawaddy against the retreating Japanese forces. On 11th May, "B" and "C" Companies were ordered to hold an important position astride a track on the west side of the river near to the village of Taungdaw. This track was vital to the Japanese withdrawal, and for three days and nights the Japanese fought with fanatical fury in an attempt to clear the track, launching wave after wave of suicidal attacks.

The key position was held by No 9 Platoon of "C" Company, almost 100 yards ahead of the remainder of the Company, and the most forward post of the platoon was manned by Rifleman Lachhiman's section. This was the situation when Rifleman Lachhiman earned his Victoria Cross. The citation in the London Gazette of 27th July 1945 read:

"At Taungdaw, in Burma, on the west bank of the Irrawaddy, on the night of 12/13th May, 1945, Rifleman Lachhiman Gurung was manning the most forward post of his platoon. At 01.20 hours at least 200 enemy assaulted his Company position. The brunt of the attack was borne by Rifleman Lachhiman Gurung's section and by his own post in particular. This post dominated a jungle path leading up into his platoon locality.

Before assaulting, the enemy hurled innumerable grenades at the position from close range. One grenade fell on the lip of Rifleman Lachhiman Gurung's trench; he at once grasped it and hurled it back at the enemy. Almost immediately another grenade fell directly inside the trench. Again this rifleman snatched it up and threw it back. A third grenade then fell just in front of the trench. He attempted to throw it back, but it exploded in his hand, blowing off his fingers, shattering his right arm and severely wounding him in the face, body and right leg. His two comrades were also badly wounded and lay helpless in the bottom of the trench.

The enemy, screaming and shouting, now formed up shoulder to shoulder and attempted to rush the position by sheer weight of numbers. Rifleman Lachhiman Gurung, regardless of his wounds, fired and loaded his rifle with his left hand, maintaining a continuous and steady rate of fire. Wave after wave of fanatical attacks were thrown in by the enemy and all were repulsed with heavy casualties.

For four hours after being severely wounded Rifleman Lachhiman Gurung remained alone at his post, waiting with perfect calm for each attack, which he met with fire at point-blank range from his rifle, determined not to give one inch of ground.

Of the 87 enemy dead counted in the immediate vicinity of the Company locality, 31 lay in front of this Rifleman's section, the key to the whole position. Had the enemy succeeded in over-running and occupying Rifleman Lachhiman Gurung's trench, the whole of the reverse slope position would have been completely dominated and turned.

This Rifleman, by his magnificent example, so inspired his comrades to resist the enemy to the last, that, although surrounded and cut off for three days and two nights, they held and smashed every attack.

His outstanding gallantry and extreme devotion to duty, in the face of almost overwhelming odds, were the main factors in the defeat of the enemy".

Rifleman Lachhiman Gurung was evacuated to hospital but he lost his right hand and the use of his right eye. On 19th December 1945 he was decorated with the Victoria Cross by His Excellency the Viceroy of India, Field Marshal Lord Wavell, at the Red Fort in Delhi. His proud father, then aged about 74 and very frail, was carried for eleven days from his village in Nepal to be present at the Red Fort to see him decorated.

Lachhiman continued to serve with his regiment, redesignated the 8th Gurkha Rifles after Indian Independence in 1947. He was promoted to Havildar but retired on completion of his service, returning to his village in Nepal. One of his sons subsequently became an Officer in his regiment.

Though now severely disabled as a consequence of his war wounds, he travelled to the United Kingdom to be present on the 'Last Big Parade' held in London on 19th August 1995 to commemorate the end of World War 2.



Hon Lt (QGO) Tulbahadur Pun VC, 6th Gurkha Rifles

It is with great sadness that we record the death of Honorary Lieutenant (QGO) Tulbahadur Pun VC. He passed away peacefully at his home in Tiplyang VDC, Myagdi District, Nepal on Wednesday 20 April 2011, aged 89. He leaves behind his wife, two sons and eight daughters.

Since 2007, Tulbahadur Pun VC had been residing in the London Borough of Hounslow, of which he was made a Freeman, and was visiting Nepal for the opening of a secondary school in his village, a project which he had sponsored. He had been living in the Sir Oswald Stoll Foundation's Chiswick War Memorial Homes, where Havildar Lachhiman Gurung VC had been his neighbour until his death last December.

Tulbahadur was the last surviving Gurkha holder of the Victoria Cross from the Second World War. He was awarded the VC for his "outstanding courage and superb gallantry in the face of odds which meant almost certain death" during the attack by the 3rd Battalion 6th Gurkha Rifles on the railway

bridge at Mogaung, behind enemy lines in Burma, on 23 June 1944, during the second Chindit expedition. A full account of the action is given in the extract from 'The Story of Gurkha VCs' which is reproduced below.

Tulbahadur VC's funeral took place on Friday 22 April, in Tiplyang, and is described in the article by Major Rick Beven which follows.

Expressing condolences on behalf of the Brigade, the Colonel Commandant, General Sir David Richards GCB CBE DSO ADC Gen, referred to Tulbahadur's valiant deeds and to his "selfless, steadfast and undiluted ferocious courage" and said that "his warrior spirit lives on in those young Gurkha soldiers who serve in our proud Gurkha Regiments of today's Brigade of Gurkhas, in the service of the Crown".

The Chairman of the Gurkha Brigade Association and President of the 6th Queen Elizabeth's Own Gurkha Rifles

Regimental Association, Brigadier John Anderson, said that Tulbahadur "was not only a man of great courage and fortitude, but someone who enjoyed life to the full and who represented all that is best in the Gurkha soldier. He will be sadly missed by all the Brigade of Gurkhas and particularly those who had the privilege of knowing him".

The British Ambassador, Mr John Tucknot, said: "Throughout his service with the British Gurkhas and his long life, Tulbahadur epitomized the finest qualities of our Nepali friends. His bravery and courage will never be forgotten".

A Farewell to Arms - The Funeral of Tulbahadur Pun VC

By Maj Rick Beven, OC British Gurkhas Pokhara

I received the phone call at 8 o'clock in the morning.

"I'm sorry to inform you that Tulbahadur VC died at his village last night."

I was in Kathmandu. The village was a long way away in the mountains of West Nepal.

"When's the funeral?"

"Tomorrow morning."

The next morning our convoy of Land Rovers bumped up the narrow dirt road that runs alongside the Kali Gandaki river. Sheer cliffs studded with stunted pines rose a thousand feet on either side of us, with the occasional house perched precariously amongst them. Whenever the road straightened we caught brief glimpses of Nilgiri Himal, 7,000 metres high and covered in snow.

Several hundred mourners were waiting patiently outside the house when we arrived. His son came out to greet us:

"You've arrived ... at last."

Tulbahadur's body was carried out and laid on a bamboo stretcher on the porch. It was a small stretcher for such a brave man.

We laid wreaths of poppies and marigolds beside a framed photograph of Tulbahadur in a pin stripe suit wearing a long row of medals, eleven in all.

Commander British Gurkhas Nepal read a message of condolence from the Chief of Defence Staff and Colonel Commandant Brigade of Gurkhas, and a tribute from the Victoria Cross and George Cross Association.

Then it was my turn. I wanted to say how proud I was to have been in his Regiment, the 6th Gurkha Rifles, of how proud we were of him winning the VC at the battle of Mogaung in Burma in 1944. Instead, I read messages from retired senior officers from his regiment, from friends and brothers in arms.

The Gurkha Major read out Tulbahadur's VC citation. The crowd lent forward intently to listen; many had probably never heard how Tulbahadur won his medal.

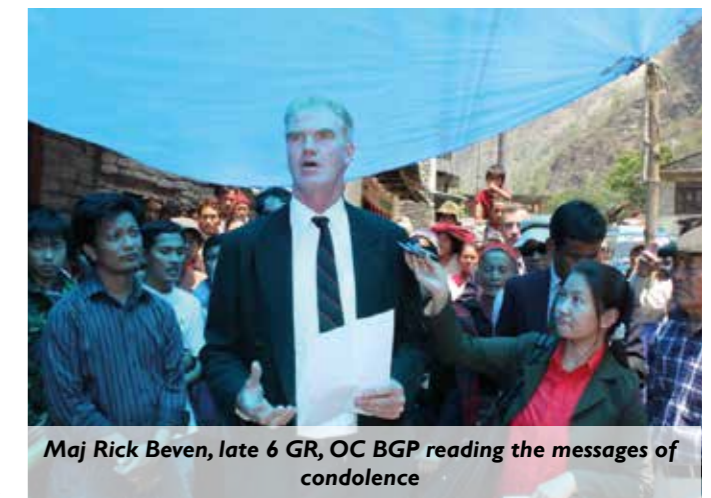
His eldest son spoke last. He described how his father had always wanted to die at home and had returned to Nepal from Chiswick to take part in a special ceremony to honour his ancestors. He ended by saying how Tulbahadur, who had not had a chance to go to school, had always championed education and how proud he was of the new school being built in his village.

It was not far to the cremation ground. Tulbahadur's sons and relatives carried his body down to the river on their shoulders. A line of women holding a long strip of white cotton on bamboo poles led the way. The villagers, each carrying bundles of firewood, followed.

Women sang bhajans whilst the pyre was built. The villagers gossiped.

A Brigade piper in tartans played "Flowers of the Forest". We stood at attention listening to the river. The family walked round the pyre a ritual three times. Ghee was poured over the firewood. The crowd turned to leave as the flames took hold.

With us were the family, friends, regiment and villagers he had grown up with. Just as Tulbahadur VC always wanted.



Maj Rick Beven, late 6 GR, OC BGP reading the messages of condolence

Tulbahadur Pun's Victoria Cross - Burma, 1944

An extract from 'The Story of Gurkha VCs' published by the Gurkha Museum.

Rifleman Tulbahadur Pun who was born in 1923 was, like so many recruits enlisted into the Gurkha Brigade from Western Nepal, recruited from a hill village called Banduk, in the Gulmi Tehsil of 4,000 Parbat District, west of Kathmandu. He enlisted in 1941 and after completing his recruit training in the Regimental Centre of the 6th Gurkha Rifles (later 6th Queen Elizabeth's Own Gurkha Rifles) at Abbottabad in Northern India (now Pakistan); he joined the 3rd Battalion which was part of the Chindit Force in Burma.

On the 23rd June 1944, the battalion was involved in an action in which Rifleman Tulbahadur Pun distinguished himself and earned a Victoria Cross.

The citation in the London Gazette dated 9th November 1944 read:

The KING has been graciously pleased to approve the award of the VICTORIA CROSS to:

No. 10119 Rifleman Tulbahadur Pun, 6th Gurkha Rifles, Indian Army.

"In Burma on June 23rd 1944, a Battalion of the 6th Gurkha Rifles was ordered to attack the Railway Bridge at Mogaung. Immediately the attack developed the enemy opened concentrated and sustained cross fire at close range from a position known as the Red House and from a strong bunker position two hundred yards to the left of it.

So intense was this cross fire that both the leading platoons of "B" Company, one of which was Rifleman Tulbahadur Pun's, were pinned to the ground and the whole of his Section was wiped out with the exception of himself, the Section Commander and one other man. The Section Commander immediately led the remaining two men in a charge on the Red House but was at once badly wounded. Rifleman Tulbahadur Pun and his remaining companion continued the charge, but the latter too was immediately badly wounded.

Rifleman Tulbahadur Pun then seized the Bren Gun, and firing from the hip as he went, continued the charge on this heavily bunkered position alone, in the face of the most shattering concentration of automatic fire, directed straight at him. With the dawn coming up behind him, he presented a perfect target to the Japanese. He had to move for thirty yards over open ground, ankle deep in mud, through shell holes and over fallen trees.

Despite these overwhelming odds, he reached the Red House and closed with the Japanese occupants. He killed three and put five more to flight and captured two light machine guns and much ammunition. He then gave accurate supporting fire from the bunker to the remainder of his platoon which enabled them to reach their objective.

His outstanding courage and superb gallantry in the face of odds which meant almost certain death were inspiring to all ranks and were beyond praise".

Rifleman Tulbahadur Pun received his Victoria Cross from His Excellency the Viceroy, Field Marshal Lord Wavell, at a special parade held in Delhi on 3rd March 1945.

After Indian Independence in 1947 his regiment was transferred to the British army; Tulbahadur Pun joined the 2nd Battalion 6th Gurkha Rifles in The Brigade of Gurkhas and served in Malaya [Malaysia] and Hong Kong. Throughout his service he continued to display operational efficiency and courage that were an inspiration to his younger companions and especially during the Malayan Emergency [1948 - 1960].

He rose to Warrant Officer rank and was appointed Regimental Sergeant Major of his battalion. On retirement on 14th May 1959 he was promoted to Honorary Lieutenant (QGO) and returned to his village in Nepal.

In retirement he visited the United Kingdom to attend Victoria Cross and George Cross Association reunions and also visited his Regiment when stationed in the Far East. He was presented to Her Majesty The Queen during Her State Visit to Nepal in February 1986.



Cpl Milan Rai QGS, leads Hon Lt (QGO) Tulbahadur Pun VC's funeral procession from his village to the cremation site beside the Kali Gandaki River

Victoria Crosses awarded to Britain's Indian Army Gurkhas, 1911- 1947

By Colonel Richard Cawthorne

The deaths of Havildar Lachhiman Gurung VC late 8th Gurkha Rifles in December 2010 and Honorary Lieutenant (QGO) Tulbahadur Pun VC late 6th Queen Elizabeth's Own Gurkha Rifles in April 2011, reported elsewhere in The Kukri, has closed a chapter in the history of the Victoria Cross. Lachhiman was the last soldier of the Indian Army to be awarded the Victoria Cross and following his death Tulbahadur was the sole survivor of Britain's Indian Army who had been awarded the Victoria Cross. Tulbahadur's death also occurred in the centenary year that the eligibility for the award of the Victoria Cross was expanded to include Indian and Gurkha officers and soldiers of the Indian Army.

Initially the award of the Victoria Cross to officers and men of the Honourable East India Company and later Britain's Indian Army was restricted to British officers and soldiers. Native officers, non-commissioned officers and sepoy were only eligible for the Indian Order of Merit (IOM), which had been instituted in 1837. The expansion of the award to include native officers, non-commissioned officers and men was notified in The London Gazette on 12 December 1911, which coincided with its announcement at the Coronation Durbar of HM King George V at Delhi on the same day.

Over the next 35 years, until Partition and the Independence of India and Pakistan in 1947, a total of forty Victoria Crosses were awarded to Indian and Gurkha officers and soldiers. Eleven Victoria Crosses were awarded during the First World War, two of which were to Gurkhas; one Victoria Cross was awarded to an Indian sepoy during the Waziristan campaign in 1921; and twenty-eight Victoria Crosses were awarded during the Second World War, of which ten were to Gurkhas. Of the twelve Victoria Crosses to Gurkhas, three were awarded posthumously, all in the Second World War.

In the First World War, the Victoria Crosses awarded to Gurkhas were both to riflemen of the 2nd Battalion 3rd Queen Alexandra's Own Gurkha Rifles; one in France in 1915 and the other in Palestine in 1918. In the Second World War, Gurkha recipients were from six of the ten regiments of Gurkhas for actions in North Africa, Italy and Burma. The first Victoria Cross to be awarded to a Gurkha in the Second World War was for an action in North Africa in 1943; two were awarded to Gurkhas, both posthumously, for actions in Italy in 1944, and the remaining seven Victoria Crosses were awarded to Gurkhas for the Burma campaign. Of the seven Victoria Crosses for the Burma campaign, four were awarded during a two-week period in 1944 - two of which were awarded to a single battalion in the same battle. Gurkhas of 5th Royal Gurkha Rifles (Frontier Force) were awarded a total of four Victoria Crosses for actions in Burma and Italy, which was more than any other regiment in the Indian Army; and its 2nd Battalion was the most decorated battalion in the Indian Army, having been awarded three Victoria Crosses during the Burma campaign.

Six of the twelve Victoria Crosses awarded to Gurkhas of Britain's Indian Army are now held by the Gurkha Museum. These are the Victoria Crosses awarded during the First World War to Riflemen Kulbir Thapa and Karanbahadur Rana, both of 3rd Queen Alexandra's Own Gurkha Rifles, and for the Second World War to Subadar Lalbahadur Thapa and Rifleman Bhanbhagta Gurung, 2nd King Edward VII's Own Gurkha Rifles, Rifleman Tulbahadur Pun, 6th Gurkha Rifles, and Rifleman Ganju Lama, 7th Gurkha Rifles.

Havildar Lachhiman Gurung and Honorary Lieutenant (QGO) Tulbahadur Pun were the last of a special breed and their deaths represent the end of an era.

"The Story of Gurkha VCs" is available from The Gurkha Museum.



1. Rfn Kulbir Thapa VC 3 GR



4. Hav Gaje Ghale VC 5 RGR



7. Rfn Agansing Rai VC 5 RGR



10. Rfn Thaman Gurung VC 5 RGR



2. Rfn Karnabhadur Rana VC 3 GR



5. Rfn Ganju Lama VC MM 7 GR



8. Jem Netrabhadur Thapa VC 5 RGR



11. Rfn Bhanbhagta Gurung VC 2 GR



3. Sub Lalbahadur Thapa VC 2 GR



6. Rfn Tulbahadur Pun VC 6 GR



9. Rfn Sherbahadur Thapa VC 9 GR
(There is no known photograph of Sherbahadur VC)



12. Rfn Lachhiman Gurung VC 8 GR

Succession of Victoria Crosses awarded to Indians and Gurkhas of Britain's Indian Army 1911-1947

Rank	Name	Regiment	Date of Action	Theatre	Comment
Sepoy	Khudadad Khan	129th Duke of Connaught's Own Baluchis	31 Oct 14	Belgium	
Naik	Darwan Sing Negi	1st Bn 39th Garhwal Rifles	23-24 Nov 14	France	
Rifleman	Gobar Sing Negi	2nd Bn 39th Garhwal Rifles	10 Mar 15	France	Posthumous
Jemadar	Mir Dast IOM	55th Coke's Rifles (Frontier Force) Attached 57th Wilde's Rifles (Frontier Force)	26 Apr 15	France	
Rifleman	Kulbir Thapa	2nd Bn 3rd Queen Alexandra's Own Gurkha Rifles	25 Sep 15	France	Died 1956
Sepoy	Chatta Singh	9th Bhopal Infantry	13 Jan 16	Mesopotamia	
Lance Naik	Lala	41st Dogras	21 Jan 16	Mesopotamia	
Naik	Shahamad Khan	89th Punjabis	12 Apr 16	Mesopotamia	
Lance Dafadar	Gobind Singh	28th Light Cavalry Attached 2nd Lancers (Gardner's Horse)	Dec 17	France	
Rifleman	Karanbahadur Rana	2nd Bn 3rd Queen Alexandra's Own Gurkha Rifles	10 Apr 18	Palestine	Died 1973
Ressaidar	Badlu Singh	14th Murray's Jat Lancers Attached 29th Lancers (Deccan Horse)	23 Sep 18	Palestine	Posthumous
Sepoy	Ishar Singh	28th Punjabis	10 Apr 21	Waziristan	
2Lt	Premindra Singh Bhagat	Royal Bombay Sappers & Miners	31 Jan 41	Middle East	
Jemadar	Richpal Ram	4th Bn (Outram's) 6th Rajputana Rifles	7-8 Feb 41	Eritrea	Posthumous
Lance Havildar	Parkash Singh	5th Bn 8th Punjab Regiment	6 Jan 43	Burma	
Subadar	Lalbahadur Thapa	1st Bn 2nd King Edward VII's Own Gurkha Rifles	5-6 Apr 43	North Africa	Died 1968
CHM	Chhelu Ram	4th Bn (Outram's) 6th Rajputana Rifles	19-20 Apr 43	North Africa	Posthumous
Havildar	Gaje Ghale	2nd Bn 5th Royal Gurkha Rifles (Frontier Force)	27 May 43	Burma	Died 2000
Lance Naik	Nand Singh	1st Bn (King George's Own) (Ferozepore Sikhs) 11th Sikh Regiment	11-12 Mar 44	Burma	
Jemadar	Abdul Hafiz	3rd Bn 9th Jat Regiment	6 Apr 44	Burma	Posthumous
Sepoy	Kamal Ram	3rd Bn 8th Punjab Regiment	12 May 44	Italy	
Rifleman	Ganju Lama MM	1st Bn 7th Gurkha Rifles	12 Jun 44	Burma	Died 2000
Rifleman	Tulbahadur Pun	3rd Bn 6th Gurkha Rifles	23 Jun 44	Burma	Died 2011
Rifleman	Agansing Rai	2nd Bn 5th Royal Gurkha Rifles (Frontier Force)	24-25 Jun 44	Burma	Died 2000

Rank	Name	Regiment	Date of Action	Theatre	Comment
Jemadar	Netrabahadur Thapa	2nd Bn 5th Royal Gurkha Rifles (Frontier Force)	25 Jun 44	Burma	Posthumous
Naik	Yeshwant Ghadge	3rd Bn 5th Mahratta Light Infantry	10 Jul 44	Italy	Posthumous
Rifleman	Sherbahadur Thapa	1st Bn 9th Gurkha Rifles	18-19 Sep 44	Italy	Posthumous
Jemadar	Ram Sarup Singh	2nd Bn 1st Punjab Regiment	25 Oct 44	Burma	Posthumous
Rifleman	Thaman Gurung	1st Bn 5th Royal Gurkha Rifles (Frontier Force)	10 Nov 44	Italy	Posthumous
Sepoy	Bhandari Ram	16th Bn 10th Baluch Regiment	22 Nov 44	Burma	
Havildar	Umrao Singh	33 Bty 30 Mountain Regiment IA	15 -16 Dec 44	Burma	
Lance Naik	Sher Shah	7th Bn 16th Punjab Regiment	19-20 Jan 45	Burma	Posthumous
Jemadar	Parkash Singh	14th Bn 13th Frontier Force Rifles	16-17 Feb 45	Burma	Posthumous
Sepoy	Fazal Din	7th Bn 10th Baluch Regiment	2 Mar 45	Burma	Posthumous
Naik	Gian Singh	4th Bn 15th Punjab Regiment	2 Mar 45	Burma	
Rifleman	Bhanbhagta Gurung	3rd Bn 2nd King Edward VII's Own Gurkha Rifles	5 Mar 45	Burma	Died 2008
Lt	Karamjeet Singh Judge	4th Bn 5th Punjab Regiment	18 Mar 45	Burma	Posthumous
Sepoy	Ali Haidar	6th Royal Bn (Scinde) 13th Frontier Force Rifles	9 Apr 45	Italy	
Sepoy	Namdeo Jadhao	1st Bn 5th Mahratta Light Infantry	9 Apr 45	Italy	
Rifleman	Lachhiman Gurung	4th Bn 8th Gurkha Rifles	12-13 May 45	Burma	Died 2010

Shooting

Bisley 2011

Message of Congratulations from Colonel Brigade of Gurkhas

To all members of the Brigade of Gurkhas in the Army 100. I wish to congratulate you for your outstanding achievement in being members of the Army 100. Signaller Sudip Gurung excelled as the Queen's Medalist. Overall the Brigade achieved 40% of the Army 100. To do so at a time when we are heavily committed to operations is a grand success. It marks the Brigade as an organization with unparalleled marksmanship throughout the Army - a magnificent demonstration of our overall Operational Effectiveness through our Infantry and Corps units.

Colonel D G Hayes CBE

Bisley Results

Top 10

1st - Sig Sudin Gurung (22 Sig Regt) - Queen's Medal Winner	3rd REME
3rd - Sgt Devprakash Gurung (2 Sig Regt)	4th The Royal Gurkha Rifles (1 RGR)
4th - Capt Bhatrat Shrestha (22 Sig Regt)	5th RAF Air Command
5th - Sig Robin Gurung (30 Sig Regt)	6th The Adjutant General's Corps 'A'
6th - Cpl Durga Gurung (2 Sig Regt)	7th Royal Naval Air Command
8th - Sig Ramesh Rai (30 Sig Regt)	8th RAMC
9th - Pte Ramesh Gurung (29 RCT RLC) transferred from RGR	9th Royal Artillery A
10th - Cpl Khagendra Tamang (30 Sig Regt)	10th Territorial Army

Army 100

- 40- From the Brigade of Gurkhas
- 6 - Recently transferred Gurkhas
- 6 - BNOs

Breakdown of BG

- 1 RGR - 8
- QGE - 5
- QG Sigs - 19
- QOGLR - 8

Unit Championships

Methuen Cup

- 1st The Royal Corps of Signals
- 2nd RAF Regiment

The Inter Unit Operational Shooting Championship

Overall Positions

- 1st 2 Sig Regt
- 2nd 1 RGR
- 3rd 30 Sig Regt
- 4th 22 Sig Regt
- 5th 10 QOGLR
- 8th 36 Engr Regt

The Inter Unit Operational Shooting Championship

Other Results

- The Infantry Champion - 1 RGR
- Top O A & Svcs Team - 2 Sig Regt
- Top Royal Signals Team 2 Sig Regt
- Top Royal Engineer Team 36 Engr Regt

Army Operational Shooting Competition 2011

Success for Queen's Gurkha Signals

By Lt Anthony H Hynes, 22nd Signal Regiment

The Army Operational Shooting Competition (AOSC) took place in the first week of July this year and saw the introduction of a number of more challenging and operationally focused shoots. With the operational tempo as high as it is, there has never been a more important time for soldiers to have well trained and practised marksmanship skills. Even if the 20 teams who took part in this year's competition came away with no silverware, the training benefit of taking part is excellent and is a far cry from the usual boring/wet/rushed range days that we all know and love.

The Army Rifle Association (ARA) was formed in 1893 and is the governing body of the AOSC. Every year competitors from all cap badges compete in various stages from Brigade level through to Divisional level to qualify to compete at Bisley. This year there were 20 teams of eight, three of which were Royal Signals (2nd, 22nd and 30th Signal Regiments). These teams were competing for the inter unit trophy, and the 160 individuals were competing for the prestigious Queen's Medal. The Queen's Medal is awarded to the champion shot of the AOSC and as a result the top shot in the Army. The top 100 shots of the competition are also awarded the Army 100 badge which is worn on the left wrist to signify being in the top 100 shots of the Army.

Although the Royal Signals have always had strong representation in the competition, the Queen's Medal has

previously only been awarded to an individual from the Corps on two occasions: in 1973 to Cpl G L Jacques and in 1980 to SSgt M Corcoran. This year we are proud to announce that Signaller Sudin Gurung of 22nd Signal Regiment was the winner of the Queen's Medal. He is also the first ever Queen's Gurkha Signals soldier to win.

Sig Sudin was not the only individual to do well: Sgt Devprakash Gurung finished third in the competition, Capt Bharat Shrestha came fourth and Sig Robin Gurung came fifth. In fact, there were seven individuals from the Corps in the top ten, 14 in the top 30 and 23 of the 24 who took part from the Corps came in the top 100, earning the right to wear the Army 100 badge.

In the inter unit competition; 2nd Sig Regt won, with 30th Sig Regt finishing third and 22nd Sig Regt finishing fourth. The new soldier category was won by Sig Uttam Rai from 30th Sig Regt, with Sig Hemanta Gurung from 2nd Sig Regt finishing runner-up. The Young Officer Category was won by 2Lt Richard Greener of 2nd Sig Regt and the runner-up was Lt Anthony Hynes of 22nd Sig Regt. The list of trophies taken and categories won is endless.

It was a truly exceptional year for the Royal Corps of Signals and we wish those who are selected to represent the Army in Canada and India the best of luck.



Sig Sudin Gurung, winner of the Queen's Medal 2011, being carried in the traditional manner, after the results were announced

Ex SHARPSHOOTER 2011 - Operational Shooting with the Gurkhas

By Capt A W Gill RWELSH - Captain British Army Combat Shooting Team

It is not often a military exercise involves visiting Niagara Falls, climbing the CN Tower in Toronto, and sampling the delights of Ottawa's night life. Yet this is the position in which six soldiers from 1 RGR found themselves in September this year on EX SHARPSHOOTER. That said, the primary objective was to participate in, and win the Canadian Forces Small Arms Concentration. This is their version of the Army Operational Shooting Competition (AOSC), and the British Army sends over a team annually. This year the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force also entered teams.

The Gurkhas have an enviable reputation at combat shooting, and no British Army Team is complete without some Gurkha representation. This year a relatively junior and inexperienced all Infantry Team was selected. 1 RGR 'anchored' the team with six firers and 2 R WELSH contributed two firers, 4 RIFLES and 1 RANGLIAN one each to make a firing team of ten.

Leading the firers was CSgt Bhakta Sherchan, who had been to Canada before and other than the Team Adjutant and Coach (WO1 (SMI) Robinson SASC) was the only firer to have been on an overseas tour previously. He was ably supported by LCpl Kesh Thapa, and Rfn Kubergung Gurung, Amar Ale, Bikram Gurung and Dhan Ghale, all of whom had shot for 1 RGR at Bisley that year.

The team deployed on 2 September and very quickly found themselves in the thick of the pistol competition. This took the form of three 'qualifying' shoots prior to the top 90 firers being selected for the 'dynamic' range package. The dynamic ranges were fired on 90 degree arc pistol ranges with facades built up to simulate buildings or compounds. There were three ranges, each with a Navy, Army and Air Force battle picture and theme. They involved judgemental shooting, as well as casualty evacuation and room clearing drills. CSgt Bhakta, LCpl Kesh, Rfn Kubergung and Rfn Amar Ale qualified for this demanding competition. Kubergung was

the star pistol shot amongst the team scoring 179 ex 200 in the qualifier. The dynamic ranges were testing for all firers, as they developed skills that we simply don't practise enough. Everyone came away from the pistol ranges having learnt a significant amount about Close Quarter Marksmanship.

No sooner had the team holstered pistols than the rifle matches started. This was where the team were looking to pick up some silverware, and were keen to get started. The Gurkhas were instrumental in bringing on the more junior firers in the team and the steady and calm influence of CSgt Bhakta and LCpl Kesh paid dividends in the team matches. The team had a runaway success in the falling plate with a British Army first, second and third, and shot very well in the casualty evacuation match. It was in the Section Match that the team dominated. This involved a two mile approach march in kit including an obstacle course followed by a 'run down' shoot starting at 500m. It was broadly similar to the Parachute Regiment Cup. The team won the match by such a margin that we could have had only seven firers and still won! CSgt Bhakta Sherchan, LCpl Kush Thapa, Rfn Amar Ale and Rfn Dhan Ghale were selected to represent the Combined Services Team which won the International Match, with CSgt Bhakta top shot, scoring with 210 ex 225. Five firers; C/Sgt Bhakta, LCpl Kesh, Rfn Kubergung, Rfn Dhan and Rfn Amar made The Queen's Final. The team punched significantly above its weight, outshooting the much more experienced Royal Navy and Royal Air Force Teams.

Outside of the shooting it has been a real pleasure to work closely with the Gurkhas. Their dedication and commitment to shooting has definitely 'rubbed off' on the younger members on the tour, although I don't think the non Gurkha soldiers will ever be able to dance like a Nepalese! New and strong relationships have been formed at junior soldier level across a number of Infantry Battalions, and I know everyone is looking forward to meeting at Bisley again next year!



Combat Shooting in QOGLR

By Capt Hutch Hutcheon RLC

This year has seen the 10 QOGLR Combat Shooting Team, led by Captain Hutcheon (Regimental Training Officer) and Lance Corporal Rudra, go from strength to strength. During the Corps Operational Shooting Competition (CORPSOSC), the team gained a plethora of trophies and also became team champions within the RLC, while Lance Corporal Rudra was also the overall RLC Champion Shot for a record third time. The team then entered the Divisional Arms Meeting (DIVSAAM) in order to qualify for the Army Operational Shooting Competition (AOSC) at Bisley. The team duly qualified, having shot magnificently against all the teams within DIVSAAM.

With many new shoots in place, and a large number of shoots designed to reflect the current operational climate, AOSC 2011 was physically very demanding. There was also a considerable number of rule changes to promote combat shooting rather than target shooting and,

at the same time, encourage 'new blood' to participate. All new members of the teams were eager to earn a place in the top 100 shots in the British Army known as the 'Army 100' and thus qualify to wear the coveted Army 100 badge.

On the final day of the AOSC the whole QOGLR team gained a place in the 'Army 100' (a rare thing indeed) and also claimed a large number of trophies, many of which were for infantry-orientated shoots!

The 2011 shooting season has been the most successful yet for the 10 QOGLR Combat Shooting Team. Everybody has gained a huge amount of experience that can now be passed on to other members of the Regiment. Final congratulations must go to Lance Corporal Santosh for becoming the best shot for a first time entry to Bisley and to Lance Corporal Rudra for earning a QOGLR Gold Medal for his outstanding support to the Regiment's Combat Shooting Team over many years.



QOGLR Shooting Team

The Retirement of Colonel BG

Farewell to Colonel Brigade of Gurkhas, Colonel D G Hayes CBE

On 31 August 2011, Colonel Brigade of Gurkhas, Colonel David Hayes CBE, left his post on retirement. He was commissioned into the 7th Duke of Edinburgh's Own Gurkha Rifles in 1973, commanded 2nd Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles, and served two tours as Colonel BG, December 1997 to October 2000 and October 2004 to August 2011.

Earlier in the summer, at the Brigade Conference Dinner Night at Shorncliffe on 30 June, the Colonel Commandant Brigade of Gurkhas, General Sir David Richards GCB CBE DSO ADC Gen, paid handsome tribute for all that Colonel Hayes had done for the Brigade and presented him with a silver goblet on behalf of All Ranks.

His last day in Headquarters Brigade of Gurkhas was more informal. Staff of the Headquarters, and guests who had worked closely with him, gathered at a lunch for Colonel Hayes, who was accompanied by Mrs Lucy Hayes and two of their children, Sam and Alice. Short speeches of appreciation and farewell were given by Mrs Margaret Gilmour, Assistant Head of the

Land Forces Secretariat, Major Hemchandra Rai, Deputy Chief of Staff in HQBG, and Major Paul Gay, Regimental Secretary of The Royal Gurkha Rifles. Major Gay quoted from a letter from Brigadier John Anderson, Chairman of the Gurkha Brigade Association, which encapsulated the scope and scale of the invaluable service rendered to the Brigade by Colonel Hayes:

"Your knowledge of our Brigade, your ability to judge when to engage or step back, and your acute political and military antennae have all enabled you to provide the necessary calm and balanced leadership that we have needed. We all owe you a huge debt."

After presentations to Colonel Hayes and Mrs Hayes, Colonel BG was garlanded by the staff and families, and, led by a piper from the Queen's Own Gurkha Logistics Regiment, was towed out of the camp.

The signal which Colonel Hayes sent to the Brigade on his last day is reproduced here.

On Quitting the Brigade - 31 August 2011

Today I hand over my appointment as Colonel Brigade of Gurkhas to Colonel Ian Rigden. Our Brigade will be extremely well served by Rigden Saheb. He is a true British Gurkha Officer of immense dedication and integrity, with all the best interests of our Gurkha soldiers at the very heart of all he undertakes.

Our Brigade has transformed itself over the past decade. Importantly it is at the centre of the Army's Operational Main Effort. Our Gurkhas of all our Regiments are alongside, and in many individual cases, ahead of their British counterparts, while they remain strong comrades in arms. Constitutionally our Brigade is on a sound legal footing within an equally robust moral framework. Thereby the Brigade is more at ease with itself, and indeed with the Army. Consequently, the Army is more at ease with the Brigade.

Through our own charity, the Gurkha Welfare Trust, we fulfil our moral duty to our ex-servicemen and their families, primarily in Nepal but also wherever in the world an ex-Gurkha may require its assistance. That includes an increasingly heavy advisory commitment as the lead Gurkha charity in the UK. Moreover, through the GWT's community aid projects, we are able in part to meet our obligations to the nation of Nepal - our most loyal friend.

The work of our Gurkha Museum reminds us through its artefacts and archives how we have got to where we are in our history, and why we do things the way we do. It is the centre of reference for our kaida.

All of those elements provide our foundation for the future - your future. During your and your predecessors' service, you have fashioned our Brigade into a potent fighting force established on a strong ethos and a character of enduring robustness, light hearted gallantry and cheerful humility.

The immediate future provides us many challenges as we contribute to the emerging Future Force 2020. We have faced such challenges before and have remained within the Army's Order of Battle. I have every confidence that our Brigade shall continue to do so.

It is here that I now take my leave of the serving Brigade. I express my heartfelt gratitude for the truly fulfilling career which our Brigade has provided for me and for the warm and enduring friendship it has extended to my wife Lucy and our family which has grown up amongst you and your families. It is now your Brigade for the future - keep it good - I know you will. Jai Gurkha!

Colonel D G Hayes CBE



The Colonel Commandant Brigade of Gurkhas, General Sir David Richards GCB CBE DSO ADC Gen, presenting a silver goblet to Colonel Brigade of Gurkhas, Colonel David Hayes CBE, on behalf of All Ranks of the Brigade at the Brigade Conference Dinner Night on 30 June 2011



Colonel Hayes receiving a GSPS plaque from Maj Hemchandra Rai, DCOS HQBG, on behalf of the GSPS Company



Colonel Hayes receiving a memento from Maj Bijayant Sherchan, COS HQBG, on behalf of HQBG Staff

Journeys in Nepal

To The Northern Borderland - A late summer journey in trans Himalaya

By General Sir Sam Cowan KCB CBE

Introduction

On 24 August 2011, my wife, Anne, and I arrived in Nepal to trek in Northern Dolpo, an area of entirely Tibetan language and culture. The plan was to visit the four main valleys of Chharka, Panzang, Nangkhong and Tarap where most of Dolpo's villages are located. We also aimed to catch the start of a festival that is held once every twelve years in Tarap. We had trekked in Dolpo twice before but each time in the autumn when the skies are usually crystal clear but the earth is brown and barren. I had long wanted to visit it in the short summer season with wild flowers blooming, barley ripening and villagers in the high pastures. That was the dream and I was greatly looking forward to living it!

With the monsoon going on south of the Himalaya, getting into the area in a safe and timely way was the first challenge. The normal option is through the Nepalganj-Juphal airlink. I did not trust this during the monsoon so we travelled in and out on the historic Jomsom to Chharka route. As we found out, this is not for the faint hearted with some treacherous trails and big passes to be crossed as early as the fourth day. Notwithstanding Dolpo being in the Himalaya rain shadow, we

got more rain than we bargained for but battled through. In the end, we were on the trail for 24 days, 22 of them at heights of 4,000m plus.

Anne came on condition that a pony was provided and, just before we flew out, I made the wise decision of asking for one also. We still had to do a lot of walking, particularly in getting over and down from the high passes but we covered a lot of ground and the ponies were invaluable. I insisted that my friend Dawa from Tingkhu village in northern Dolpo was imported into the trekking crew as our guide. He was a key man. He knew every trail and was well known wherever we went. He opened endless doors for us, from houses in the villages to the gompas and the lamas.

The trail to Dolpo

Getting to Chharka safely and without a serious altitude problem was key to the whole trek, and the first five days of the trail from Jomsom is worth a brief description. We took an early morning flight from Pokhara to Jomsom where we



High above the Keha Lungpa, on the morning of day 3 - Sandak in view, Mustang behind



On the sharp edged Khag La, Touche La beyond

met up with our trek crew. Because of heavy rain in Pokhara and mist in Jomsom this was not as "early" as we had planned but the weather suddenly relented and to our great relief we took off at 08.15. Seventeen minutes later we were in Jomsom to even greater relief! We saw little on the flight but trusted the pilot to find his way between Annapurna and Dhaulagiri through the monsoon clouds.

A two-hour walk along the Kali Gandaki brought us to the long bridge across the river at Eklai Bhatti. We were covered in dust from endless jeeps taking Indian pilgrims up to Mukhinath so it was a joy to turn left and make the gentle one-hour climb to Phalyak where we enjoyed one of our two nights in a very pleasant lodge. The second was on the way back and we were not surprised to find that no one had stayed there since we last passed by. Phalyak is a very Tibetan village that overlooks the Kali Gandaki and the trail to the Thorung La beyond. Some large new houses were being built with, we were told, remittance money from villagers resident in New York.

The second day started with a climb to the first 4,000m pass. From here, and for the next two hours, we enjoyed spectacular views over Mustang in its wonderful summer colours. At the next pass the trail turned west and climbed steadily around the flank of Dhaulagiri, high above the gorge of the Keha Lungpa River. We crossed nine ridges before a long day finished with a steep descent to Sangdak, a cluster of 20 houses built on the edge of the gorge. This is the summer village. At the end of October, after the buckwheat harvest, the Sangdak people all move on a single day to their winter village called Gok. This is a five-hour walk away, 400m higher, and further up and on the other side of the great gorge, but it gets more winter sun and is sheltered from the prevailing wind.

On the third day we continued the high traverse on a steeply undulating trail above the gorge. After five hours, the trail dropped sharply down to the river where we had lunch in baking heat. From this point, an old trail to Dolpo follows the gorge for two days before emerging on the other side of the main passes but it was never suitable for pack animals and

erosion has now made it very dangerous on foot, even for the Dolpopa [the people of Dolpo]. After lunch we crossed the river and climbed up a steep and narrow path towards our camping place in a small juniper grove, not far from Gok. At one place, the path was so narrow that the mules had to be unloaded and everybody had to help carry the loads for 200m up the steep path. It was another difficult eight-hour day but we were rewarded with great views down the gorge from our campsite with a glorious sunset over Mustang at the end of it.

We knew that all of this was mere prologue to the crucial day of the trek: the crossing of the 5,100m Khag La and the 5,600m Touche La which would take us across the great watershed between the Kali Gandaki and the Bheri, known in its upper reaches as the Barbung Khola. We woke up in cloud. It was a long, rough, and steep climb to a lower pass before we reached the sharp-edged Khag La [also called the Sangdak Pass]. We rode up some of the way but had to dismount for the last half hour because of loose stones and shale on the steep final approach to the pass. From there, we walked part of the way down into a great basin and had lunch beside the river.

After lunch we crossed the river and rode up to the Touche La, the highest point of our trek. With the horses we were first up and able to linger to enjoy some glorious views. We walked a little way down, and then the horses arrived to carry us down past the Niwar La which marks the actual watershed. Then the rain and the hail came to give us a good soaking. It was a long trek down the valley to a desolate camping spot at a river junction at 4,800 metres. We shared this with some yak herders from Sangdak. We sheltered in the kitchen tent while the other tents were erected, and tried to find dry clothing. Eventually we got into our tent, the sun came out and we were able to dry out some of the bags and their contents. It had been a ten-hour day but we knew that the way to Dolpo now lay open.

Eight hours on an up and down trail the next day, following the line of the river, brought us to Chharka. Early in the day we crossed two rivers, one of which followed a trail that led to Mukut, one of the main villages in lower Dolpo. We were tired after five hard days but the first sight of Chharka, Dolpo's most iconic village, standing fortress-like high above the Barbung khola, gave us a great lift. We had tried to reach it from Dho Tarap in 2009 but weather and sickness thwarted us. After a cloudy day, we had some brilliant late afternoon light which was good for photography.

The next day was a welcome rest day. The sun shone throughout and I was able to wander round at leisure with Dawa to explore the village and its surrounds. Eric Valli shot most of his widely acclaimed film Himalaya in and around Chharka. The village is littered with old but still brightly coloured chortens and mani walls. It was once a centre for Bon, the old pre Buddhist religion of Tibet. I counted four Bon gompas of different vintages, and a recently built one showed that the old tradition is still followed. A lot of the women were up in the high pastures and all the men were away on their

annual trading trip to Tibet. We were told that we would meet them returning home with their 500 yaks over the next two days as we headed north to Tingkhu.

Round the northern villages

The two-day trail from Chharka to Tingkhu starts with a crossing of the 5,100m Mo La. The Barbung Khola turns west below the pass and the trail that follows it leads across Lower Dolpo to Dunai. Eight very cheerful village girls who were carrying provisions up to the high pastures accompanied us for the first hour, and we had lunch beside one of their camps on the other side of the pass. The Mo La marks another great watershed: that between the Bheri and the Karnali. From the pass we had wonderful views of our route north. Just before reaching our campsite, we had to cross a wide and fast flowing river in a thunderstorm. Thank goodness we had the ponies as the water came up to the waist of our support crew. With an hour of daylight left, a weak sun appeared along with the first of the returning Chharka yaks to share the site with us. Dawa told me that the headman of Chharka was with the group so I went to have a chat with him. Like all his companions, he had been drinking heavily on the trail so there not much chance of having an extended discussion about the challenges of life in Dolpo today! The yaks were loaded with every conceivable type of Chinese goods so I simply asked him what they had traded in return. He raised a closed fist towards me, waved it around, and shouted paisa! So much for the salt-for-grain trade! This has traditionally helped to shape and sustain life in these high trans Himalaya regions but profound changes are now underway.

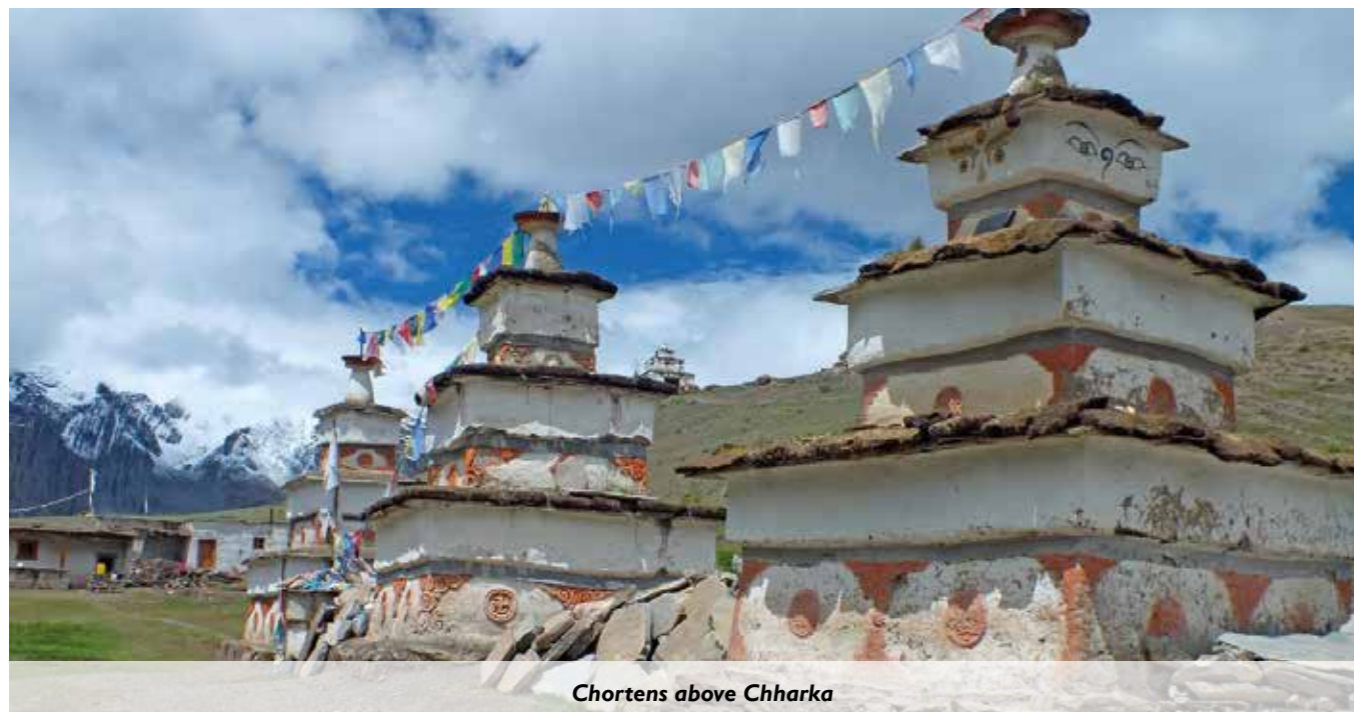
The weather was again mixed the next day: sunshine in the morning, cloudy during the day and rain as we reached Tingkhu in the late afternoon - a typical Dolpo summer day!



Chorten and prayer flags in Chharka



On the Mo La looking North



Chortens above Chharka

We passed the rest of the Chharka yaks in groups of about 20 during the day, and there were indeed over 500 of them. It is a seven to eight day round trip from Chharka to the mart on the other side of the border that is specially set up for the Dolpopa. Sadly, the trail was littered with discarded Chinese beer cans and packets of foodstuff.

As we approached Tingkhu, we saw across the river the trail that leads southwards over the Chhoi La to the Tarap valley. With ponies, it is a one-day trip for the local villagers. Dawa also pointed out Kula Ri, one of Dolpo's three great sacred mountains. [The others are Crystal Mountain near Shey Gumpa and Ribo, which is close to the Tarap Valley.] He told us that on the next full moon the people of Tingkhu would be doing their annual kora or circuit around Kula Ri - and that the trail was a tough one. In our wet and bedraggled state we were delighted to have Tibetan tea and soup in Dawa's mother's house while the tents were sorted out.

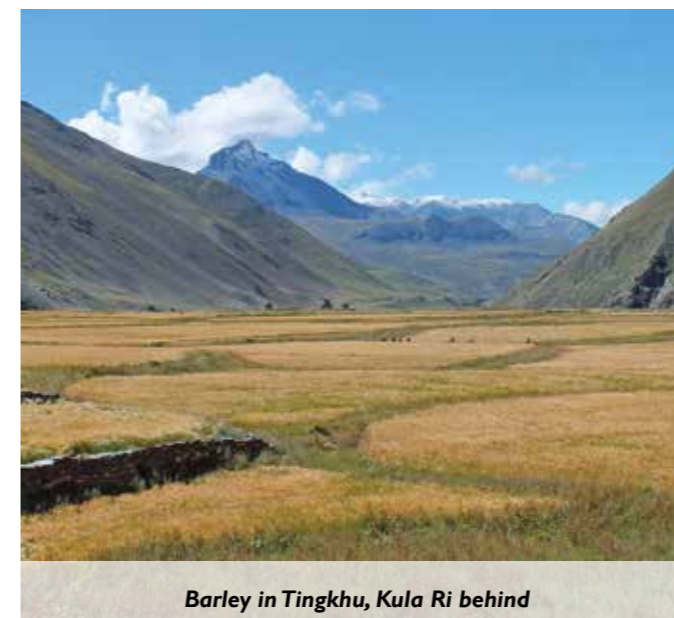
We had briefly visited Tingkhu in 2002 and had planned to have a rest day in it during this trip to see friends and to explore it properly. Our camp was set up near an old Tibetan fort, a visible reminder that for many centuries Dolpo had been part of various Tibetan kingdoms and principalities. The village lies in an open basin at the junction of two main valleys. There are about 35 houses, including some recently built ones, all strung along the foot of the northern slope of the basin, facing south. The main Panzang valley runs west towards Shimen village and east towards the small village of Polde. Before the border was closed, there was a direct trail from Polde across the Bindu La to Lo Monthang. This was the trail used by the kings of Lo when they came on their yearly pilgrimages to ask for blessings and consecrations from Dolpo's lamas who were highly respected across the Tibetan-speaking world for their ascetic life and deep learning. Sixteenth century biographical texts reveal that the Dolpo lamas also travelled very widely. Now a traveller from

northern Dolpo to Mustang has to go on the much longer trail via Chharka.

I spent the morning of a sunny day walking round the village, taking photos and chatting to many of Dawa's friends. We had hoped to see our friend Tenzin Norbu. He comes from a long lineage of Tibetan thangka painters and has adapted his skills to paint impressionistic scenes of everyday life in Dolpo. He has had exhibitions in New York, Paris and Japan. He has a studio in Kathmandu where he and his family spend the winter. His wife told us that we would see him in Saldang where he was spending most of the summer masterminding the painting of a large new fresco in the gumpa.

After lunch, I walked up the steep trail to Trolung gumpa which sits high above the village. Norbu's father had been the lama there and the family had only moved down to a house in the village after his death. To my surprise, but clearly alerted by Dawa, Norbu's mother was waiting for me with Tibetan tea and tsampa. She is a regular visitor to her old home in the gumpa. We walked down to the village together and had more tea and chat in her house. She is a very special lady with a wonderful face and featured prominently in the film Himalaya as the wife of Thimle, the hero of the story.

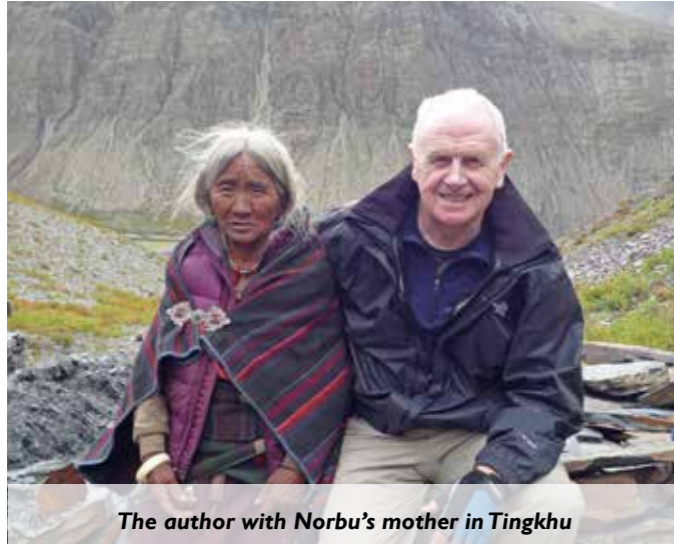
It is an easy five-hour journey from Tingkhu along the Panzang valley to Shimen, an attractively laid out village in a large valley with houses and small groves of willow trees spaced around the fields. When we arrived in Shimen in 2002, the first person we met was a lady who had a small baby on her back with a harelip and cleft palate. This was Sonam. Norbu brought her to Kathmandu two years ago. She has now had three operations and is doing well. It was a great pleasure to meet her parents again and share the photos from our 2002 visit and the recent ones of their daughter in Kathmandu. They were naturally delighted with



Barley in Tingkhu, Kula Ri behind



Tingkhu, early morning



The author with Norbu's mother in Tingkhu

the great improvement they saw. Sonam's father is a lama whose specialization is the important and prestigious one of protecting the growing barley from hailstones.

It is worth noting that we saw not a single trace of the Nepal government's presence in either Tingkhu or Shimen. In each village there was a thriving school with a full complement of teachers from Darjeeling, all entirely funded by a Swiss benefactor who was a friend of Norbu's.

To Saldang and Tarap

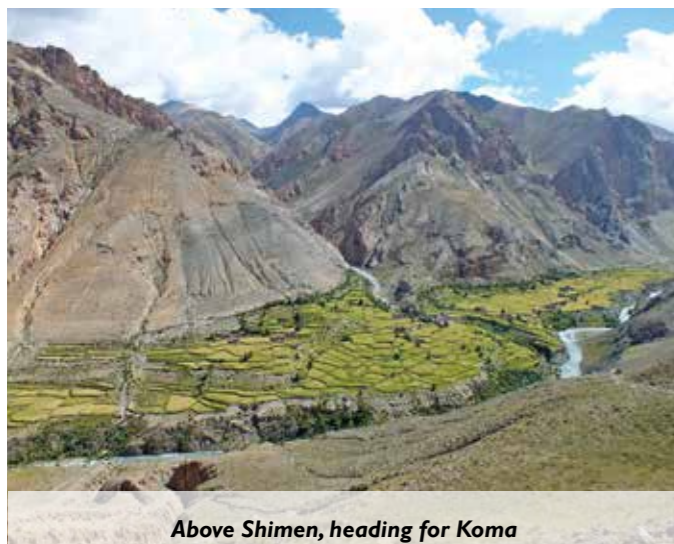
The next aim of our journey was to get to Saldang, the largest of the Dolpo villages. All the trekking maps show a trail west of Shimen along the Panzang gorge but no such trail exists. I tried to persuade Anne that we should go to Saldang by retracing our 2002 steps by crossing a high pass called the Mushi La to the tiny hamlet of Mo, and then on to Yang Shir gumpa, the spiritual heart of Dolpo, and a very special place. I had a strong hankering to revisit it but Anne was having none of it. Stick to the plan! This involved a morning climb to the small village of Koma where we spent a delightful afternoon, relaxing in warm sunshine. There is a large gumpa above the village, and in and around it are many chortens of different shapes, all painted in a most distinctive and very attractive pale ochre. The late afternoon light was perfect for photography. We had a glass of red wine in our hands as we enjoyed a glorious sunset, a perfect moment marred only slightly by my wife reminding me of the very great virtues of sticking to plans!

The following morning there was a two-hour climb to the pass above Koma. From there we could see the houses and fields of the villages of Saldang and Karang far below and spread out across the opposite side of the Nangkhong valley. We could also trace the finish of the high route on which we approached Saldang in 2002 from the direction of Namgung and Shey. It was a painful three-hour steep descent to the river below Saldang. Unlike the flat fields of Shimen and Tingkhu, those in Saldang are carved out of the side of a large hillside. Our camp site was at the bottom of the village. After lunch, we climbed up to meet Norbu to see his work in the gumpa and meet his helpers. We spent the rest of the afternoon wandering round the village taking photos, starting with the spectacular chortens near the top of the village. Norbu joined us that night for our evening meal. He told us about what had gone on in Dolpo during the recent yartsagumba harvest which I will expand on later.

The next phase was the two-day journey from Saldang to the Tarap valley. We first headed south above the Nangkhong valley through various small hamlets. The trail was marked with numerous colourful chortens, huge piles of prayer stones, in addition to many traditional mani walls, and at least six old gompas, one of them built high into a cliff. On a glorious morning, it was a four-hour photographic fest! After lunch we passed 220 yaks carrying timber north. We were assured that it was needed to build a school in Koma and we had seen this work going on, but the sheer quantity made us suspicious about



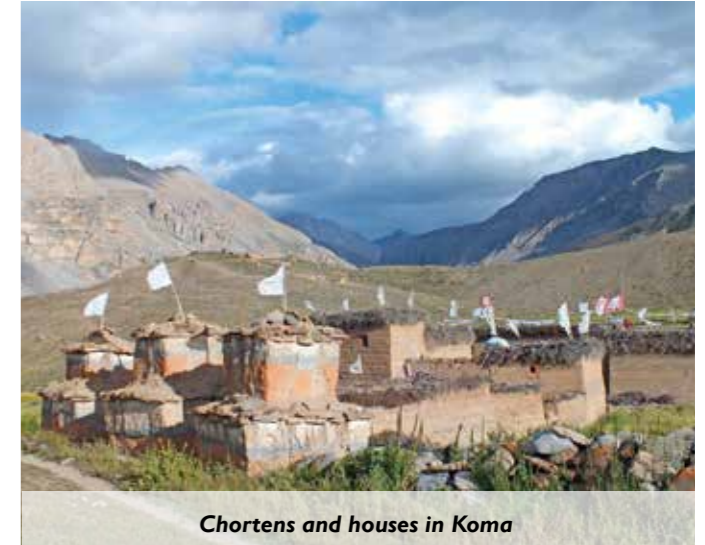
Anne with Sonam's mother in Shimen



Above Shimen, heading for Koma

the possibility of it being sold into China. In mid afternoon, the weather closed in just as we turned off the main trail [which eventually leads to Phoksomdo Lake] by crossing the river and started a climb to get into position to cross the Jang La the next morning. The trail was a tricky one but Dawa was always confident. We arrived at our campsite before the mules. As the cold set in, a small boy brought us a large pot of Tibetan tea from some locals in a tent across the river. It tasted even saltier than usual but it was warm and very welcome. It was a generous gesture, typical of the Dolpopa who travel widely and know the value of hospitality on the trail.

The next day dawned bright and clear. The two-hour climb to the Jang La was relatively gentle by Dolpo standards. Wild flowers were growing in abundance most of the way up and we rested among them on the pass at 5,100 metres. We stopped half way down the descent to the Tarap valley for lunch but by 1400 hours we were nearing the entrance to it, just as the afternoon drizzle swept in. Before hitting the main valley, we first joined the valley that leads down from the Chhoi La. This is the trail from Tingkhu, the first part of which we would follow in four days time on our return journey to Chharka.



Chortens and houses in Koma



Yaks carrying timber crossing a river in Nangkhong

The Tarap valley and the arrival of the Rinpoche

The Tarap valley is very much the crossroads of Dolpo. In addition to the trails to Tingkhu and Saldang, we could see to our right, as we entered the main valley, the much-trekked trail that leads up over the Numa La and Baga La to Phoksumdo. At the bottom of the valley near the village of Dho, a main trail follows the deep gorge of the Tarap Chu to Dunai. This is the only trail that is open all year round. Another trail from Dho leads to a high pass that is the direct route to Chharka. We had been defeated by deep snow on it in 2009 [and a chest infection of Anne's] and I was keen to have another go at it. Dawa was resolute that he would take us on a less testing route. I was concerned that no trekking map or guide even mentioned the route he described to us but there are no prizes for guessing whose side Anne was on!

We spent three nights in our camp just below the hamlet of Gagar, half way along the Tarap valley. We had planned this break to recharge our batteries for the journey back to Jomsom and to take in the first day of the festival. Another good reason was to give us the chance to explore this very interesting valley. There are seven separate hamlets in it, each with its own gompa. The most photographed of them is Ribo Gompa which sits above Dho. Lama Nyamgal is the resident lama there and we knew him well from our 2009 stay. He was very kind to us again, giving us tea in his small room at the back of the gompa



Above Saldang looking north to the valleys that lead down to the Tibetan plateau



Saldang chortens and gompa looking south along Nangkhong



Ready to greet the great Lama



Gagar Gompa, ready for the Rinpoche

and sharing with us all the worries he had about organizing the religious aspects of the festival.

At the top of the valley in Chamling gompa, we met Sherpa Sangpo Rinpoche. He had featured in a German documentary called Dolpo Tulku - Return to the Himalayas that won many film festival awards. The film covers Sherpa Sangpo's return to his home village in Tarap as a reincarnated lama after 17 years

away studying in the great Nyingmapa monastery in Namdroling in Karnataka in southern India. He was a delightful man who shared with us his deep knowledge of the history of Dolpo and its many gompas. To mark the festival he had organized the funding and building of seven very fine new chortens for the front of Chamling gompa. These were to be blessed by the Great Lama who was coming as the chief guest for the festival. He was Rabjam Rinpoche, the head of the Shechen Monastery



Lama Nyamgai, Rabjam Rinpoche and Lama Chhewang



The procession sets off

of the Nyingmapa school of Tibetan Buddhism in Kathmandu. He is the leading Lama in that tradition. During his stay he was also to preside over the enthronement of Donnag Norbu as the new Tulku of Gagar gumpa. He was born in 1991 in Mukot village in lower Dolpo and had been studying in Bhutan and the Shechen monastery.

The weather was overcast, with intermittent light drizzle, on the morning that Rabjam Rinpoche was due to arrive but nothing could dampen the excitement of the many people who had assembled to welcome him. All the ladies of the Tarap valley, and many from surrounding villages, were dressed in their traditional costumes with katas in hand ready to greet

the Rinpoche. They included Norbu's redoubtable 75-year-old mother who had ridden from Tingkhu the previous day! Lama Nyamgal was rushing around issuing orders to everyone. When I mildly suggested that the weather might prevent the helicopter from getting up to this 4100m valley, people looked at me incredulously. Did I not realize that this was a very powerful lama? The implications were very clear, even to this poor benighted soul. The Rinpoche duly arrived on time, clearly acting as MA, ADC and official photographer, came our very own Lama Chhewang. The Brigade of Gurkhas to the fore again! Hami jasto, kohi chhaina?!

A procession formed and headed up the valley through the waiting Dolpopa. In the lead were the main lamas, including Chhewang, mounted on four grey horses adorned with magnificently coloured saddle blankets. It started to rain but no one noticed or cared. As the procession approached the Crystal Mountain School, which is run by an excellent French NGO called Action Dolpo, the children were all lined up, and a large musical group playing typical Tibetan instruments led the lamas into the school for the official welcoming ceremony.

The Return to Jomsom

Sadly we had to leave that afternoon to get into position for the two-day trip back to Chharka. We were on the Chhoi La (5,050m) by 08.30 the next morning. A little beyond the main cairn and prayer flags we saw two cairns which marked the separate paths to Tingkhu and to Chharka. The trail to Tingkhu dropped quickly away to the left. Dawa's route started to the right with a long traverse across a huge lekh, in and out of river valleys, mostly above 4,000m. I doubt if many outsiders had ever

been on it before. It is marked on no maps and local knowledge was essential. Just after mid day there was another one and a half hour climb to a second pass (5,100m), after which there was a steep descent down a very slippery shale slope. After crossing a few rivers and waving to some Dolpopa in high camps who lined up to witness the clearly unusual sight of foreigners on this trail, we eventually hit the main valley we had travelled on two weeks earlier when coming from Chharka to Tingkhu; and Dawa and Anne stood vindicated!

Unfortunately, very soon afterwards I took the gloss off the celebrations by being somersaulted from my horse



Tingkhu villagers heading down to Tarap



View from the Mo La looking North



On the high trail coming out from Chharka



Chharka and ripening barley

when it lost its footing. I managed to shield myself from injury to the face by getting my right hand down on some rocks but I was in agony - and very angry! At that precise moment heavy rain started to fall! In an increasing state of shock I insisted on travelling another hour to the intended campsite. The inevitable shivering hit me when I got off the horse and the mood all round was sombre. Anne shoved me into a sleeping bag while the tent was put up. Once we were installed I had a cup of tea, and depression turned to elation as I slowly realised that by some miracle I had not broken my wrist, arm or thumb. It was only pain. No need for helicopter evacuation: get out the paracetamol and brufen! There was not much sleep during the night but we were at 4,700m. In the morning my hand and wrist were bluish black, and the pain lasted for weeks, but at least I could grip the reins and click the camera!

By midday we had crossed the Mo La and were in Chharka again, ready for the five-day journey back to Jomsom. One of the dangers of this route is that, because of their proximity to Dhaulagiri, the Touche La and Khag La can be hit by snow as early as mid September, which makes them a very difficult proposition. This was a great worry for me before and throughout the trek but fortunately the weather held and we completed the journey to Jomsom without further misadventures.

Change in Dolpo

The account of this journey would be incomplete without highlighting the great challenge of change that the Dolpota are currently living through. In anthropological terms, they are agro-pastoralists, and brilliantly resourceful at both, but life would still be impossible for them if they did not make money through trading. They are the archetypal trans-Himalayan traders who have the personal physiology and own the yaks which have enabled them to act as the middlemen in getting goods from both Tibet and Nepal across the high Himalayan

passes. As my encounter with the headman of Chharka indicated, the nature of this trade has changed dramatically in recent years. It used to be based on salt-for-grain. Not much grows in the Tibetan plateau but there are huge salt lakes there from the time when the whole area was under the Tethys sea before the Indian plate hit the Eurasian plate to cause the rise of the Himalayas. In Nepal, on the other hand, there are no salt deposits but the middle hills, through clever irrigation, can provide a twice-a-year harvest of grain. Now the Chinese have built extensive networks of roads across Tibet so grain can be delivered easily enough to all remote areas. On the Nepal side Indian salt [which is naturally iodised unlike the Tibetan variety from the dried-up lakes] is brought into the remote areas through a network of roads which, though nowhere near as extensive as the Chinese-built ones in Tibet, has greatly reduced the time needed to travel to obtain it.

Now, as my encounter with the Chharka headman indicated, salt-for-grain has mainly been replaced by cash for Chinese goods. I mentioned that on our trip north to Tingkhu, we passed 500 yaks travelling back to Chharka from a mart that had been specially set up for them just across the border. These marts are in the hands of ferocious traders from eastern Tibet from the region of Kham, called Khampas. In old Tibet they had a terrible reputation as brigands. They were also the people who most fiercely resisted the Chinese invasions with, as recent books have revealed, the active help of the CIA. Many of them were also formerly successful and ruthless trades and the opening up of extensive road networks across the Tibetan plateau has created many new opportunities for them. Now they have directed their considerable energy and resourcefulness into various forms of trade. Each of the Dolpo villages is given their specific period to bring their yaks to wherever the mart has been set up.

The Dolpota get the money to buy all these Chinese goods from the sale of the amazing phenomenon that is yartsagumba,

now popularly known as the Himalayan Viagra. Up until 2001 this was protected in Nepal as an endangered species. Villagers were forbidden to trade in it. They could only sell it at the District Office for some trivial amount. The bureaucrats in the District Office could then sell it on at a fat profit into the Chinese market through their cronies in Kathmandu. No doubt hoping to expand this lucrative source of income, the law was changed in 2001 to allow unrestricted harvesting but sales across the border into Tibet were still forbidden; all still had to be sold at the District Headquarters under the same arrangements as before.

This clever plan fell apart in 2002 when the Maoists expanded their military activities into Dolpo. All elements of the Nepali government in the area were withdrawn to the District Headquarters and the Maoists immediately liberalised the yartsagumba trade to the great financial benefit of both themselves and the local villagers. The message was a simple one: sell as much yartsagumba as you like to the Chinese middlemen, just give us a 20% tax and keep the rest as income. They also encouraged villagers from the south to take part in the harvest and taxed them for doing so. In 2003, 20,000 people from the lower southern valleys arrived in Dolpo, 5,000 of them to Tarap alone. Yartsagumba related activity was probably the biggest single source of funding for the Maoists during the war, and the Dolpo villagers have never been richer. We saw the evidence for this not just in the amount of trading going on but also in the number of new houses that had been built.

The very same Khampa traders who control the marts are the middlemen for this most lucrative of transactions. It is very big business. Our friend Norbu told us that at the start of the yartsagumba harvest the Khampa traders arrived with saddlebags absolutely bulging with money. They are so frightened of being mugged on the trails that they order up helicopters to move themselves and their money around. Norbu told us that on a single day he saw six Kathmandu-based helicopters land at Saldang; all summoned by the Khampa traders to do their business.

Now there are no Maoists involved in the yartsagumba business in northern Dolpo - just the headmen of the villages and the Khampa traders. We were told that the headman of Chharka made a huge amount of money out of this year's yartsagumba harvest when single good quality pieces were fetching 1200 to 1400 NRs each. [About £10.] The Nepal government has not re-established its presence in Dolpo outside the District Headquarters and it will now be very difficult for it to do so. Its only agency would be a police force that is notoriously prone to corruption and whose members often have little respect for local customs and who hate being sent to such remote areas. On all past form, they would immediately try to cut themselves into the yartsagumba trade and, given the freedom that the locals have enjoyed over the last few years to enrich themselves, this would be certain to produce some very strong reactions, to put it mildly.



At Phalyak on the morning of day 24

The yartsagumba harvest starts each spring just after the snow melts at about the 16,000 feet plus level. Only the very old and very young are left in the villages during the six weeks of the harvest. Otherwise every person is in the temporary camps set up near the harvest areas. These in turn are serviced by a large subsidiary industry taking beer and food up to them. Descriptions of what went on in and around the camps suggested that it was like the Wild West. Dawa, our guide, had been involved in the harvesting many times. After we crossed the Jang La, just after starting the descent that brought us to the Tarap valley, he pointed out where the Tingkhu villagers set up their camp. It is in the grazing land of Tarap so the Tingkhu people must pay a tax of 1,500NRS for each individual taking part in the harvest. The camp was in a very remote and exposed spot that must be very cold at night in the early spring.

The photo shows one average piece of yartsagumba in Anne's hand. [Worth at 2011 prices about £6.] The fat piece



A piece of Yartsagumba

is the dead caterpillar that has been progressively killed by the grass which grows through it and emerges through its head as a fungus which is the thin piece. Only the fungus appears above ground and Dawa explained how difficult it is to distinguish it from grass among the snowmelt. The sharp eyes of young children are particularly good at doing so. The work is done on hands and knees. Once identified, the dead caterpillar piece has to be dug up carefully as only the combined whole piece has any value. The harvesting starts at dawn. At the end of each back-breaking day one person might have collected 80 to 100 pieces and another five or maybe none.

It is clearly very hard-earned money but the prize is great, indeed potentially transformational, as the Chinese demand seems to increase each year. To consume it, it is ground down into a powder and mixed with yak milk or some other liquid. I cannot vouch for its claimed properties but in the Tibetan amchi medical tradition it has long been used, and still is, along with many other Himalayan medicinal herbs, as a tonic or pick-me-up.

Economic change is invariably the harbinger of social change and this is well illustrated by what is happening in Dolpo. The sudden influx of large amounts of money into what until very recently had been a mainly agro-pastoral community is having a profound impact on the life, culture, economy and environment of Dolpo. It is also changing relationships both within the Dolpo community and with those to their north and south with whom they have traditionally interacted through trade. Many outsiders are now trying to establish themselves in Dolpo on a seasonal basis. Locals reported to us that material wealth is now starting to be prized above all else. With cash as king, there is a lot more envy, and alcohol abuse, already a problem, is becoming even more prevalent. At a much lower level of concern, though still indicative, we saw how small children are becoming addicted to cheap Chinese sweets and confectionery, great quantities of which are brought back by the yak caravans.

Very recently I had an email from an academic friend who has lived in Dolpo and has also carried out extensive research among the nomads of Tibet. This is what he said:

"Thank you for sharing the information on yartsagumba. It is astounding how that one commodity has changed rural life across the Tibetan world. The Tibetan nomads whom I have been interviewing about resettlement in Qinghai rely entirely on it for their income - not a sound economic strategy as history has shown us over and over. At least the folks in Dolpo will still have their land and animals if the golden goose stops laying that egg; Tibet's nomads, on the other hand, will soon be left without animals, motorcycles they can't fuel, and skills they can't use in the cities while they wait for their children to get educated and somehow pull them out of the morass of welfare dependence. I hope that at least some of the Dolpopa are investing the money for the long-term."

We share the hope expressed in the last sentence but it will need education and a big change of culture to get the people of Dolpo to take the longer term view necessary to protect their way of life while best managing the disturbing change they are living through. There is no easy way out. Money from trade has always been absolutely vital to sustaining life in these high, marginal lands. With the ending of the traditional trade of salt-for-grain, the income from the sale of yartsagumba can be seen as vital to sustaining life on a year-round basis in places like Dolpo. What clearly has to be guarded against is that it does not destroy the social and cultural foundations that are equally important to sustaining life in such a harsh and unforgiving land, not to mention the need to maintain the capability to sustain life should the yartsagumba harvest fail, either temporarily or permanently.

Final thoughts

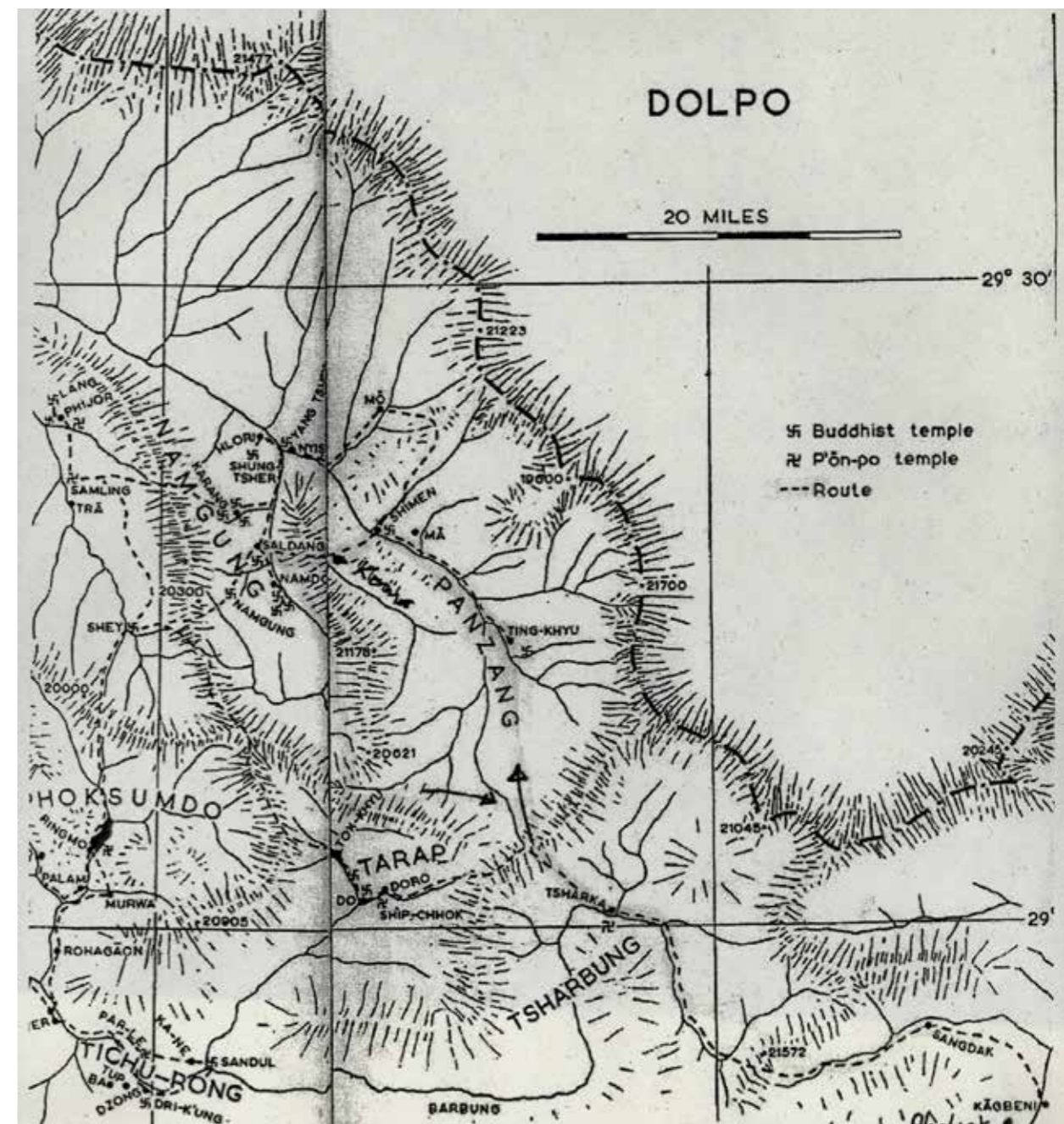
I took a lot of photos during this journey, many of them particularly striking in terms of subtlety of light and shade caused by endlessly changing cloud formations that are a feature

of the short Dolpo summer. The classic photos of this area are of crystal clear blue skies which one gets in the autumn when most trekkers visit but every piece of ground is brown and barren. The Dolpo winter is very severe. By the end of November, most of the northern villages are cut off from the rest of Nepal by deep snow on the high passes. They will not be clear until April at the earliest.

Despite some tough days, our journey was a wonderfully rewarding experience. We were always conscious that we were privileged to see at first hand an amazing way of life in a land that was overwhelming in its grandeur and awesomeness. For a long time after our return to UK, we were still up there in

spirit with the Dolpopa, beyond the Himalaya, on the fringes of central Asia, meeting the yak caravans, getting over one more big pass, astounded by yet another spectacular view!

The vivid memories will remain with us for a long time, as will our hopes that the Dolpopa can successfully manage the period of traumatic change through which they are living. They are an extremely tough and resourceful people, who have adapted to great changes in the past while still managing to preserve their distinctive culture and way of life. This could be their toughest challenge yet but there are good grounds for believing that they will do so again. We will long remain with them in spirit!



Adapted from a sketch map in 'Himalayan Pilgrimage' by David Snelgrove published by Shambala (1981)

Morning Walks

By Lieutenant Colonel J P Cross OBE

"Grandfather, take out one of your eyes."

The command was imperious and insistent: its deliverer was a tousle-haired nine-year-old Nepali boy, with authority well beyond his years, clearly leader of the cluster of kids with him. Surrender or walk on regardless? I was two hours from home and not quite halfway round one of the circuits of my morning walks. I looked at them, all with eyes button-bright and overflowing enthusiasm: how many other mid-octogenarians would be similarly challenged?

I suppose the morning-walk habit started when I was in Laos, living alone. On high days and holidays I would take my dog, Singha, my pedometer showing me that I walked between twenty-one and twenty-eight miles. In my early days I would take language cards and I would ask people I met a question from the top word in the pile. They would be surprised to be asked if they caught crabs in the swamp or what noise their buffalo made when scratched. I was only accepted without hostility or suspicion when people learnt I was neither French nor American but a 'khon Añgit', an Englishman.

I met Pathet Lao patrols as I ranged far and wide. After the Communists had taken over, every morning, everywhere, the ritual of political indoctrination would take place. One Saturday morning, early, miles out 'in the sticks' and still a bit chilly, I saw an armed group of young Pathet Lao soldiers - looking for all the world like our Gurkhas as to visage - sitting cross-legged in a circle in a harvested rice field on the outskirts of the village they were garrisoning, being lectured by a hard-faced 'cadre'. They were directly in the line I was taking. I did not deviate but kept on towards them. I talked to Singha, in Nepali, telling him not to chase the goats or the pigs. The soldiers saw me coming, then heard a strange language. The cadre stopped talking, turned and stared at me, as did the soldiers, scowling severely. I sensed tension in the air but, having committed myself, chose to ignore it.

I walked into the centre of the group and told the dog to sit, give me one paw and then the other. He obliged me. In Lao I said to the group, "That's discipline. That's how you won the war. Without it that's how you'll lose the peace." I pointed to Singha. "You can call him the 'little soldier' but don't call me the 'big dog'."

Blank amazement greeted this utterly unexpected stricture. Nothing existed in the book of rules for such behaviour that was neither hostile nor rude, merely eccentric. I wobbled my hands and knees, then my eyebrows and ears, asking the soldiers if they could. They burst out laughing, all semblance of severity gone. I put my arm round the shoulders of the cadre, a Vietnamese, my hand on his head and made a squeaking noise with my mouth. He gave a start but stayed silent. Such an occurrence was evidently not yet a common experience.

"You've got a mouse in your head," I said sympathetically and inanely. "I hope it doesn't hurt. And you teach politics?" By then I had gone as far as I dared so, telling the dog to follow me, turned and left without looking behind. For a brief moment I felt it mighty cold on the back of my neck. I never heard anything about that trivial, unnecessary and entirely unrehearsed incident.

Once I had started living in Pokhara, in 1986, I only started walking after we began to keep dogs. With dogs, the morning walk habit set in really properly. The dogs loved it: we had two. Three neighbours' dogs joined us to make five and the most I ever had trailing behind me was seven. 'Morning walk', along with 'half brain' and 'love marriage' are Nepali neologisms - 'paper wedding', to aid foreigners' citizenship process, is another, fairly new one. No, I will not put words into your mouth by conflating the first two.

By now I have, on a conservative estimation, walked over a hundred thousand kilometres, more than three times round the world at the equator. It was on one of our earlier walks when Buddhiman and I were wondering how much or how little the countryside had changed in the past five hundred years did the idea of historical novel writing occur to me.

When I was struggling with any passage in the book I was currently writing, for instance when I had nearly had the hero killed halfway through, I felt I had to have him rescued even though the scene I had set did not allow it. 'Winking little thoughts into my tiddlecup', unquote Lolita, I would drift for two or three hours mulling over a number of possible scenarios. Then suddenly, bingo, an answer would come.

On one walk in an unusual place in my early days I was called, rather rudely, by some schoolboys.⁴ I was, as normal, wearing shorts and traditional Nepali headgear. I did not answer them. I was chi-hiked again and did not answer. I then heard an interesting comment from one of the boys. 'I thought he was a foreigner but he must be a Nepali because he refuses to talk to us.'

Twice I have limped back to the house bitten and bleeding, once when attacked, from either side, by two dogs and once when I found myself in the middle of our dog and a neighbour's fighting: anti-rabies jabs both times.

Buddhiman and I have seen pine martens, ferret badgers, mongooses and, once, a badger. Twice we have seen either a leopard or a tiger in the flesh and, separately, their droppings. Then the dogs seemed almost to walk on tiptoe, directly behind us. Our small bitch, Leenie, always attacked snakes. She would bite them on the tail several times, shaking them violently. The hapless creatures would turn round to try to retaliate but eventually would tire when she would bite

them behind their head. She was equally industrious with mongooses. Once one clung to her nose as she clung to its tail and almighty squealing ensued from both creatures. Buddhiman's wife, Bhim, was angry that we did not bring the skull back as such makes excellent anti-diarrhoea medicine. We have seen a group of mules chasing a horse's foal, trying to kill it. Monkeys are always a target for the dogs. Once, near a river, one swam a surprisingly long way under water trying to escape. They got her when she eventually came up for air on the far bank.

The 'foot' part of 'foot and mouth disease' is distressful to see. The cure is to soak the infected feet with crocodile's urine (ten rupees per bottle from the Kathmandu zoo) and molasses. We have seen a distraught bull watching over his mate's tiger-torn body.

The only fish we have come across have been in the monsoon when some have foolishly ended up in water-filled paddy fields (first cousin to the Irishman with the same name?) and those trying to climb a concrete dam on their way to spawn.

As for birds, I am always fascinated by watching long-tailed tits diving on vultures or jumping on their back and pecking them to drive them away but unhappy to see a vulture tearing the innards out of dying cattle - that is why they have featherless necks to stop them sticking halfway. No dying or dead cattle are attacked when they lie exactly on a north-south axis. Egrets, in flocks of many hundreds or individually amongst cattle, are a commonplace. I have only once seen a dozen vultures fighting hard to get at a recently decapitated sheep's head. Our dogs have been swooped on by long-tailed tits and, twice, by an aggressive fish owl.

Only once have Buddhiman and I been swept down a river in spate - and that was once too many.

As for men, some of the jogis on their morning food-collecting ritual talk to me. Once an Indian Army man on leave jogged passed me before turning round to come back to ask me my 'sepoy number'? I said I didn't have one and he apologized for wasting my time. Occasionally I come across a young man giving a weeping woman the rough side of his tongue. I have come across a dead person twice.

When I walk up to Tiger Mountain I carry two sticks. My reply to 'why two' is that vehicles have four-wheel drives and I have to have a four-legged drive.

Wearing tunnel vision spectacles means I don't see 'hand signals' from a flank. I then hear a plaintive voice asking why I am walking past without speaking. I try and smooth hurt feelings. Phatic remarks pose their own problems. I have learnt what to say to the womenfolk: when they are laundering beside the road I tell them that if they had a rupee for each article washed, they'd be millionaires by now, and often I comment on how it is the women who keep the country ticking. Sometimes I say that even with twenty-five hours a

day they can never get everything done. These remarks always have a positive reaction, with a smile and a spoken agreement. Also the obvious one to shoppers: 'it is easier to spend that to earn'. That always earns me a rueful smile. People clean their teeth as they wander outside their house. Sometimes I ask the women if they know the song one Mitra Sen wrote [in 1943]? 'My queen-love's teeth are like cucumber seeds and her ankles like pigeon's eggs.' None have yet admitted to knowing it.

With smiles galore, laughter often and frowns seldom, usual questions asked me are: how old am I? How much is my pension? What do I eat? What religion am I? Why walk? Where is 'mother'? - which means my wife when my questioner sees me around the same age as his father, the relationship always being as he or she would see it, never from my point of view. How many children have I? Political points are hardly ever mentioned and, when they are, are 'in code'.

I was once shocked to see a woman binding her screaming son with a rope and tying him to the house door. I felt I had to go and ask the reason. 'To make him do his homework,' came the unexpected reply.

I have only once been asked, by a young man, to bless the girl standing next to him so that her first baby would be a son. It took me by surprise and I still don't know if what I expressed was correct. School children, including pubescent girls, routinely ask for blessings to pass exams. I was upbraided by one such when she failed her School Leaving Certificate mathematics paper and I only managed to save my face by saying that I had not blessed the person who had marked it. I was asked for a repeat blessing and was thankful to learn that that second time pass she did. Pre-selection potential recruits are another lot wanting blessings: I am cagey then and always add a rider 'were I the person who chooses...but I'm not.'

Cuckoo and dove calls, blowing tunes on my walking stick, eyebrow and knee-wobbling (I tell smiling mothers that children come in two types, the real smallies and the real oldies), fingers up the nose and in the ear and...

"Grandfather, you haven't been listening. Take one of your eyes out." ...

and, by sleight of hand and a popping noise made with my tongue, the mission is completed to hoots of wonderful laughter from some and a look almost of reverence from others.

A Simple Bus Ride

By Capt T R Morris, Hon Sec 6 GRRRA

"Tomorrow is a holiday and we can go to Besi Sahar. It's a simple bus ride from here" said Bhim Sir, with whom I am staying. Bhim Sir is a typical Gurung and would make the best type of CSM, if life had not chosen for him to be a school teacher; hence the title Bhim Sir.

He and his delightful family live in the main house which is just as you would know it; save that the roof is of corrugated iron and not thatch. He has both mains electricity (except when the load sharing cuts it out) and solar power, so boasts both a TV and an electric rice cooker (although the family think that the rice does not taste the same and prefer their rice cooked on an open wood fire).

"Good", I reply, "What time does the bus depart?"

"Probably about 8 o'clock," he states.

"Where does it go from?"

"That depends," he vaguely replies.

"Depends on what?" I stupidly ask. Why are you English so finicky he thinks but is of course far too polite to say so.

"It depends on where it gets to," he firmly answers. I wisely decide not to pursue the point.

"So we will need to have an early breakfast if we are to get to the bus stop on time, won't we?" I continue.

"Oh no, Richard Sir! (I am also a teacher). You should have your breakfast at your usual time." We both know that "the usual time" is a variable measurement but generally finishes around 8.00am.

I envisage myself gulping down my breakfast and running down the hills, as I know for a fact that the bus cannot possibly reach the village.

I retire to bed a little perplexed. Perhaps I had misunderstood and he meant 8 o'clock in the evening?

Tomorrow arrives and Bhim Sir is out cutting grass for the bhainse, whilst young Bhakta brings a doko full of daura (firewood). The only break in the morning routine is that little Amrita does not come to my room for a reading lesson. Otherwise I take my breakfast at "the usual time".

It is now a 7.45 am and I can see that Bhim Sir is ready to go but then the phone rings. We boast a mobile phone which sometimes gets a reception which is wonderful but generally the caller cannot hear us reply. On this occasion, not only do

we get a reception but the caller can also hear us! So delighted are we with this success that Bhim Sir chats to the caller at length and then invites the rest of his family to chat amidst much hilarity.

By now the time is 8.10 and I am convinced that the bus will have gone and am mentally making alternative plans as to how best to spend the holiday.

To my surprise once the conversation is over Bhim Sir leaps into action, grabs a small haversack and announces "We must go, it is getting late."

I am now in a minor panic as after 40 years as an office wallah there is no way I am going to keep up with Bhim Sir, even if we are only going downhill. Fortunately after five minutes of determined pace out of the village, Bhim Sir, perhaps sensing my incompetence at walking, slows the pace and starts pointing out the houses of friends and fellow teachers.

Inevitably others join us on the track as we all make our way steadily downwards. And then Bhim Sir meets an old friend and chat begins in rapid Gurung kura. So, I rashly ask the bystanders what Bhim Sir is talking about. First there are shrieks of delight from those who do not know that I can speak some Nepali. This is closely followed by much vociferous argument and gesticulations involving hearty slaps amongst themselves, whilst they correct and disagree with each other. Eventually I elicit that the two men have said hello to each other.

The time is now 8.30am, so once again I ask Bhim Sir when the bus leaves. "Usually at 8 o'clock Sir" he firmly replies, inwardly puzzling as to why I was asking when he had already told me yesterday.

Anyway, we continue on our way, a jolly party of about ten or so, ambling downhill as though going to a mela (fair).

As we drift along chatting away, I notice to my great surprise, parked next to an old house, is a health and safety nightmare. So decrepit is the vehicle that I assume it has been abandoned and the house owner is probably keeping chickens in it. Once upon a time it was brightly decorated but after years of toil, it is now more dented than painted. Incidentally I have seen one even older and that proudly bore the name "Susmiths Travelies" and we all thought that Rodney had retired!

The time is now about 9.00am but to be frank I am wondering if my watch is in fact correct. Then a dishevelled young man emerges from his house and we are clearly disturbing his dalbhat (meal) but he leaps into the bus and furiously pumps the horn. At this our jolly crowd becomes a

seething mass and in the blink of an eye the bus is completely jam-packed with people, packages, chickens, a small goat, luggage and indescribable bags tied up with string. The luggage rack on the roof is similarly covered, mostly with rumbustious young men who are clearly looking forward to the ride.

This presents Bhim Sir and me with a diplomatic problem. As teachers, we have a certain status but firstly we cannot physically get into the bus and secondly we cannot ask the two old bajyaus (grandmothers) nearest the door to give up their seats.

Bhim Sir points to the roof. "Are you afraid?" he asks. I think of the honour of the Regiment and answer "Of course not!" as convincingly as I can. Meanwhile the dishevelled youth pumps the horn some more and we climb onto the roof amidst the luggage and in my case cling to the luggage rack for dear life.

An even younger and more unkempt youth appears from nowhere and hysterically shouts "Besi Sahar" whilst the first youth continues to pump the horn. I can no longer tell you what the time is, as both arms are firmly clamped to the luggage rail and, by now, even I have realized that it is not really relevant and the bus will go when it has a full load.

A small toddler emerges from the bystanders and gets onto the bus unaccompanied. Shouts and screams follow as mother rushes out of the house and retrieves the child. Two ladies who initially fought their way into the back of the bus now decide that they don't want to go to Besi Sahar and with some difficulty and discomfort to their fellow travellers get off the bus.

Then the great moment comes and the first dishevelled youth starts the engine and for us on the roof, this is a kind of Chinese torture, as the vibrations feel like sitting on a pneumatic drill! With a final flourish on the horn and further shouts from the second youth, the Driver Saheb crunches the bus into gear and begins to move slowly forwards. Thank goodness, as the black diesel fumes coming straight up to the roof make me want to choke.

Just as the bus is moving, three women bystanders suddenly decide that they want to go Besi Sahar and amidst shouts of encouragement from us on the roof and alarm from those already jammed inside, they squeeze in with a skill I have not seen matched in 40 years of using the London Underground!

The second unkempt youth now leaps at the moving bus and hangs off the side. He is the ticket collector, except that there are no tickets. He holds a wodge of money in his teeth and by clambering around the outside negotiates a fare with those near a window, although I notice that he never gives any change. The wodge in his mouth therefore simply gets bigger. Then he climbs on top and Bhim Sir wisely suggests that we pay when we get off. I realise that there will inevitably be a surcharge for this delay but even the notion of releasing one hand to find my

wallet only makes me cling on more tightly. Those who have been ocean racing in a severe storm will have some inkling of the conditions we next endure - except that, firstly, the crew on a sailing boat deliberately swing against the tilt and yaw whilst my rumbustious friends seem to go deliberately with the pitch and swing forcing us on the end to gape even further over the edge than we ever thought possible, and, secondly, on a rough Himalayan track you generally have a choice between jagged rocks and trees on one side and a breath-defying drop on the other side, ending in a fast flowing icy river strewn with menacing boulders. In my present predicament, a place in the Fastnet race seems a softer option.

Suddenly the boisterous lads at the front shriek and squirm about but as I am facing backwards, I don't know why, until a low twangy branch catches the back of my neck and to their great delight almost catapults me off the back of the bus!

Now you would think that we roof-riders would pray for a bit of straight flat road but you would be wrong, as, on such sections as there are, the Driver Saheb accelerates and inevitably hits the next stray rock or pothole at speed thus launching us all into the air, so that we come crashing down on the roof and in my case, with the benefit of a hip replacement, sounding like a blacksmith at work and causing further denting to the already crumpled roof.

The clutch shudders and the gears crunch as we meet a particularly awkward incline and the bus stops. I am poised at about 85 degrees staring over the cliff side at a steep green jungle chasm below, but in front of my nose is resting a magnificent butterfly. It is iridescent brown and purple like nothing I have ever seen before. You cannot help but notice the amazing variety of butterflies in Nepal, but this is very special and I wonder if it is rare? If only I had a head camera which I could operate with my teeth. Whilst I am pondering this impractical concept, we shudder into life and my winged friend delicately flutters away as though to emphasize the contrast between his and my own clumsy form of motion.

But now I start to see the hills and mountains afresh; an uninterrupted view in every direction. The rumbustious boys are right - this really is the way to travel! As we near a village you can see the rice fields turning from green to gold, you can nose into people's houses and even chat with those leaning over their balconies. Thus did the victorious Roman armies enter Rome leaning out of their chariots and the Allies re-enter Paris riding on the sides of their tanks. Small boys run after the bus and cling on for a few yards and then tumble off much to the delight of all, except the ticket collector. The sun is shining so we break into song and, although I have no idea of what I am singing, Pavarotti never got a better reception than when I join in!

No longer is it quite so steep and the villages become more frequent which means more people try to get on. I have a suspicion that some are trying to barter with those already on board but by now I would not miss this trip for the world. On the powerlines are sitting two black fork-tailed drongos, just as I have seen in South Africa. A little roadside house proudly

displays the badge of 5 GR and at every stop street traders surround us and try to sell us inedible foods and ancient drinks.

We are nearly at our journey's end and this I know because four of the rumbustious boys suddenly stand up and in unison leap off the bus onto the grassy bank. But oh! One has forgotten his bag and is now running after the bus frantically waving his arms. We find the bag and throw it down to him with such speed and accuracy it bowls him straight over. Everyone is in stitches, including the lad who has been so firmly re-united with his haversack. TV was never as good as this!

The four boys are not only high-spirited but shrewd as they will be in Besi Sahar before us. The closer we get, the more traffic we meet, which involves reversing, creeping around the edge of impossibly narrow corners and manoeuvring over ledges and against cliff sides which we remaining roof-riders are able to inspect at very close quarters. Amidst all this two motorbikes appear and weave their way between the manoeuvring bus and oncoming lorry. Clearly the bikes are racing as the second bike hares through the ever-narrowing gap at a greater speed than the first.

Then we meet another bus and, whilst I am thinking that our driver has at last lost his nerve and to my relief is slowing down, simultaneously, to my amazement, so is the oncoming bus. They stop exactly cab to cab and exchange endless conversations in a special driver's language full of flourishes, handshakes and laughs. A few hundred yards further on we meet another bus. Not to be outdone the ticket collector bangs the side of the bus firmly which is the instruction to stop. How the driver can tell the ticket collector's bangs from all the other bangs - including those of passengers wanting to get off or customers trying to get on - I do not know. Nevertheless he does, and instantly stops the bus. So does the oncoming bus driver and the two drivers stare at

each other in stony silence. Is this a stand off? Far from it, as the two ticket collectors scramble on to their respective roofs, shake hands, hug each other and generally discuss life as one would with a long lost brother. They are speaking Nepali but at such a rate that even we roof-riders get bored. We therefore amuse ourselves by encouraging passing small boys to climb onto the roofs. This does the trick and both ticket collectors are forced to interrupt their life histories to chase off the invaders from their respective roofs. Meanwhile the two drivers challenge each other at engine-revving and gear-crashing before abruptly releasing their clutches and pouncing like wild cats at the vehicles in front of them who have foolishly attempted to overtake one bus and come face to face with the other stationary bus.

People are now leaving our bus at any opportunity, but I half suspect that the bus driver slows down till they get ready to leap from the open door and then accelerates when they are about to jump off. Needless to say this does not deter either young or old who even take up the challenge carrying babies, parcels and the small goat who would no doubt have been most nimble if he had been allowed to jump by himself.

At last we reach a flattish piece of rock-strewn ground about the size of a football pitch - indeed this is what it is sometimes used for; but it also doubles as the bus terminal. Of course if you are travelling on elsewhere you have a quarter of a mile of unmade rocky path over which to get your suitcase before reaching the point where the other buses depart, but on this occasion Bhim Sir and I are not so encumbered. We therefore clamber down and he tries vainly to avoid the additional charge I knew would be incurred for non-payment in transit and, seeing my white face, we are lucky that the ticket collector doesn't charge for me at tourist rates. He therefore walks away from the bus and glumly remarks, "What a boring journey, I hope that we have a better trip home". I pretend not to have heard, whilst I contemplate the prospect of a more exciting return journey!

British Gurkhas Nepal - Exercise HUMLA TIGER 2011

By Capt F E Fox, SO3 Log Sp/Estates

Although current times are not easy within the Armed Forces, unique opportunities still exist for officers and soldiers alike! As the current SO3 G4 in Kathmandu, I was fortunate enough to join the Gurkhas on Ex Humla Tiger, a high altitude Adventurous Training expedition to the Humla region, one of the most remote regions of Nepal.

Following a two-day minibus journey into the back of beyond and a flight (in what was small enough to pass as a toy aircraft) through towering mountain passes, we landed in a small town (Simikot) at 3,000m and two weeks' walk from civilization! The dirt strip of a landing field was chiselled at an angle out of the mountainside and it took a fair few bounces of the plane before the solid stop!

Acclimatization, donkey loading, guide finding, ration shopping (dhal bhat twice a day would be powering us through for the following three weeks) and we were all set for the off. My initial perception of civilization had already been left behind, but I wasn't quite prepared for the remoteness we would be encountering.

All in all we were a team of 11 people and five donkeys! The objective was to complete the Limi valley, trekking the southern section of the valley to the Tibetan border at Hilsa and continuing along the remoter Northern section (only recently re-opened) back towards Simikot. We predominantly rested weary heads in tents, but also found a few huts for refuge - tents being rather more preferable as the mud huts were populated by other forms of nature we were unable to distinguish. One rather memorable campsite was situated at 4,300m, tents perched centimetres from a vertical cliff below, whilst we sat beneath a colossal cliff face of potential rock fall - I wasn't 100% confident I'd survive the night.

The scenery changed dramatically by the hour with each site being uniquely overwhelming. Hilsa (on the Tibetan border) resembled a perception of space with dry, overpowering, desert mountainsides. The only people we encountered were leading their yak, donkey and goat convoys carrying salt, Chaing (the local tippie) and timber vast distances over tough terrain. However, a two-week walk to the local trading post was their equivalent of visiting the corner shop!

The paths we ascended/descended (flat was rarely an option) continuously met the eye with doubt. I was utterly surprised the mountain goats could negotiate them, let alone a human and donkey convoy. At 4,300m we rather thankfully but totally unexpectedly stumbled across endless open plains, leaving any sign of life behind apart from a scattering of Tibetan villages, only accessible by foot or helicopter for a few months a year. Lakes appeared from nowhere, out of



place sand dunes surrounded them and raging rivers with awesome beaches took precedence! Never did I expect to be trekking at 4,300m in my flip-flops along beaches! On one of our more memorable river crossings (needless to say no bridges) levels were dubiously high and currents incredibly strong and our fortunes took a potential turn for the worse. The intention was to negotiate the river utilizing the donkeys to ferry personnel, but as one donkey was dramatically swept downstream on his back this was ruled out! We are thankful that our insane local guide managed to grab a few of the team, supporting each other in a doubtful attempt of a river crossing, scabble across hazardous boulders and drag the donkey to safety after it had bumped along and been swept to the bank!

Surprisingly the Tibetan villages were incredibly wealthy in the midst of nothingness! Stone-built houses, open courtyards, beautifully clean streams running through and such hospitable people willingly hosting us for tea. I was incredibly excited about my cup and potential elevenses. However, Tibetan tea is a creation of yaks butter mixed with salt and the snack, evidently, a bowl of hard grown flour from the fields. A spoonful of flour followed by a swig of yaks butter (the Tibetan way to consume it) was not quite what I had imagined! We glimpsed a fascinating matriarchal society with wives having three husbands and certainly ruling the roost!

We were vegetarian for the time we were away, but it didn't stop the attempts to sling shot the illusive 'blue sheep', 200m above us on the cliffs - certainly one of the more demanding methods of hunting I've encountered! The snow leopards were more productive in capturing their prey.

Unfortunately, one event tainted the expedition, as I was robbed of a substantial amount of money on our penultimate day as we hiked out of the grand valley back to the base town of Simikot. Fortunately, with our local guru guides and a band of Gurkhas, the hunt for the criminal in a vast valley simply became the next thing on the 'to do' list which they seemingly thrived on! Within 24 hours, I received the majority of the money back, the whole valley was aware and involved, the thief was in a cell (apparently a notorious 'badmash') and the band of merry men quite ecstatic!

I felt incredibly privileged to be a part of such a unique expedition to an area above and beyond all expectations. Having the opportunity to spend 'quality time' with the Gurkhas and gain an insight with them into their country and culture was fascinating. Those that grew up in the hills wondered what the awe-inspiring fuss was all about! I'm now recovering back in Kathmandu, piling down the food I craved and getting stomach cramps as a result of the different diet! Quite typical!



The busts were sculpted by Robert Jones. Available in cast bronze resin or electro hallmarked silver (with any cap badge or front badge, plinth mounted or unmounted), are 6 inches in height, individually numbered and made to order.

The unique Ayo Gurkhali Collection, Edition Two offers an opportunity to acquire a most tasteful work of military art created to celebrate The Brigade of Gurkhas. The collection comprises of four hat styles as shown, decorated with relevant badges on the parade hats and regimental badges on the base as required. The selection of badges available is as shown above, but variations can be accommodated. On the reverse of the base an inscription plaque may be ordered at a nominal price in either silver or other metal. The Collection was launched in 2011 with Series One (Hat Felt Gurkha) and the remainder will be available during 2012. Individual busts and orders for sets may be placed now.

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THANK YOU FOR DONATING TO REGISTERED GURKHA CHARITIES



Headquarters Brigade of Gurkhas

Staff List

Military Staff

Col I A Rigden OBE late RGR
Maj Bijayant Sherchan GSPS
Maj Hemchandra Rai BEM GSPS
Capt K A Brewster GSPS
Capt Chinbahadur Thapa RGR
WO2 Bishan Rai GSPS
Sgt Santoshkumar Gurung GSPS
Cpl Nabin Rai GSPS
Cpl Bhismaraj Jabegu GSPS
LCpl Kamal Thapa Magar QOGLR

Colonel Bde of Gurkhas
Chief of Staff
Deputy Chief of Staff
SO3 G1/MS
SO3 G3 O&D Plans/QGOO
Supt Clk
G3/Estb/Budget Clk
G1/G4 Clk
Asst Editor Parbate
Col BG's Driver

Civilian Staff

Maj (Retd) B Mckay MBE
Mr S L Lord ED
Mrs J Patterson
Mr P Davies
Mrs D Ewart

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

Gurkha Welfare Centre (Aldershot)

Capt (Retd) Mahendrakumar Limbu
Hon Lt (QGO) Tulbahadur Gurung
Sgt Hariprasad Gurung GSPS
Sgt Taranghang Lawoti GSPS

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

Newsletter

Life continues at a frenetic pace in Headquarters Brigade of Gurkhas (HQBG) and readers of The Kukri would not be surprised if HQBG claimed that 2010/11 was yet another busy year (they would say that!). But it is true. There has been little let-up, and, if anything, the pace has accelerated with this small Headquarters now firmly embedded in the Director of Personnel Operations area as part of the wider Director General Personnel's empire. The move is significant as HQBG finds itself better placed to operate within the Adjutant General's area and now enjoys a more focused interface with Army HQ as well as other Arms and Services Directorates on Gurkha policy matters.

Following the successful move of this Headquarters from Airfield Camp in Netheravon to Trenchard Lines in Upavon in the early part of 2011, the staff has lost no time in making its mark on other departments within Upavon Station. HQBG has settled into its new working routine and has been involved in numerous key issues affecting the Brigade of Gurkhas, some of which have come to fruition, some of which are on-going. Some of these key issues that the Headquarters is currently grappling with include:

a. The Gurkha Terms and Conditions of Service (GTACOS) Review. The implementation work is on-going but it is on course to be complete by mid-2012. The GTACOS Review has set the serving Brigade of Gurkhas on the same terms as their British counterparts and this underpins how the Brigade is managed.

b. The impact of the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR). The post-SDSR detailed work is now underway and the Army is dealing with substantial structural changes set against an unprecedented resource challenge. The implications of the SDSR and Future Army Structure will have an effect on the BG in terms of its manning, as the Army seeks to get us down to liability (i.e. establishment) by 2015 - no doubt some by normal wastage and some by redundancies.

c. The Management of Excess Gurkha Manpower. The BG is over-manned for its current and future establishment of 2926 (now) and 2814 (2015). The excess to current liability is approx 740 although this is mainly employed in Gurkha Reinforcement Companies or in UKTAP substitution posts (posts outside the Brigade, in British units), many in deployable roles. Voluntary transfer is still a potential option for our Gurkhas although this has proved difficult in the current manning climate. 519 Gurkhas have voluntarily transferred to the wider Army since 2007.

d. Army Redundancy Programme. The Gurkha manpower excess is now within the Army's Redundancy Programme and it is not unrealistic to deduce that our Gurkha Excess will be included in future planning work. HQBG remains, in principle, supportive of Director Manning

(Army)'s drive to reduce the excess whilst taking its fair share in the Army Redundancy Programme.

e. Gurkha Staff and Personnel Support (GSPS). The formation of our clerks into the GSPS Company in July 2011 has rightly given them their own place in the BG Orbat. We will seek to ensure they maintain the Gurkha ethos and kaida whilst having the ability to have a greater and enhanced career within the Adjutant General's Corps (Staff and Personnel Support) - but maintaining their Main Effort to support the BG.

On a more functional basis, HQBG has a strong and balanced team of dedicated military and civilian staff. Inevitably there have been changes and as with any organizations we have continued to bid farewell as well as welcome new members to the team in 2010/11. We welcomed Capt K A Brewster AGC (SPS) as SO3 G1/MS and Maj Bijayant Sherchan as Chief of Staff HQBG in July and August 2011 respectively. We said farewells to the outgoing Chief of Staff, Maj David Robinson (now CO 1 RGR), and our Man/Estb SNCO, SSgt Anil Thapa (now WO CDC at RMAS). Other farewells included Maj (Retd) Paul Gay, our Regimental Secretary, and Mrs Sandie Hower, PS to Col BG, both retiring after long, loyal and highly effective service in HQBG, whilst we extended a warm welcome to Maj (Retd) Bruce Mackay as our new Regtl Sec.

However, the most notable of them all was undoubtedly the departure of Colonel D G Hayes CBE. After some seven years in the post, Col David Hayes handed over to Colonel I A Rigden OBE as Colonel Brigade of Gurkhas in September 2011. Col Hayes was instrumental in the re-establishment of the Gurkha Reinforcement Companies and the formation of the GSPS Company. However, he will be best remembered for leading the BG through the difficult period of the GTACOS Review. His last day in Headquarters Brigade of Gurkhas was an informal family affair with Mrs Lucy Hayes and two of their children, Sam and Alice joining the staff for a farewell Curry Lunch. (See the separate article earlier in the journal.)

On the sporting and social scenes, HQBG continues to be busy. Our resident Queen's Gurkha Orderly Officer and SO3 G3/O&D, Capt Chinbahadur Thapa RGR, has been instrumental in setting up a messing hut and various sporting activities, when not away on ceremonial duties at Buckingham Palace with his opposite number from The Queen's Gurkha Engineers, Capt Devkumar Gurung. Trailwalker is another regular feature in our sporting calendar and our Superintendent Clerk, WO2 Bishan Rai GSPS, will be leading the HQBG team again in 2012. The time to beat is 16 hrs 35 mins - the previous HQBG time taken to complete the gruelling course.

On wider Brigade issues, it is re-assuring to note that BG units have received the Tranche I Redundancy announcement in a mature and professional manner. All BG Capbadges (less GSPS and the BG Band) were represented in Tranche I involving two

officers and 144 ORs. Tranche 2, 3 and 4 are likely to be larger than Tranche 1 as DM (A) is seeking to target the Gurkha excess.

On the BG's operational commitments, the pace of operations continues to be high. In 2010, 13 out of the 20 BG deployable sub-units either deployed on or returned from operations in Afghanistan. 1 RGR returned from Afghanistan in October 2010, as, in March, did 10 QOGLR from its first full regimental deployment as a logistics support regiment, whilst The Queen's Gurkha Engineers and Queen's Gurkha Signals have had and continue to have numerous elements deployed in Afghanistan. Particularly noteworthy is the re-role of QGE Squadrons to High Risk Search as a significant contribution to the Counter-IED Capability. In November 2011, 2 RGR returned to Brunei from another six-month deployment.

Of all that we are very proud, but we should also remind ourselves that the human cost of operations in Afghanistan has been heavy. The Brigade of Gurkhas has lost 13 soldiers Killed in Action (KIA) and has 47 seriously Wounded in Action (WIA). We are looking after the widows and wounded, including their families, in league with the wider Army and particularly the emerging Army Recovery Capability and the Service Charities.

And this newsletter would not be complete without a mention of the sterling work that Capt (Retd) Mahendrakumar Limbu and his team carry out daily in helping our retired community at the Gurkha Welfare Centre in Aldershot, which is the 'Forward Operating Base' of the joint GWT/HQBG Gurkha Welfare Centre, which has its headquarters with the Gurkha Welfare Trust in Salisbury. The Aldershot 'FOB' has had more than 13,000 visitors since the flow of Gurkha Settlement Project cases began in earnest in October 2009 and the team works closely with government departments, particularly the Department for Work and Pensions, local authorities (especially Rushmoor Borough Council), the Service Charities and other agencies all of whom have been doing devoted work for our retired servicemen and dependents.

In spite of the challenges facing the BG today, the Brigade's reputation remains high and HQBG has striven hard to support the units of the Brigade, which have acquitted themselves in an exemplary manner. They can be justifiably proud of their performance on operations in Afghanistan and other parts of the world. The BG is an integral part of the British Army and we must continue to contribute with the confidence to change and adapt to serve the wider Army's interests.

Colonel I A Rigden OBE MA (Late RGR)

Col Ian Rigden joined the Army as a soldier in 1980. He was selected for Sandhurst in 1981 and commissioned in August 1982 into the 2nd Goorkhas. He has spent much of his time at Regimental Duty including four years as a platoon commander, three years as Adjutant and seven years (three tours) as a rifle company commander. He commanded 2nd Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles (2 RGR) in Brunei and Afghanistan between November 2003 and April 2006.

He has served on the Staff in HQ Land Forces, 1st (UK) Armoured Division, the Army Staff in the MOD, as Chief of Campaign Plans CJ5 in HQ Multinational Force-Iraq writing the Joint Campaign Plan and as Assistant Head of Thematic Doctrine at the Defence, Concepts and Doctrine Centre. In this latter appointment he was the lead author of JDP 04: *Understanding*, JDP 2:00: *Understanding and Intelligence Support to Joint Operations*, and JDN 6/11: *Partnering Indigenous Forces*. He also instructed at the Advanced Command and Staff Course at Shrivenham specializing in campaign planning and Counter-Insurgency (COIN). He is a graduate of the US Army War College (USAWC) in Carlisle, Pennsylvania (2007-8), and has attended the Royal College of Defence Studies. He holds Masters Degrees in Defence Studies from King's College, London (1995), and Strategic Studies from the USAWC (2008). Some of his work on COIN and Security Transitions has been published in America by the USAWC.

He has served on operations in Hong Kong (12 Border Tours), the Falkland Islands (post-conflict 1986), Northern Ireland, Belize, Bosnia (twice), Afghanistan and Iraq. He was



awarded the OBE for his time as CO 2 RGR in Brunei and Afghanistan and a QCVS for his time in Iraq. He has spent a lot of time in Nepal and is a fluent Nepali speaker. He is married to Zoë and they have two boys, Harry and Jack. His interests include hill walking, mountaineering, swimming, painting and military history. He is also very proud to be an Honorary Colonel in the Commonwealth of Kentucky Militia. He hopes to start a part-time PhD through King's College, London in the next year.



The Brigade Secretariat making a presentation to Maj Paul Gay, on his retirement October 2011



Col Ian Rigden making a presentation to Mrs Sandie Hewer PS to Col BG, on her retirement, October 2011



Col Ian Rigden making a presentation to Maj Paul Gay Regtl Sec RGR on his retirement, October 2011

The Vigil

By Colonel Richard Cawthorne

A little over one hundred years ago, on 7 May 1910, King Edward VII died and for the first and only time Gurkha officers, who were serving as King's Indian Orderly Officers (KIOO), took part in the funeral of a Sovereign.

On ascending the throne in 1901, King Edward VII had proposed that a number of native orderlies from the Indian Army be attached to the Royal Household. This idea eventually led to the appointment of KIOO. Drawn from regiments across the Indian Army, they attended the Sovereign for the season from April to August. While in England, they were under the supervision of a British officer from the Indian Army and, accompanied by orderlies and cooks, were accommodated in a private house in Pimlico close to Buckingham Palace. The first officers attended King Edward VII at his coronation in 1903 and thereafter four KIOO were appointed annually until the outbreak of the Second World War when the tradition ceased.

The first Gurkha officers were appointed KIOO to King Edward VII in 1905. During their tour of duty they attended HM The King at levees, investitures and state visits as well as Royal Reviews, the Royal Naval and Military Tournament and presentation of prizes at Bisley.

Five years later, in 1910, the KIOO comprised two Gurkha officers, Subadar Majors Santbir Gurung 2nd King Edward's Own Gurkha Rifles (The Sirmoor Rifles) and Singbir Ghale 3rd Queen Alexandra's Own Gurkha Rifles and two subadars of the 39th Garhwal Rifles. King Edward VII was Colonel-in-Chief of 2nd Gurkha Rifles while Queen Alexandra had recently been appointed Colonel-in-Chief of 3rd Gurkha Rifles. The Officer-in-Charge was Major H St A Wake 8th Gurkha Rifles (later killed in action while serving with the 2nd Battalion in France in 1914) who, like his predecessors and successors, maintained a diary of the KIOO tour of duty. It is upon his diary that this article is mostly based.

The KIOO arrived in London towards the end of April 1910 and were being fitted with new uniforms and familiarizing themselves with life in England when the King died. On 13 May, the Orderly Officers were received in Audience by King George V, who invited them to guard the body of his Father during the Lying-in-State and afterwards to be his Orderly Officers. Two days later they were summoned to Buckingham Palace to attend a private Lying-in-State of the King. The diary describes how they were conducted into the Throne Room and after standing for some time in front of the coffin, saluted and retired backwards until they had withdrawn from the Room.

On 17 May, the KIOO were taken by open landaus to Buckingham Palace where they took their place in the funeral

procession. They marched in front of the massed bands leading the gun carriage cortège that conveyed the coffin of King Edward VII to Westminster Hall for the Lying-in-State. On arrival at Westminster Hall, the KIOO joined the Gentlemen-at-Arms, Yeoman of the Guard and officers of the Household Cavalry and Foot Guards in keeping vigil over the coffin. The four Orderly Officers mounted guard at the foot of the coffin, one at a time for one hour each. They performed this duty day and night continuously for 72 hours receiving much praise, including that of the most senior and revered officer of the Indian Army, Field Marshal Lord Roberts, who commented on "the admirable and steadfast manner in which they had performed such a difficult and trying feat."

The KIOO then took part in the procession that conveyed King Edward's coffin from Westminster Hall to Paddington Station. Just before the procession was about to set off, King George sent verbal orders that he wished the Orderly Officers to accompany the coffin to Windsor which they duly did on the Special Train. From Windsor Station, they processed to Windsor Castle and attended the funeral service in St George's Chapel. The KIOO returned to London later that day worn out after more than 80 hours of continuous duty. The diary records that they felt tremendously honoured and overwhelmed at being invited by King George V to play such an important part in the funeral.

Queen Alexandra subsequently showed her gratitude by presenting each officer with a gold & pearl pin in memory of King Edward VII and a signed photograph of herself and King Edward in recognition of their services whilst on duty during the Lying-in-State. At their final audience with King George V, the Orderly Officers were presented with the Victorian Medal, except for Subadar Major Santbir Gurung who, having previously been awarded the Medal, received a clasp. Santbir's medals are now displayed in the Officers' Mess of the 2nd Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles in Brunei as are photographs of King Edward VII and the Lying-in-State, all of which were presented to 2nd Gurkha Rifles by Santbir. The part played by Subadar Major Santbir Gurung in the funeral of King Edward VII was later to form the basis of Rudyard Kipling's story "In The Presence", extracts of which were published in the first edition of *The Kukri* in 1949.

Just over a quarter of a century later, King George V died in January 1936 but as the KIOO were not on duty at the time they did not take part in his funeral. And as the appointment of Queen's Gurkha Orderly Officer was not instituted until 1954, Gurkha Orderly Officers did not attend the funeral of King George VI in 1952.



The Lying in State of King Edward VII



The King's Indian Orderly Officers, 1910

How Children Happen to Help

By Lieutenant Colonel J P Cross OBE

'There is always one moment in childhood when the door opens and lets the future in'.

The Power and the Glory, Graham Green (1940), Part I, Chapter I.

Three times I have come across currents in history, whose headwaters rose in the dark and convoluted past, unexpectedly and irrevocably changed by chance reactions of children.

The first happened in Rangoon, of all unlikely places: in 1951 I was OC Troops, taking a leave party to Calcutta.

On the third day there I was sent for by the Purser. Three Nepalis, one man, somewhere in his thirties, chubby-cheeked with an incipient pot belly, and two ladies had come to see me. The man gave me a long, lingering, quizzical look as I gave him a Namaste. "Welcome on board, Hajur. I am the Officer Commanding the Gurkha troops and their families going on leave to Nepal. What can I do for you?" I asked.

"Oh, you speak our language," he replied, looking pleasantly surprised as the ladies also cooed their appreciation. "We had heard about the Nepalese citizens on board and would like to meet them."

"Please may I know who you are?"

"I am the Nepalese Vice Consul in Burma and the two ladies are my wife and the Consul's wife."

"I will lead you first around the deck so that you can meet the single men then go to the cabins and meet the families. Before that I must make an announcement to that effect." I turned to the Purser. "Please let me use your broadcast system."

Off we went. I had expected some conversational initiative to be shown by the Vice Consul but no, he only spoke to a few men in general terms, not specifics, as if he were trying to make his mind up about something. Mostly he stared speculatively at them: for their part, the soldiers looked away after making initial eye contact. I felt something was unusual, if not wrong.

Down a deck in the cabins the two lady visitors tried to make conversation with the wives and embrace the children. The wives showed deference but no interest and the two ladies were astonished to see some of the little ones run to me and grab me round a knee, looking up and smiling, obviously happier with me than with them.

Long before every cabin had been visited, the Vice Consul glanced at this wrist watch and said, "Captain Sahib. That's enough, thank you. I have seen all I need to. Will you please come back with us to the Consulate?"

I went with him. I saw a metal archway with a notice '66 Transit Camp' hanging from it and, under that, another smaller notice hung, 'Nepal Consulate'. I recognized the place from the end of the war.

The car drew up outside what had been the Officers' Mess. I stood in the hot sun while the car was locked up. The ladies disappeared. I was led into a room where there were rattan chairs and a small rattan table beside each one. The Vice Consul left me to myself and returned with an elder, puffier man, wearing thick glasses, who proffered his hand. "I am the Consul. You are welcome."

The Consul gave me the same sort of look that his underling had given the men on board. "Sit down and I will give you a drink."

A bottle of whisky was produced and my glass was filled half full before some soda water was added. I intuited that the two Nepalis were out to learn something and the looser my tongue, the more forthcoming would I be. "Cheers!"

Boring small talk ensued. I steadfastly refused to alter the pace or the amount of what I drank.

"Captain Sahib," the Consul said. "What you said on arrival here surprised me and, I fear, disturbed me."

"Oh? Consul Sahib. I am sorry if I said the wrong thing. You are the first Consul I have spoken to."

The two Nepalis glanced at one another and the junior gave a slight nod.

"You said 'leave party'."

"I did."

"From one battalion?"

"No, from all eight battalions plus from the Engineers, Signals and Military Police."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, Consul Sahib. I am as sure of that as I am sure I am sitting here, drinking and talking to you, in Rangoon, Burma and nowhere else."

"What you told us is not what we have been told."

Not knowing what they had been told and not knowing how to reply, I said nothing.

"We have had a letter from Kathmandu, secret I'll have you know, telling us that this boatload of Nepalese soldiers, Gurkhas from the British Army, were a battalion that mutinied so was immediately disbanded and sent back to Nepal as civilians."

"Utter and unadulterated nonsense, Consul Sahib, I can assure you of that. Which battalion were you told had mutinied?"

The Consul went to get the message. "A rifle company of 1/7 Gurkha Rifles, at Kota Bharu."

"Except for A Company 1/7 GR suddenly being sent to Kota Bharu last month, no Gurkha troops have ever been sent to the northeastern corner of Malaya, Hajur. Only Malay Regiment battalions operate there. That I know as a fact."

The Consul gave me a beady look. "My information says that the unit which mutinied was A Company, 1/7 Gurkha Rifles and the whole battalion was instantly disbanded on orders from the British Government."

"No. Although A Company was unexpectedly ordered to go to Kota Bharu to oversee a three-week operation, they had come back just before I embarked. Nothing was out of place."

"The Captain Sahib must be correct, Consul-ji," interpolated his subordinate. "Going round the men on deck and meeting the families in the cabins there was no disrespect whatever shown to Cross sahib here, just the opposite. The few people I did make a remark to in no way showed anything but normality. There was no look of mutiny on any soldier's face. The women, who might have unwittingly said something to the ladies to give them a clue that the battalion was in disgrace and that they were going home before they were due, were also quite normal. In other words, everything seemed to be perfectly natural."

The Consul turned to me. "That is a relief to me. I don't like the idea of Nepalis misbehaving in foreign countries where they should be our unofficial ambassadors and blackening our country's name. In fact, we were ordered not to go to visit you, not to make any contact at all."

"May I make a suggestion?"

"Indeed. Let's hear it."

"When I get back to Singapore I'll ask the producers of our Gurkhas' newspaper, Parbaté, to include you on their distribution list. In that way you will know what is happening and will not be disturbed by such appalling rumours."

And that is what happened. The central plot of trying to defame Gurkhas coincided with the guerillas being defeated

in Malaya. In an effort to relieve the pressure on the Malayan guerillas, a rumour 'from somewhere Central' was put out that Gurkhas were needed in Sarawak: the rumour was soon seen as spurious. Jute mill coolies also tried to coerce leave men, when in Barrackpore transit camp, from returning from leave

None of that would ever have come to light but for those little children.

The second time children were concerned was when I was living nearby an aboriginal ladang on the Kelantan side of the main 'divide' of Peninsular Malaysia, in 1963, where I realised that getting through to recalcitrant, fearful and primitive adults was by getting their inquisitive children fascinated with 'tricks'. As my face grew tired by contortions with trying to win them over, I mentally dismissed sniggering and sneering peers' reactions were they to witness what I was trying to do and likewise exorcised the souls of Commanding Officers past and present as I tried to see myself as they would have seen me. But successful I was: only after I found myself asked to live in the aborigines' houses as their children had asked their parents did I get firm and accurate reports of guerilla movements. The Temiar aborigines held the keys to the whereabouts of the last of the rump of guerillas who would come down to visit them from the Thai border - and had been looked up to ever since Spencer Chapman's time avoiding the Japanese some score of years previously I had succeeded in winning them over for firm and accurate information.

The third time occurred in Borneo, in 1964, when I was Commandant of the Border Scouts (which involved my simultaneously being a lieutenant colonel in two armies and a superintendent in three police forces with each entity thinking one of the others was paying me when, for ten months, none did). The Border Scouts had disintegrated after a savage Indonesian attack at Long Jawi and the Resident of the Third Division (a relative of General Sir Walter Walker), a pompous man allergic to common sense, had told me that he, not I, would publicize the requirement for thirty new recruits and that his putting it out over Radio Sarawak and by word of mouth would produce the desired results. I travelled to Belaga with two junior officers of the local administration as representatives of the Resident to welcome and recruit them. In the event no one turned up.

I suggested going upstream to Long Linau, where the headman, an influential person, might help us in our quest. Certainly we could achieve nothing by staying where we were. Two and a half hours after starting out, we arrived. It was mid-afternoon. We met the headman and the local councillor, who made us comfortable. That meant we were given a mat to sit on, which was just as hard as was the wooden floor. They retired to one end of the longhouse and left us at the other end, in splendid isolation. The two administrators decided to go fishing and left me on my own. On looking around I felt that there was a glass curtain between me and the inmates, distorting, clouding and colouring what they saw, so making normal contact difficult, if not impossible. Our quest seemed even more remote and as useless as the Resident's efforts.

To pass the time I went to the river for a wash, but the water was muddy, so I didn't bother and returned, feeling stale. I went back to my mat and sat down, completely ignored. I glanced up and saw the children, who had also been gathered with the others at the other end of the longhouse so that they should have nothing to do with men representing Government and unhappiness, who had so unexpectedly arrived to spoil their peace yet again. I wobbled my eyebrows independently of each other and was seen by one youngster. For the next hour I carried on a one-man cabaret show, by which time, face aching, I was festooned with children and the womenfolk were halfway between me and their menfolk, still unconvinced and

Mules

By Bruce Roberts, latterly Chairman 9 GRRA, in cooperation with Major Bill Towill

I suppose nowadays with our armed forces more and more using mechanized and air transport for both movement and supply, our faithful Mule Transport of years gone by is very largely now a forgotten and sweet memory of companionship in the dire circumstances of World War 2 in the jungles.

Major Bill Towill of the 3/9th Gurkha Rifles, a veteran of the Chindits, has recalled the memory of the part played by the Battalion's mules in those campaigns and the close relations forged between men and mules. His account set out in this article may remind us that there is more to war than just death and destruction.

He says that no account of the War in Burma would be complete without reference to our mules, who were undoubtedly heroes. Admittedly they could be cantankerous and cussed, causing headaches and frustration to their handlers. Sometimes they could be seen careering around, trailing their handlers behind them like rag dolls. But in time, every one of these men came to regard their charges as their "long eared darlings" and was grief stricken when they had to part with them.

For many a long weary mile Bill trudged the jungle tracks of Burma behind a particularly fine specimen called "Taxi", who carried their most precious cargo - the wireless set without which they could not communicate with Base to order ammunition and supplies and set the location of the dropping zones for the airdrops, in enemy territory well behind the Japanese lines. Others carried spare batteries for the wireless, the chore horse small petrol driven generator to keep the batteries charged, the three inch mortars and Vickers machine guns, ammunition for them and numerous other items.

Without proper fodder and making do with whatever they could find in the surrounding jungle, they were called upon day after day without remission, to carry their heavy loads over exhausting trails, which at times defeated even their courageous spirits and they collapsed belly deep in the

glowering balefully at me from the other end of the longhouse. I could see how the women tattoo their arms so that they look like lace gloves, as indeed do they also from the knees upwards towards their thighs but, from that range, exactly how far up I could not be sure.

Another half hour passed. By then it was dark outside and the men had moved up and joined the women who, by then, were all around me. Serious talk started after that: what, exactly, did I want? Thirty men, I said. Before long I was promised thirty men and, in the event, twenty-nine did turn up.

mud. They then had to be offloaded, helped out of the mud and taken to higher ground where the load was replaced and they started off again.

Bill Towill says, that after his book, 'A Chindit's Chronicle', was published, he heard a tale which most of us would find hard to believe, but which he was assured was true. The column had come to a steep slope, made treacherous by mud and the passage of the leading part of the column and which was quite impossible for a loaded mule. There was nothing for it but to offload the mule, manhandle the load down the slope and reload it at the bottom. Half a dozen rifles from the mule were off loaded and shouldered to carry down the slope. Apparently, feet began to slip away but a disastrous fall was prevented by a firm grip on the upper arm. To everyone's total amazement the helper had been the mule without even leaving a mark!

In March 1944, the Chindit 77 Brigade under Brigadier Mike Calvert, established a road and rail block at Henu, which became known as 'White City' because of the parachutes which festooned it. Six days afterwards, a pack pony in the transport platoon unexpectedly gave birth to a mule foal. The mule was born during a determined Japanese attack and mortar bombs exploded all around as Sergeant Lee of the 1st Bn Lancashire Fusiliers and his staff worked to bring this new life into the block. Immediately the troops heard of the new member of the Brigade, the foal became the topic of the day. Something apart from death and destruction had arrived. During quieter periods in the fighting, men would stroll down to the transport lines to see Minnie, so named because she was born close to the mortar post named Minnie. British and Gurkha troops, united in battle, were all interested in Minnie's progress.

During a heavy bombardment by the Japanese, bombs fell into the transport lines and killed several mules. One mule broke loose and, acting as only mules can, kicked Minnie above the right eye. It seemed that Minnie might lose the sight of one eye, but Sergeant Lee worked ceaselessly, with

improvised veterinary equipment, to save her eye. Brigadier Calvert ordered periodic reports on Minnie's progress to be sent to all forward positions. As Minnie's condition improved so did the morale of the troops defending the block. When she was better, she was often seen walking off to the mortar positions, where she would drink tea out of a pint pot. The advent of Minnie had definitely helped morale and stories of her pranks and antics, however trivial, brought happiness to everyone in the Brigade. She subsequently became the Regimental mascot of the Lancashire Fusiliers.

When orders were received to evacuate the block, the problem arose as to what to do with Minnie, who was still too young and weak to march. Brigadier Calvert, appreciating the part she had played in building morale, decided to have her flown back to India. An attack was ordered to clear the airstrip and was successful. An aircraft managed to land, as all the men 'stood to'. There were tense faces as Minnie was placed in the aircraft and there was a genuine sigh of relief

Namaste v Namaskar

By Lieutenant Colonel J P Cross OBE

Many people may wonder what the difference between 'Namaste' and 'Namaskar' is. Briefly, in Saṅskrit, 'Nam' implies any bending and 'Namas' is a bending in respect, salutation or obeisance. 'Namas té' can be translated as '[I make] a Namas [to] thou'. However, the word 'Namas', when used by itself - and here the learners of grammar at school will come into their own - 'takes' a dative case which, in Saṅskrit means the addition of 'kar' on the end, ergo 'Namaskar'.

as the plane took off. It was sad to see Minnie go, but the troops had been told that she would be well looked after by the rear party which had stayed behind in India.

When columns came under mortaring and shelling, the mules were not able to take cover, as the men often could, but had no alternative but to stand and take it, often suffering the most horrific wounds. When this left the handler no alternative but to put his greatly beloved animal friend down, his grief was indeed profound and almost unbearable.

In 1990, Bill Towill wrote 'A Chindits Chronicle' prior to the 50th Anniversary of the 3/9th re-raising, in response to the then Commandant's request for an account of the Battalion's involvement in the Chindit operations in 1944. He and some others from the 9th Gurkha Rifles Regimental Association attended the celebrations and were overwhelmed by the welcome and hospitality they received from all ranks. Jai 9th!

In other words 'Namaste' now means 'I greet you' while 'Namaskar' merely means 'greetings'.

So take your choice: English idiom has 'hello' rather than 'I make a 'hello-type-greeting' to you yet, lurking under the surface, so to speak, some will opine that 'goodbye' is the shortened form of 'God be with ye' - as opposed to that obsolete, except in prayer, 'thou'.



British Gurkhas Nepal

Staff List

Headquarters British Gurkhas Nepal

Col A M Mills Late RE	Comd/DA
Lt Col EA Davies QG SIGNALS D Comd/COS	D Comd/COS
Maj J H Thompson AGC (SPS)	DCOS
Maj Hitman Gurung MVO QG SIGNALS	GM
Capt Pimbahadur Gurung GSPS	SO3 G1/MS
Capt I Ahsan QG SIGNALS	SO3 G2/3/6
Capt F E Fox RLC	SO3 G4 Log Sp/Estates
Capt D Smit RLC	SO3 Tpt & Mov
Capt Kedar Rai QG SIGNALS	OC NST
Mrs M Childs	CivSec
Hon Maj Karnasher Tamang MBE Ex QG SIGNALS	CLO
Dr K Baker	CMP
Ms M McFayden	SSAFA

Defence Section British Embassy Kathmandu

Maj A Vick RAC	AMA/MLO
Capt Ashwin Rana GSPS	SO Admin

British Gurkhas Kathmandu

Maj W J P Kelsall Rifles	OC
Maj K C Thorpe AGC (SPS)	RAO
Capt Rajpati Gurung QOGLR	2IC/MTO
Hon Maj Hitman Gurung Ex 1 RGR	BUWO
Lt (QGO) (Retd) Ravindra Sahi Ex QGE	EO (L) Transit

British Gurkhas Pokhara

Maj R G J Beven RGR	OC
Capt Rabindrprakash Tulachan RGR	2IC
Capt G EA Norton RGR	OpsCoord
Capt Buddhibahadur Bhandari QGE	QM
Capt (QGO) (Retd) Gangabhadur Gurung Ex RGR	Records Offr
Hon Capt Mansing Gurung Ex QG SIGNALS	SARO
Capt (Retd) Pradip Limbu Ex QOGLR	ARO (Coord)
Hon Capt Gajendrabhadur Dewan Ex 2 RGR	ARO (E)
Capt (QGO) (Retd) Bhojraj Gurung Ex 2 RGR	ARO (W)

Defence Infrastructure Overseas (Nepal)

Capt R H Gale RE	Head of Delivery
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British Gurkhas Dharan

Mr Chandrakamal Rasaily	OC
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Headquarters Gurkha Welfare Scheme

Lt Col J D Fenn QOGLR	Fd Dir
Maj (Retd) Lalitbahadur Gurung Ex RGR	Dep Fd Dir
Capt J F Waller RE	Proj Engr
Capt (QGO) (Retd) Bhaktabhadur Rai Ex QGE	Prog Dir RWS
Capt (QGO) (Retd) Hikmatbahadur Gurung Ex 1 RGR	SO Coord
Hon Maj Govinde Gurung MVO MBE Ex QG SIGNALS	SO Med
Hon Maj Chandrabhadur Gurung MVO Ex 1 RGR	SO IA
Lt (QGO) (Retd) Purnabhadur Gurung Ex 1 RGR	SO Log
Hon Capt Narbahadur Gurung MVO BEM Ex 1 RGR	OIC RH Kaski
Capt (QGO) (Retd) Khembahadur Thapa Ex QG SIGNALS	LO GSO

Area Welfare Centres

Hon Lt (QGO) (Retd) Tirthabhadur Thapa Ex 2 RGR	AWO Bheri
Hon Lt (QGO) (Retd) Deobahadur Rana Ex QOGLR	AWO Gulmi
Maj (Retd) Krishna Gurung BEM Ex QG SIGNALS	SAWO Kaski
WO2 (Retd) Shriprasad Tamang Ex 1 RGR	AWO Lamjung
Lt (QGO) (Retd) Senbahadur Gurung Ex 6 GR	AWO Gorkha
Capt (Retd) Surendra Gurung Ex 1 RGR	AWO Syangja
Hon Lt (QGO) Haribahadur Rana Ex 1 RGR	AWO Tanahun
Capt (QGO) (Retd) Rukumbahadur Rana Ex 1 RGR	AWO Chitwan
Capt (QGO) (Retd) Mekhbahadur Gurung Ex 1 RGR	SAWO Butwal
Capt (QGO) (Retd) Jitbahadur Thapa Ex 1 RGR	SAWO Bagmati
Hon Lt (QGO) Chhatrabhadur Rai Ex QG SIGNALS	AWO Rumjatar
Insp II (Retd) Subharaj Thamsuhang Ex GCSPF	AWO Diktal
Capt (Retd) Barhajit Rai Ex 7 GR	AWO Bhojpur
Capt (Retd) Purnaprasad Limbu Ex 2 RGR	AWO Khandbari
Hon Lt (QGO) Tikaram Rai Ex 10 GR	AWO Tehrathum
Hon Lt (QGO) Punendraprasad Limbu Ex 2 RGR	AWO Taplejung
Hon Maj Dalbahadur Limbu MVO Ex QGE	AWO Phidim
Hon Maj Chandraprasad Limbu MBE Ex 3 RGR	SAWO Dharan
Capt (QGO) (Retd) Damberkumar Pradhan Ex 6 GR	AWO Darjeeling
Hon Lt (QGO) Premkumar Tamang Ex QG SIGNALS	AWO Damak

Area Welfare Officers (Medical)

Lt (QGO) (Retd) Mahendrakumar Gurung Ex QG SIGNALS	AWO (Med) Bagmati
Hon Lt (QGO) Thakursing Gurung Ex 2 RGR	AWO (Med) Dharan

Honorary Area Welfare Officer

WO2 (Retd) Satyasagar Ghale Ex 6 GR	HAWO Dehradun/Dharamsala
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Commander's Introduction

By Col A M Mill Late RE

I write as Defence Attaché, Commander British Gurkhas Nepal and Director of the Gurkha Welfare Scheme, to introduce the British Gurkhas Nepal Chapter of this year's Kukri. It has been a busy time.

From the Embassy we continue to offer assistance and influence when we can, to ensure continuing support for the Brigade's activities. At the time of writing, there is growing optimism that Nepal's political parties are at last demonstrating the will to tackle the problems of the integration and rehabilitation of the former Maoist combatants, draw up a new constitution and, in a longer time frame, hold nationwide elections. The government of Baburam Bhattarai is showing encouraging signs and we wish him well. We continue to work closely with the Nepal Army which is making an impressive contribution to United Nations peacekeeping missions across the world.

In British Gurkhas Nepal we have, again, recruited 176 young soldiers for the Brigade and a further 60 for the Singapore Police Force. These young men, who have competed strongly against many peers, continue to impress their commanding officers on operations and are worthy successors to their fathers and grandfathers. We expect a dip in the number required for the next few years but, thereafter, for structural reasons, the requirement should

increase once more. Meanwhile our welfare staff work long hours to provide much needed support to the families of our dead and wounded and the hard-pressed officers in the Gurkha Settlement Office give sensible advice to the many ex-Gurkhas considering emigrating to Britain. As a result of the Strategic Defence Review we are facing a 20% cut in the British Gurkhas Nepal military manpower, which will be followed by a commensurate cut in our civilian numbers.

The Gurkha Welfare Scheme continues to thrive despite the tough fund raising environment in the United Kingdom which has caused us to carry out our own Strategic Review and re-examine our priorities and direction. We now pay some 9,000 welfare pensions a year, sadly down from 10,500 two years ago, and are involved in a wide variety of individual and community aid projects. Building upon the success of our first Residential Home (Kaski), we are now, with the help of a hugely generous sponsor, starting work on a second home alongside the Welfare Centre in Dharan.

You will read more about our activities in the following pages. Suffice to say that your Brigade and its Charity is thriving in Nepal. We are doing all we can to support the Home Base and look forward to seeing you as you come and go in the year ahead. Jai Gurkha!

Second Tour in British Gurkhas Nepal

By Major Hitman Gurung MVO QG SIGNALS, GM BGN

I must admit, I am extremely fortunate to have the opportunity to serve in British Gurkhas Nepal for the second time. The first tour was in 1997/98 as Officer Commanding Nepal Signal Troop. When I left BGN, I never thought I would be coming back again. However, here I am.

I arrived in Nepal in July 2010 and 18 months has passed in an instant. This period has been challenging, demanding, frustrating (at times), interesting and of course fun too. I have been heavily involved on recruit selection and have helped to select 352 recruits (two batches) for the Brigade. I visited the 2010 intake during their recruit training at the Infantry Training Centre in Catterick and it was very satisfying to see them all doing so well. The second batch of recruits are equally good and I have every confidence that they will do the Brigade proud both in barracks and on operations.

Given the operational tempo in Afghanistan, one of the areas that we have been very busy with over the last 18 months or so is welfare support. Whilst we have a very experienced

and capable Brigade and Unit Welfare Officer (BUWO), as the Gurkha Major to British Gurkhas Nepal, I am heavily involved in most of the welfare cases. We are all aware that many of the extended families of our serving soldiers, those who have been transferred to the wider Army and those who joined through being British Nationals (Overseas) are still living in Nepal.

When it comes to welfare issues both in Nepal and abroad, BGN has an important role to play. In Nepal we work very closely with the Gurkha Welfare Scheme (GWS) and rely on them for support with the majority of compassionate and welfare cases in the hills and remote areas. Without their cooperation and support we would be unable to do what we are able to at the moment. The welfare cases we deal vary from family disputes, compassionate cases, Dangerously Ill Forwarding of Relatives (DILFOR) cases, Aeromedivac and repatriation of the deceased to Nepal.

The majority of welfare cases are sensitive and emotional and have to be handled with great care and compassion. It can

be challenging, demanding and frustrating but when you are able to resolve the issues and see some smiles and happiness on their faces, it gives you the greatest satisfaction. However, it is not always the smile on their face. In fact, during my first month in Nepal I had to make an early morning visit to break the saddest news to the late Rfn Remand Kulung's parents, the death of their beloved son. This too can be very disheartening. I have had to lead three repatriations - the late Spr Ishwor Gurung QGE, Rfn Vijay Rai 2 RGR and most recently Rfn Sachin Limbu 1 RGR. Rfn Amit Tamang 2 RGR died whilst he was on pre-deployment leave in Nepal and BGN provided the necessary welfare support to the family. BGN also provided support when Hon Lt(QGO) Tulbahadur Pun VC died at his home at Tiplyang. There are many more cases we have dealt with and continue to do so. However, it is our aim and aspiration in BGN to help resolve welfare cases and issues without too much interference or disruption to the unit, so that the serving Brigade is able to concentrate fully on their primary role of training and operations.

We are very fortunate that the Regimental Associations Nepal (RAN) continue to be hugely cooperative and supportive in support of our mission. They provide balanced and wise advice and remain our main point of contact for any ex-servicemen's issues and concerns that are raised in Nepal. They attend all important events where ex-Gurkhas' presence is required, including the repatriation of deceased service personnel to Nepal which means a great deal to the bereaved family. The RAN hold quarterly meetings to which both the Chief of Staff and I are fortunate to be invited to attend. We provide regular updates on current issues in the Army, the Brigade and BGN and similarly we receive information regarding ex-servicemen residing in Nepal. The bond between BGN and the RAN is very strong and long may it continue.

Nepal remains very attractive when it comes to visitors, and we host a very large number each year. As far as BGN is concerned each and every visitor is important to us and we treat them accordingly. We have hosted the Minister for Defence Personnel, Welfare and Veterans, Mr Andrew Robathan MP, the Chief of Defence Staff, Gen Sir David Richards, His

Excellency the British Ambassador to Nepal, Mr John Tucknott, Colonel QGE, Lt Gen Sir David Bill, Colonel QG Signals, Maj Gen Nick Pope, GOC 4 Div, GOC Sp Comd, DGARTD, Comd 2 (SE) Bde, past and present Colonels BG, COs and GMs of Regiments and Battalions; the list is endless. The visits are vital for the Brigade of Gurkhas and we give our best to ensure that the visitors go home with the right impression.

The Banda is a big concern for us. We have to remain flexible at all the times and need to have a plan B and C ready at all the times. This is both time consuming and frustrating. Banda could take place at any time any place with little or no notice. In Nepal we don't hold all the resources required to carry out our tasks and have to rely on other agencies and organizations for support. In the majority of cases we fail to receive useful feedback or confirmation which again leads to some frustration.

When it comes to public relations, BGN has established and maintained very good relationships with the local communities including the Chief District Officer's office, local Police, Hospitals and Airport authorities etc. Additionally we are able to provide community aid to local communities in both urban and hill areas, this has helped to strengthen our relations with the public at large.

Like many other units in the British Army, BGN is busy and faces many challenges. Everyone in Nepal is fully committed to give their continued support to the Brigade and the Army. Personally, for me, it is fantastic to be back to Nepal once again. Beside the work there are opportunities to visit your close ones and explore the areas that you have not previously had the opportunity to see. I have visited Kakre Bihar, Bulbule tal, Tilaurakote, Lumbini, Muktinath, Gurkha Durbar, Resung and Tiger Tops. I have also been very fortunate to visit many of the Area Welfare Centres (AWC) including Surkhet in the West and Taplejung in the East and to meet with many ex-servicemen and their families. As I approach the twilight of my army career, to be able to contribute and support the serving Brigade and retired community so closely and directly at a difficult and challenging time is extremely satisfying and rewarding.

BGN Political Update for 2011

By WO2 S Roberts, SAG2, HQ BGN

Media-related matters during December 2010 in Nepal were dominated by the publication of US Diplomatic cables on the Wikileaks website, which stated that the US believed that the Nepal Police were being bribed by the People's Republic of China into handing over Tibetan refugees trying to flee China. There was also as much press coverage regarding the departure of the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN), whose relationship with the Government of Nepal (GoN) had started to deteriorate, as it was becoming apparent that GoN no longer wanted UNMIN's tenure extended.

At the start of 2011, the political environment was focused on the ongoing Prime Ministerial election process which was up to its 17th round run-off and had become stagnated by the refusal of Nepali Congress's (NC) candidate, Ram Chandra Poudel, to pull out of the race. Fortunately on 12 January, Poudel, at last, saw sense and reason and withdrew from the process, which then paved the way for the Constituent Assembly (CA) to draw up a new election process that would prevent the debacle Nepal had to endure throughout 2010.

Three days later on 15 January, UNMIN's mandate ceased and the organization left Nepal and despite a number of agencies stating that it would be to the detriment of Nepal's security situation (notably UNMIN's chief, Karin Landgren) this was not the case. As it was, a new monitoring mechanism was deployed (after some minor teething issues) to the cantonment sites where the Maoist's Former Combatants were sited. As a result of this development the UN gifted its monitoring assets to GoN.

With the new monitoring mechanism set in place, GoN gained renewed impetus as it then began to set about forming a new consensus government. On 20 January President Dr Ram Baran Yadav declared to the CA that a consensus government should be formed no later than 26 January, otherwise the election process to find a new PM would be initiated. Whilst it was unlikely that a consensus government would be formed, a seven point secret agreement was made between the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) party's candidate Puspa Kamal Dahal (Prachanda) and the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist Leninist)'s candidate, Jhala Nath Khanal. The agreement installed Khanal as PM, with significant support (votes) from the Maoist party. However due to the fact that Khanal had made a secret pact (i.e. he had not informed his own party's Central Committee of his intentions) and the Maoist influence Khanal had to deal with, his tenure only lasted seven months, as he was unable to balance the two parties' aspirations.

Unfortunately Khanal's tenure was ineffective and between March and August Nepal witnessed a rise in Improvised Explosive Device (IED) activity (eight reported in the media). Nepalese media also reported an increase in the amount of Fake Indian Currency (FIC), transiting from Pakistan to India via Nepal which was reflected by the number of arrests made by both Indian security forces and the Nepalese Police directed against Pakistan's Inter Service Intelligence Directorate (ISID). Prosecutions by security forces against domestic terrorists also increased, notably against the Hindu extremist grouping, Nepal Defence Army and the Nepal Communist Party (Bidrohi Maobadi).

Whilst criminal and terrorist activity increased during Khanal's tenure, significantly one of Nepal's most notorious groupings, Janatantrik Terai Mochta Morcha (JTMM), announced

British Gurkhas Kathmandu

By Major W J P Kelsall RIFLES, OC/QM BGK

British Gurkhas Kathmandu (BGK) provides the immediate infrastructure and support to Headquarters British Gurkhas Nepal (HQ BGN) within the same camp in Kathmandu. BGK is also the hub for the majority of the 4,000 BGN/BGP personnel, visitors, and transitees who stage through Kathmandu annually.

I was rather alarmed on my arrival in February 2011 to meet

a ceasefire in April and then in June the group went a stage further and joined the political process by signing up to the Madhes People's Right Forum - Republican (MPRF-R) political party.

In August 2011, Jhala Nath Khanal resigned as PM, citing his inability to reconcile the UCPN-(Maoist) and CPN-(UML) party differences. On 28 August, Baburam Bhattarai, from the UCPN-(Maoist) party, was elected as PM, due to the backing of the Madhes based bloc Samyukta Loktantrik Madhes Morcha (SLMM), which comprised 65 votes, and invariably support from the government of India (GoI). Since being elected as PM, Bhattarai has made significant progress in an attempt to conclude the peace process and the Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA), receiving immeasurable support from the Maoist Chairman, Prachanda, in order to achieve this. Bhattarai's tenure began with the announcement that the control of the weapon systems belonging to the Former Combatants (the Maoist's former armed grouping, the Peoples' Liberation Army) would be turned over to GoN's Special Committee. Unsurprisingly, this act met with fierce resistance from the party's hard line faction, Mohan Baidya (Kiran). However, as Bhattarai continued to make more progress the likes of Baidya became more marginalized (as it has become increasingly apparent that the Nepal Street and external 'stakeholders' have no desire for Nepal to return to an armed insurgency).

In October, Bhattarai went to New Delhi to meet his counterpart Manmohan Singh and signed a Memorandum of Understanding with India. The signing of the MoU signalled the improved relationship between India and Nepal and that India was ready to give its 'blessing' to a moderate (pro-Indian) Maoist-led government.

In November and December, Bhattarai again made further progress by getting GoN's opposition parties, Nepali Congress (NC) and CPN-(UML), to sign up to a seven point Integration and Rehabilitation package for the Former Combatants, which was probably one of the biggest sticking points before the peace process could move ahead. Bhattarai and GoN have now also signed up to a 'Road Map' so that the best chance has been allowed, thus far, for getting the CPA and peace process completed by May 2012 (which will be the next timeline for the CA's tenure to run out).

my predecessor Maj Mel Pears on crutches, having sustained a broken leg playing 5-a-side football; and to discover that his predecessor had also left injured. What was in store for me? So far so good! Many congratulations to Maj Pears who returned to the UK on promotion to Lieutenant Colonel. Ironically he was going back to command the Casualty Rehabilitation Unit in York. Arriving on crutches - now that is real empathy.

BGK personnel, military and civilian, have continued to provide timely and consistent support to BGN across a plethora of key functional areas. The variety and frequency of events, social activities and commitments have been relentless. These have included, to name but a few:

- Kathmandu Rim Walk - An excellent trekking day for all BGN military and civilian staff, organized and run superbly by OC Nepal Signal Troop.
- BGN Ball - A spectacular 'Bollywood' evening at the exclusive Hyatt Hotel with 250 people attending. Magnificent food, cocktails and entertainment. The event also raised funds for the GWT.
- Commander's Cup - Congratulations to BGP who won by the narrowest of margins and to the BGN/BGK team who competed with such determination, skill and in such a sportsmanlike manner.
- Armed Forces Day - An afternoon of fun with serving personnel, families and civilians getting together to celebrate and raise money for charity.
- BGN farewell to Col BG - A sad but fitting departure of Col Hayes on his final visit to Nepal.
- SAAFA Big Brew - A full day of fund-raising activities which was officially opened by Her Majesty's Ambassador to Nepal. The cake and Nepali food stalls run by the Wives Club proved to be extremely popular. The event broke all

British Gurkhas Pokhara

By Major R G J Beven RGR, OC BGP

Introduction

It has been a great privilege to have been extended as Officer Commanding British Gurkhas Pokhara (BGP) and SO2 Recruiting for the last two years. Unfortunately, this also means that I am best placed to summarize our achievements over this time. BGP has continued successfully to deliver British Gurkha Nepal's main outputs. Foremost of these has been recruiting Recruit Intakes 11 and 12 (the latter is still in progress at the time of writing). In addition, BGP continues to pay pensions to service pensioners in West Nepal; man the Brigade Records Office; support the activities of the Gurkha Welfare Scheme and Kadoorie Agricultural Aid Association; facilitate Nepali language training for British Officers and support Gurkha Contingent Singapore Police Force (GCSPF) recruiting.

People

As usual, 2010 saw the changeover of some key personnel. In May, Ops Coord BGP, Captain Alex Crawley 2 RGR left on posting. His wedding to Emily, who had spent most of the year

previous records by raising over NCRs 200,000. Well done and enormous thanks to everyone who donated, assisted with the organization and those who came and supported a very worthy cause.

- Farewells and Welcomes - Numerous social and cultural evenings to sadly say farewell to COS, Lt Col and Mrs Vickers, CNP Mrs and Mr Maynard, Civ Sec Mrs Jill Simonot and many others. A very warm welcome was given to the new Colonel Brigade of Gurkhas, Col Rigden and BGN COS, Lt Col Davis and Mrs Davis, CNP and many others.
- Regimental Birthdays - All four regimental birthdays were celebrated by parties within BGK fully supported by their Regimental Associations.
- Life Guard Course - To meet the H & S requirements, BGK conducted a full qualifying course for eight students. A very demanding course, I know I did it!
- Visits - A full array of visitors from Ministers, senior officers by the dozen and many, many more.

Despite the traffic congestion, pollution and claustrophobic feel of Kathmandu, it has a strange and often undefined appeal to many. Kathmandu was recently described as 'Marmite'. You either love it or hate it - thankfully for most the former. The future of BGK will depend on the final announcements of the Strategic Defence and Security Review. It could see the merging of BGN and BGK into a single entity and a reorganization of staff and responsibilities. Time will tell. Jai BGK

with him in BGP, took place in August. Alex handed over to Captain Mark Brightwell 2 RGR, a keen mountaineer who went on to complete a record number of climbs and treks during his tenure. In July 2010, Captain Tulbahadur Ale MBE handed over as QM BGP to Captain Buddhibahadur Bhandari. In December 2010, the Project Engineer, Captain Doc McKerr, handed over to Captain Jay Waller. Tragically, Captain (QGO) Aitabahadur Limbu, Area Recruiting Officer (East), was involved in a fatal motorbike crash in November 2010, casting a shadow over the rest of the year's recruiting.

January 2011 started with a superb hunt breakfast under blue Himalayan skies on the ridge above Lamachaur to say farewell to Lieutenant Colonel Adrian and Anne Griffith. His farewell was the culmination of ten years' service in Nepal: as Second in Command British Gurkhas Centre Pokhara, Chief of Staff BGN and Field Director GWS. His successor, Lieutenant Colonel Johnny Fenn QOGLR, took over as Field Director in March 11. Two new AROs were selected at the start of the year. Captain (QGO) Gajendra Dewan took over

as ARO (East) and Captain Pradip Limbu as ARO (Coord). In March 2011, Honorary Major Prembahadur Thapa handed over as Records Officer after 11 years in post to Captain (QGO) Gangabahadur Gurung. At the same time, Mr Bhupal Darlami assumed the post of BGP Pension Paying Officer. In May 11, Captain Debbahadur Ghale RGR handed over as 2IC BGP to Captain Rabindraprakash Tulachan RGR.

Recruiting

This article covers two recruit intakes: Recruit Intake 11 in 2010 and Recruit Intake 12 in 2011. A total of 11,623 Potential Recruits (PRs) reported to register for Recruit Intake 11 and a total of 9,714 PRs were successfully registered. As usual Regional Selection was conducted sequentially in BGP and British Gurkha Dharan (BGD) in August 10 and September 10. For a variety of reasons, only 520 British Army PRs out of 7,429 PRs who attempted Regional Selection passed the selection tests. The top 500 PRs in the order of merit (250 PRs from the East and 250 PRs from the West) were called forward to Central Selection. The GCSPF called forward 200 PRs to Central Selection (100 PRs from the East and 100 PRs from the West).

Central Selection began on 20 November 10 and ended on 18 December 10. The best 88 PRs from the East and the best 88 PRs from the West were selected to form the final 176 recruits for Recruit Intake 11. The GCSPF selected 80 recruits (40 from the East and 40 from the West).

The Recruit Intake 11 Attestation Parade was held on 31 December 2010 at BGP. For the second year running, BGP combined the parade with a Big Curry for guests, recruits and their families and raised £1,596 for ABF The Soldier's Charity.

Recruit Intake 12 is still going on at the time of writing. However, this year 7,819 PRs reported to register for selection and 6,851 PRs passed to attempt selection for 176 vacancies in the British Army and 60 in the GCSPF. This is a considerable drop in numbers attempting selection compared to previous years. The main reason for this is that this year PRs were required to be in possession of Nepalese passports for Registration. This additional cost, as well as continuing efforts on the part of Recruiting staff to stop applicants with false documents, means that only genuine PRs, who believe they have a good chance of passing, attempt selection. A total of 5,858 PRs reported for Regional Selection and of these 582 passed British Army selection and 120 passed GCSPF selection. The best 500 British Army and best 120 GCSPF PRs have been called forward to Central Selection.

As I have reported in previous articles, the vast majority of our PRs no longer come from rural backgrounds in our historical hill heartlands, but from the cities, towns and the terai where the standard of education far surpasses that which is available in the hills. Does this matter? The recruits we select continue to do well at the Infantry Training Centre Catterick and subsequently in their Battalions and Regiments, including on operations in Afghanistan. But I, like many others, feel we are

losing something intangible but important. Your environment shapes and moulds you and life in the hills especially so. The education system in the hills, especially English medium education, needs to be much improved if we are ever to get PRs from our traditional recruiting districts in any numbers again.

SLP Nepali Language Courses

Over the last two years, a total of four Standard Language Profile (SLP) 1 Nepali Language Courses have been run by Gurkha Language Wing in BGP and a total of 29 students have taken the language course. Winners of the JP Cross award for the best language students on the course have included: Lieutenant Sam Meadows 2 RGR, Miss Hattie Griffith BGP (daughter of Lieutenant Colonel Adrian and Anne Griffith), Lieutenant Tom Baker 1 RGR and 2nd Lieutenant James Duvall 1 RGR. Students also have to do the "doko" race or Stamina Assessment Test and complete it in less than 48 minutes. The following students came first in the doko on their course: Lieutenant Euan Waters 1 YORKS, Captain Jay Waller QGE, Lieutenant Rory Evans 1 RGR (who broke the course record for a British Officer with a time of 39 minutes and 26 seconds) and 2nd Lieutenant Jamie Garthside 1 RGR.

Pensions

BGP is also responsible for paying pensions to retired servicemen in West Nepal. In 2010, the BGP Pensions Office paid out a total of NCR 2,871,382,288 (£25,272,435) to a total of 10,007 ex-servicemen. Many of them still come to collect their pensions in person in the Pension Paying Compound at BGP. To date the BGP Pensions Office has paid out a total of NCR 2,436,992,216 (£ 20,851,851) to a total of 9,834 ex-servicemen in 2011.

Records Office

The Records Office houses the records of 37,900 Gurkhas from Independence until 2007. It has been particularly busy since the immigration rules were changed in 2009 to allow pre-97 Gurkhas to settle in the UK. The Records Office is often the first port of call in the process of an ex-Gurkha serviceman moving to the UK or Hong Kong. In 2010 the Records Office dealt with a total of 2,002 cases. This year they have dealt with a total of 1,897 cases to date.

Exercise KOHIMA TIGER

In April 2010, seven BGP personnel conducted a battlefield tour to Kohima in North East India travelling there by air, road and train. On arrival, the group commemorated the 66th anniversary of the battle by laying wreaths in remembrance of the fallen British, Indian, Gurkha and Allied soldiers and airmen who are buried in the Commonwealth War Cemetery in Kohima. This was followed by a three day battlefield tour.

(See separate article.)

Exercise HUMLA TIGER

In June 2011, Captain Buddhahadur Bhandari led a team of six Gurkha and British personnel on Exercise HUMLA TIGER, a three week adventure training exercise to the Limi Valley in Humla District in the Far West Region of Nepal. Humla is one of the most remote districts in Nepal and it is believed that this was the first official military adventure training exercise to have taken place there. The team flew into Simikot, the District Headquarters of Humla, and then trekked along the source of the great Karnali River to the village of Hilsa on the Tibetan border. From there they turned North West into the Limi valley, into countryside that was more Tibetan than Nepalese. They returned to Simikot from the Tshom Tsho Lakes over a series of high Himalayan passes up to 5,000 metres, a truly Himalayan experience. (See separate article).

Visitors

BGP continues to host large number of visitors and duty trekkers. In 2010, a total of 347 visitors passed through BGP, many of them staying in the Kali Khola Mess. There were numerous VIP visitors. In January 2010 the Adjutant General, Lieutenant General M F N Mans CBE, was the Inspecting Officer at the RI 10 Attestation Parade. In February the Chief of the General Staff and Colonel Commandant Brigade of Gurkhas, General Sir David Richards KBE CBE DSO ADC Gen, and Lady Richards visited for two days and took part in a magnificent hunt breakfast at Dhampus. In March BGP hosted a visit by Sir Michael, Bettina and Philip Kadoorie, Trustees of the Kadoorie Agricultural Aid Association that continues to do so much for ex-Gurkha servicemen and their communities in Nepal. In August the new British Ambassador to Nepal, HE Mr John Tucknott MBE, visited during Regional Selection (West). In October Lieutenant General Sir Philip Trousdell KBE CB, Chairman of the Residential Home Working Group, visited to preside over the opening of the Kulbir Thapa VC Residential Home. On 31 December General Officer Commanding 4 Division, Major General R L Kirkland CBE was the Inspecting Officer for the RI 11 Attestation Parade.

There have been a similar number of visitors during 2011. In February the Minister for Defence Personnel, Welfare and Veterans, Mr Andrew Robathan MP, visited. Not to be outdone, Labour dispatched the much prettier Shadow Foreign Office Minister, Emma Reynolds MP, who visited during Regional Selection (West) in August. Lieutenant General Sir David Bill KCB, Colonel QGE, and his family visited BGP on a farewell visit just before Dashain in September. At the time of writing General Officer Commanding Support Command, Major General C J Boag CBE is trekking between Lamjung and Kaski and visits are imminent from Commander 2 Brigade, DGARTD and CDS/Colonel Commandant.

BGP also continues to support the week-long GWS/BGN Conferences in October of each year, a major commitment that always culminates with the SSAFA Big Breakfast on the last morning.

Commander's Cups

Both the 2010 and 2011 Commander's Cups were held in BGP. Under Captain Deb Bahadur Ghale's careful leadership, BGP convincingly won the cup in May 2010, defeating BGN/BGK in six of the eight competitions. BGP also won the 2011 Commander's Cup in March 2011 in a close fought competition that was tied at the end but decided by BGP winning the tug of war in a nail-biting finale.

Miscellaneous

The massive 9.0 earthquake and tsunami in Japan in March 2011 gained a lot of attention in Nepal, where a major earthquake is long overdue. Following the disaster in Japan, BGP held a study day and rewrote and simplified its earthquake contingency plan. This is now rehearsed twice a year so that people know what to do when a major earthquake occurs. The 6.9 earthquake on 18 September 2011 on the Sikkim-Taplejung border (which was felt in Pokhara) was a further reminder that at some stage in the future the training will be required.

On 20 April 2011, Honorary Lieutenant (QGO) Tulbahadur Pun VC died suddenly whilst visiting his home village of Tiplyang in Myagdi District. A quick response from BGP meant that both BGN staff and members of the 6 GR Regimental Association were able to attend his cremation the next day. The funeral in his home village and cremation beside the Kali Gandaki was a very fitting send off for one of the last Gurkha VCs from the Second World War. (See separate article.)

Summary

This will be my last article as OC BGP as my FTRS attachment ends in March 2012. I first came to BGP as a relatively young and unmarried Captain as the Recruit Conducting Officer for Specialist Intake 92/93. I have visited BGP many times over the subsequent years, especially when I was OC Gurkha Company at ITC Catterick. It has been a great privilege to finish my Brigade service here as a relatively crusty and married Officer Commanding/Recruiting Officer. One of our greatest joys has been watching our children grown up here. I hope that one day they will be able to come back and visit and that BGP will still be the Recruiting and Welfare Centre for the Brigade where you can clearly hear the heartbeat of Nepal.

Reflections on Kohima

British Gurkhas Pokhara Battlefield Tour, 14-22 April 2010

By Major R G J Beven RGR with Captain D J McKerr QGE

Introduction

As I write I am looking at a photograph we took of the Kohima battlefield from near the Cameron Memorial on Naga Hill. It is a cloudy April day with grey cumulus threatening rain. In the background is the dark jungle covered peak of Mount Pulebadze. A tall radio mast now stands above the village of Jotsoma where 161st Indian Infantry Brigade formed its defensive box and allowed 24th Indian Mountain Regiment to bring down supporting fire to assist the besieged garrison. As you come down the jungle-clad slopes of Aradura Spur, where Captain Jack Randle won his Victoria Cross, the jungle now gives way to Officers' quarters and the rust-red roof of the Catholic Church. In the photograph Kohima Ridge forms a gentle parabola from Naga Hill to Aradura Spur but the ridge is now covered with an ugly rash of buildings. There are still some pink, green and yellow splashes of simple Naga homes made of wood and corrugated tin and occasionally, in Naga Village, you come across an Angami house with its traditional crossed roof beams. In the heart of the photograph is a green oasis of trees on Garrison Hill that is the Commonwealth War Cemetery. The azaleas were all in flower in riotous pink when we visited and the roses lovingly tended in their Regimental plots. It is difficult to imagine that just over a half century ago two fading empires collided along their peripheries on these hills and that so many of their sons lie there still.

The study of former battles and campaigns can provide insights and tactical lessons relevant to today's campaigns. The Battle of Imphal in 1944 was an excellent example of this tenet. General Slim (later Field Marshal, 1st Viscount Slim) remembered the advice he had been given by a Chinese General on how to defeat the Japanese. He was told that the Japanese always planned operations on the slimmest of logistic margins. If they could be held long enough they would over-reach themselves, run out of supplies, and could be defeated. Slim recalled this advice when he drew up 14th Army's plan of battle for Imphal.

What Slim had not counted on was 31st Japanese Division crossing the Somra Hills, in a march as epic as Hannibal's across the Alps, to besiege the Garrison in Kohima and cut the vital road and supply line to Imphal. The battles of Kohima-Imphal, which were contemporaneous, are excellent examples of planned and reactive battles.

Kohima is a not an easy battle to study. It involved the best part of three Divisions: 31st Japanese Division, 2nd British Division and Brigades from 5th and 7th Indian Divisions. The fighting went on for 64 days over incredibly difficult terrain and involved many Regiments fighting different actions

simultaneously. In order to study this complex battle effectively we used the 'Functions in Combat', the British Army's principles of war in the military decision making process, as a framework. Our reflections are summarised below.

Command and Control

At the highest level, the Battle of Kohima-Imphal was fought between Generals Slim and Mutaguchi. It can be said that Slim nearly lost the battle of Kohima by failing to realise that a division could move across the Somra Hills to Kohima. However, Mutaguchi and Sato definitely lost the battle, largely due to their inflexible style of command. Lieutenant General Sato did not utilise auftragstaktik or mission command to achieve his commander's intent.

If Lieutenant General Sato had masked Kohima and pushed on to attack Dimapur the Japanese could have captured the vital supplies they needed and denied them to 4th Corps in Imphal. However, he had been told to capture and hold Kohima and this is precisely what he tried to do, failing to exploit the opportunity to achieve his commander's intent by taking Dimapur instead.

Once Slim realised that his plan was in danger, he rapidly corrected it by moving 161st Indian Infantry Brigade to Dimapur by air and 2nd British Division to Dimapur by rail whilst flying elements of 5th and 7th Indian Divisions to reinforce Imphal.

Slim was also a master at improving morale. If soldiers in the front line were on half rations he made sure that staff officers in rear headquarters were also on half rations. This usually meant that problems were rapidly resolved.

Information and Intelligence

14th Army had very good intelligence. At the start of the battle V Force agents, patrols, scouts and local tribes all provided information about the Japanese crossing the Chindwin River and advancing on Kohima-Imphal. 14th Army also had a good system of acquiring and exploiting information. Dead Japanese were searched for documents and maps which were rapidly sent back for Intelligence staff to translate and analyse. At the Battle of Sangshak, 50th Indian Parachute Brigade recovered the 15th Army plan of attack from a dead Japanese officer. Despite being surrounded by Japanese forces they realised the value of this information and managed to smuggle it out. Slim was able to exploit this intelligence and it allowed him to readjust his plan of battle by reinforcing Kohima and Imphal.

Firepower

Kohima would almost certainly have fallen if it had not been for the indirect firepower provided by 24th Indian Mountain Regiment based inside 161st Indian Infantry Brigade's defensive box at Jotsoma, two miles across the valley from Kohima. Time and again, Japanese attacks on Kohima Garrison were broken up in the FUP by rapid and accurate artillery support.

Although the Allies had tanks it was very difficult to use them in the mountainous terrain of Nagaland. Often roads had to be built specially to bring them into action. Where they could be used they were a decisive factor, particularly at the battle of the tennis court on Garrison Hill, where a Lee-Grant tank was finally manoeuvred into a position to blast the Japanese out of their bunkers.

Protection

Troops that were dug in, especially in deep bunkers with overhead protection, were relatively safe from the effects of indirect fire. This is why it took so long for 2nd British Division to retake Kohima Ridge from the Japanese. As soon as the indirect fire lifted, the Japanese would pop out of their bunkers and start firing at attacking troops.

Tanks were very useful in attacking bunkers because they offered protection against small arms and indirect fire. Tanks often played a crucial part in many attacks at Kohima despite the limitations on their mobility.

Mobility

Slim did not believe that a division could move across the mountainous jungle from the Chindwin to Kohima. He was wrong. 31st Division managed to move its forces along jungle tracks and used mules, porters and elephants to carry their supplies.

In order to defeat 31st Division, the British had to outflank the dug-in Japanese positions by moving on foot through the dense jungle-covered mountains. Navigation was extremely difficult and often units relied on local Nagas to act as their guides.

Finally, victory at Kohima-Imphal was achieved by Slim's ability to reinforce and resupply Imphal and Dimapur by air. He was able to reinforce and support Kohima Garrison by redeploying units such as 161st Indian Infantry Brigade, moving them from the Arakan to Dimapur by air at short notice. This allowed Kohima Garrison to be held until further reinforcements arrived.

Combat Service Support

Slim had not forgotten the lesson he had learnt from the Chinese General about defeating the Japanese. At Kohima-Imphal he exploited the fact that the Japanese operated with limited scales of supplies. On the Allied side, the supply depot at Dimapur was two miles wide and 11 miles long - a lot of combat service support - with a railhead and airfields. Slim deliberately designed a plan of battle that shortened his supply line whilst lengthening that of the Japanese. When the Japanese failed to capture the supply dumps at Imphal and Dimapur they literally starved. During the battle the 14th Army also used aircraft to re-supply and reinforce their troops, something that had not been done before on such a large scale.

Conclusion

Although 'Functions in Combat' are a relatively new concept in British military doctrine they are applicable to a study of Kohima. Even though Kohima was a completely different type of operational environment to ongoing British Army operations in Afghanistan lessons can still be drawn. The first is the over-arching importance of intelligence to plan and conduct operations. To this can be added the utilisation of indigenous forces to help procure information and the ability to translate, analyse and use it. The main difference is that 14th Army's objectives were very clear: to defeat a brutal, expansionist enemy. The objectives in Afghanistan are far more complex and make the prosecution of the campaign more difficult. As one of General Stanley McChrystal's staff officers recently commented, victory in Afghanistan "... is not going to look like a win, smell like a win, or taste like a win."



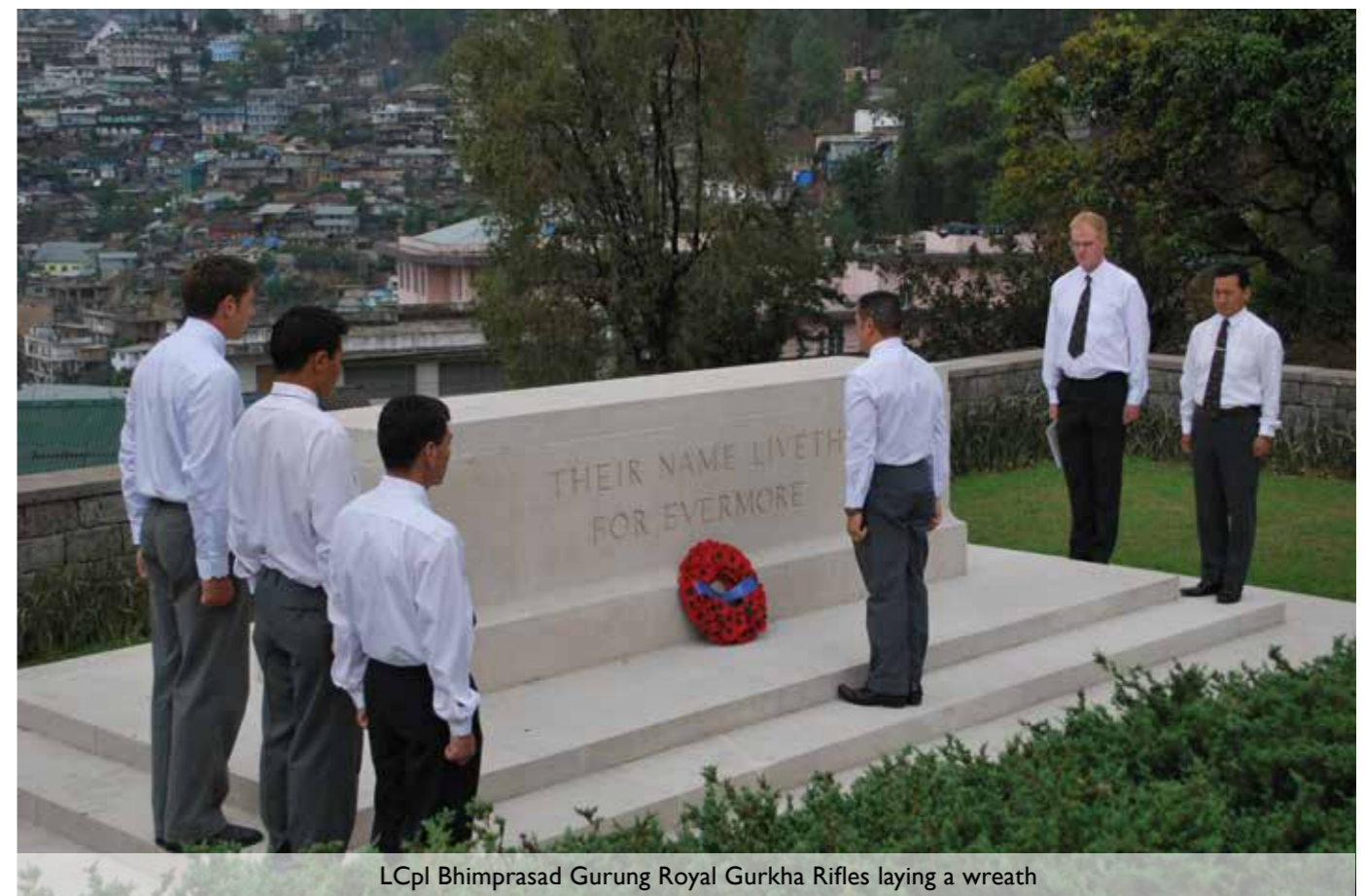
Sgt Manprasad Gurung Queen's Gurkha Signals lays flowers



Marking the Tennis Court at the Commonwealth War Cemetery, Kohima



The Ex KOHIMA TIGER team in Naga shawls outside the Deputy Commissioner's Bungalow



LCpl Bhimprasad Gurung Royal Gurkha Rifles laying a wreath

Welfare

By SSgt Madan Rai GSPS, ABUWO BGN

In previous years, the Welfare Office was known as Serving Soldiers Welfare. From 1 April 2007, it became known as the Brigade and Unit Welfare Office (BUWO). The fundamental role of the Brigade and Unit Welfare Officer is to provide welfare support on various aspects and issues such as: Notification of Casualty (NOTICAS), Dangerously Ill Forwarding of Relatives (DILFOR), marital problems, land disputes and compassionate cases for serving soldiers and dependants of the Brigade of Gurkhas, including those who transferred to the wider Army.

The management team consists of four staff - BUWO Hon Maj Hitman Gurung, ABUWO SSgt Madan Rai and two Locally Employed Civilians (LECs), Mr Yogendramani Tamang and Mrs Mani Shrestha.

Currently there are 20 Area Welfare Centres (AWC) established in Nepal and India (19 in Nepal and one in Darjeeling, India). They are locally administered by the Area Welfare Officer (AWO), under the command of the Gurkha Welfare Scheme (GWS).

For all welfare cases outside the Kathmandu Valley, a serviceman's family should report to the nearest Welfare

Centre, and for those in the Kathmandu Valley they should report directly to the BUWO.

Area Welfare Officers will examine each individual case and forward it to the BUWO in Kathmandu. On receipt of a letter with the AWC's recommendations, the BUWO will assess and verify the case with the appropriate organization before forwarding it to the respective units. However, as regards medical cases, only a Civilian Medical Practitioner (CMP) can categorize and recommend compassionate leave on receipt of requests from any organization involved in the case. On the CMP's recommendation, the BUWO will release a signal to the Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC) for authority and to the unit for information and action.

Likewise, on receipt of a NOTICAS signal from the JCCC, BUWO/ABUWO will act as Casualty Notification Officer/Casualty Visiting Officer (CNO/CVO). For the next-of-kin who reside outside of Kathmandu Valley, the nearest AWOs will act as CNO.

The locations of the AWCs with their telephone and facsimile numbers are as follows:

AWC's in West Nepal

Bheri - 083 - 520396
 Gulmi - 079 - 520107
 Butwal - 071 - 540880
 Syangja - 063 - 420208
 Kaski - 061 - 521075
 Tanahun - 065 - 560185
 Lamjung - 066 - 520185
 Gorkha - 064 - 420272
 Chitwan - 056 - 521592

AWC's in East Nepal

Bagmati - 014 - 371599
 Rumjatar - 037 - 540113
 Diktel - 036 - 420117
 Bhojpur - 029 - 420101
 Khandbari - 029 - 560101
 Dharan - 025 - 520796
 Tehrathum - 026 - 460009
 Taplejung - 024 - 460107
 Phidim - 24 - 520101
 Damak - 023 - 580175

India

Darjeeling - 0091 - 354 2254965

As in previous years, this year has been busy for the Welfare Office in Nepal. The statistics on all welfare cases from 1 January - 30 November 2011 are as follows:

- Cat A (close relative very seriously ill) - 14 (seven relatives died during soldiers' leave)
- Cat B (close relative seriously ill) - 123 (16 relatives died during soldiers' leave, 53 other deaths)
- Cat C (other welfare cases) - 39
- DILFOR - six
- NOTICAS - 15 (five notified by BGN, three notified by the GWS, four notified by soldier's unit, three notified by welfare staff)
- Aeromed - one
- Repatriation - one
- Repatriation UK - one
- Funeral UK - one (non operational death)

Sadly, Rfn Vijay Rai from 2 RGR died on operations this year. He was repatriated to Nepal on 9 November 2011 with the funeral being held on the same day at his home town of Dharan.

Gurkha Settlement Project, Nepal

The United Kingdom Immigration Rules were amended in October 2004 to enable post-1997 Gurkhas with at least four years service with Her Majesty's Armed Forces to apply for settlement in the UK within two years of being discharged. All ex-Gurkha soldiers who retired on or after 1 July 1997 were given two years in which to make an application. In May 2009, this was supplemented by discretionary guidance outside the normal Immigration Rules in which ex-members of the Brigade of Gurkhas with at least four years of service who retired before 1 July 1997 were allowed to apply for settlement in the UK. Under this discretionary guidance, an ex-Gurkha can also apply for settlement for his wife (only one, if he has more than one wife) and children below 18 years of age. A marriage must have been formed at least two years before the application. A widow of a former Gurkha who had served for at least four years and who was discharged before July 1997 can also apply to settle in the UK.

If the application is successful, either Indefinite Leave to Enter (ILE) or Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR), commonly known as 'settlement visas', will be granted. Normally these visas are made valid until the individual's passport expires. The ILR/ILE visa will then be transferred to the individual's new passport. Applying for a settlement visa means that the applicants are intending to make the UK their permanent home. There is no deadline to make an application for a settlement visa. Once a visa has been issued and if there is a significant delay between the dates of issue of the settlement visa and arrival in the UK, the individual may be questioned by an Immigration Officer. If this is the case, they will need to satisfy the Immigration Officer that they are travelling to live in the UK or they may have their visa cancelled.

The Gurkha Settlement Office (GSO) was established on 5 October 2009 and operates at British Gurkhas Nepal

(BGN), Jawalakhel, Lalitpur. The GSO is open on Mondays to Fridays, 0800 hrs to 1700 hrs. The main role of the GSO is to provide free advice and assist former Gurkha soldiers and their dependants wishing to settle in the UK. It provides factual information so that ex-Gurkhas can make an informed choice about whether or not to go to the UK. It also provides a check list of the documents required and assists individuals to complete the application forms. Those who decide to move to the UK can then ask the GSO to include them in the process for the fast tracking of their National Insurance Number (NINO) applications. The GSO is independent of the United Kingdom Border Agency (UKBA); it neither influences an individual's decision nor provides any legal advice or assurances. However, where it feels that a retired Gurkha is likely to face serious difficulties adapting to life in the UK, it will advise him accordingly.

The GSO is run by the following staff:

- CI (Retd) Rumbahadur Gurung - Office Manager
- Capt (Retd) Khembahadur Thapa - Liaison Officer (GWS)
- Ms Jamuna Gurung - Senior Clerk
- Ms Sabina Thapa - Senior Clerk
- Ms Ranjita Rai - Senior Clerk

In summary, the headline figures as at 2 December 2011 were as follows:

- 25,230 - Total number of Visits (some of them are repeat visitors)
- 8,611 - Total number of Registrations (including 3,271 Main Applicants)
- 3,915 - Total number of Visa Application Forms completed
- 2,243 - Total number of Visa Approvals reported
- 2,683 - Total number of NINO Fast Track

Nepal SSAFA Big Brew 2011

By Marion MacFayden, SSAFA BGN

Introduction

SSAFA Big Brew is an annual fund raising event held all round the world where there are British Forces. It is organized by the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association - Forces Help (SSAFA) - a UK charity committed to supporting Serving and Ex-Service personnel, their families and communities.

All funds raised by the SSAFA Committee in Nepal during these events stay in Nepal and are used to help the serving community, ex-serving personnel, their families and communities with such things as livestock - goats, pigs and buffaloes - to help generate income. Some who were given money towards skills training have now set up their own businesses and others were provided with wheelchairs, crutches, bedding and clothing. Those we help are usually from remote and hilly areas of Nepal and are either welfare pensioners or non-pensioners. The Big Brew in Nepal is held in two locations - British Gurkhas Kathmandu (BGK) and British Gurkhas Pokhara (BGP) - and was held on 23 September and 13 October 2011 respectively.

BGK SSAFA Big Brew

The BGK Big Brew had two phases. The morning phase targeted BGN staff, including serving and Locally Employed Civilians (LEC). Both Nepali and British food was available to purchase along with tea and coffee. There was also a table top sale of clothes, shoes and books. Raffle tickets were also on sale for the afternoon prize draw.

The afternoon phase started with the British Ambassador cutting the ribbon and declaring the event open. It was a fun-filled afternoon with lots of games like hit the can, football, tombola, golf, guess the weight of the cake, tabletop sales, a raffle and face painting. The tombola (lucky draw) and raffle were the most popular, especially with the LECs and outside guests. There were many excellent prizes available, which included a diamond ring, and a return flight to Pokhara for two people.

Serving personnel, their partners and the LECs were very supportive and helpful throughout - the event was a huge success. Credit for this goes to the Deputy Chief of Staff and OC BGK and his staff for running the event in a well organized

manner. The onerous task of encouraging and collecting raffle prizes was coordinated by the SSAFA Committee members and BGN ladies. The ladies also spent many hours preparing delicious food to sell and helped to run the stalls on the day. Volunteers from the LEC community and Nepal Signal Troop also helped with the different games, making the day very enjoyable for all those attending. Apart from the people already mentioned, there were many others who helped to make this event a huge success both by organizing and being part of the day's activities. The SSAFA Community Nurse Practitioner was in attendance throughout, whilst also helping to promote the work of SSAFA especially within Nepal.

BGP SSAFA Big Breakfast

The SSAFA Big Breakfast was organized on 13 October 2011 to coincide with the Gurkha Welfare Scheme (GWS) Conference. Here the format was a breakfast served at the cookhouse during the morning break on the last day. The attendees, who were each invited to make a donation, were the delegates of the GWS Conference including Area Welfare Officers and visitors from the UK. Local staff from BGP, GWS and Kadoorie also attended the event. This year, OC BP and 2IC BGP organized the event slightly differently from previous years. There was no raffle but instead there was a 'Golden District Game' where 75 people could 'buy' a district for NCR 1,000.00. The lucky winner received a tola of gold, with the runner up receiving two tola of silver and third place receiving a bottle of wine. There was also a 'guess the weight of the goat'. There was an art exhibition of Maithili art which could be purchased on the day with contributions going to SSAFA.

The day was a huge success with credit going to OC BGP, 2IC BGP, QM BGP and BGP ladies who helped to organize and run the day. Master Chef BGP and his staff did a splendid job preparing lots of tasty food while the ladies made traditional 'selroti' which proved very popular.

Many thanks go to all those attending BGK Big Brew and BGP Big Breakfast and giving generously to raise SSAFA funds. Approximately £2,800 was raised from both events.

Where has the time gone?

By Major Kevin Thorpe AGC (SPS), RAO BGN

It all started back in early 1997; I was in a cold and damp Catterick Garrison preparing for an operational tour with the Royal Artillery. I received a call from my desk officer asking if I would be interested in a tour with the Gurkhas? Having previously served in Hong Kong in 1990 with 1st Battalion The Royal Regiment of Wales, a chance to return would be fantastic. But wait, the British were pulling out. So then it must be Brunei. Think again. Church Crookham? Kathmandu was not the first place to come to mind. And so it was the chance not only to serve with the Brigade of Gurkhas but also to do so in their home country. The opportunity was grasped, and so the preparations started and the beginning of what would be a long and extremely enjoyable 15 years.

Kim and I arrived in Nepal in September 1997, having done the Op tour, a few days before experiencing our first Dashain. The two children were at school in UK and would join us for holidays. A two year tour in Nepal had begun. The Hong Kong withdrawal had been completed and Nepal leave was concentrated on supporting troops from UK and Brunei. With soldiers being discharged in Nepal, Re-Orientation Courses were an essential part of life in the camp. Preparation for a second career was, as it is today, extremely important. Pensions' entitlement, final salary and DCRG were the topics of the day. Payment, administration and audit of the Gurkha Pension System in Nepal were an essential part of the job. The payment of pensions through Area Welfare Centres was in its infancy, a marked and essential requirement in the care of our ex-servicemen. The repetitive nature of the tasks was easily compensated by the opportunity to meet regularly with ex-servicemen and their families across Nepal and India; the stories and tales from soldiers of all ages from 35 to 95 and beyond were always fascinating. My first visit to East Nepal and Darjeeling was undertaken within the first month, I just couldn't believe how lucky I was. Would I wake up and find it all a dream? But like all good things it would end very quickly. Two years passed in no time and in December 1999 I left Nepal, a sad occasion, thinking I might never return.

History, however, repeated itself, this time in the summer of 2002, again in Catterick. Would I like to return to Kathmandu? Could they get no one else to volunteer? After all Local Overseas Allowance had increased!! Kim and I had no hesitation; the children, now at university, could still visit. We left the freezing Catterick weather behind and arrived in Kathmandu in February 2003. The Nepal Pension Paying Scheme had been introduced, and the Brigade was still going through some transition and was at the forefront of operations in the Balkans. The job had changed; I took on the role of Education Officer, and responsibility for the payment of Gurkha Education Allowance, the ETS post having been dis-established. The Far East Prisoner of War study had concluded and a decision had been made to pay compensation to those living in Nepal.

The country was certainly in some turmoil due to the Royal Massacre, the Maoist Insurgency and the continued level of poverty across the country. My experience from my first tour was of vast benefit, not just to myself but, so I have been told, to British Gurkhas Nepal and to the wider Brigade. This tour I managed to squeeze out to two and a half years and left Kathmandu for a more operationally focused tour in Hereford. Surely this would be goodbye, a sad day when we drove out of Camp on that wet July morning. Happily, even in Hereford, I was able to maintain the contact with the Brigade; a number of Gurkhas had passed selection and were in the Regiment. I was also able to work closely with MOD Pensions on the writing and implementation of the Gurkha Offer to Transfer and preparation for the move to the Armed Forces Pension Scheme from the Gurkha Pension Scheme.

During my three year tour in Hereford I visited Nepal on a private visit with my family, assuming I would never have the opportunity to serve there again.

January 2008, Hereford, raining. Would I think about going back to Nepal, a third time? Surely someone would want the job, even though Local Overseas Allowance had been just about removed. No I was the only one who might be interested. Again, little hesitation, we would go back. Can I have a three year tour this time? Yes. This time the children were working. So it was, I arrived in Kathmandu in July 2008 some three years after saying a sad farewell. There had been many changes. The new Gurkha Terms and Conditions of Service and Gurkha settlement in UK saw a reduction of former Gurkhas working in the camp. There were, fortunately, some familiar faces, Col Jeremy Ellis (QG Signals) was still there as the Commander and Defence Attaché, Lt Col Adrian Griffith (6 GR/1 RGR) was the Field Director GWS - he had been the COS on my middle tour. Maj (Retd) Karna Tamang was still the CLO. And many, many LECs remained. Could this third tour be as good as the first two?

We moved back into our old house, OMQ 2, the Paymaster's House. It was just as we had left it in 1999 and in 2005; even the house staff were the same. We arrived at 1700 hrs, went next door for a drink (or two) and a meal with the QM and by the time we returned "home" at around 2100 hrs, our bags had been unpacked and our clothes put away. I knew I was home.

This tour would be very different, GTACOS had taken the serving Brigade forward and put the soldiers on equal terms with the British Army, Immigration would be extended to those pre 97 servicemen. Pensions for post 1997 retirees were changed. Gurkha Pensions had received a massive boost and another new payment system had been introduced. FENAS would revolutionize the way pensions were paid - more bank paid pensioners and the additional responsibility for Pokhara

personnel. The Brigade was heavily involved in Operations, fully committed to Afghanistan and still contributing to Iraq. Casualties and compassionate cases increased, and it was in this area that I had the honour to work closely with the Brigade Unit & Welfare Officer, Major (Retd) Hitman Gurung. We had met previously on an earlier tour when he was GM at Pokhara and AWO with GWS. I was able to get involved with working with the Regimental Associations Nepal and also alongside colleagues in the GWS. AWC pension paying continues and the support given by GWS in this area is beyond recognition.

I will leave British Gurkhas Nepal in February 2012, and this time it will be final. My retirement in August will ensure that I don't return as RAO BGN. I will have served almost nine years, spread over 15, as RAO BGN, or Paymaster as the RAN still refer to me, worked for five Commanders, seven Chiefs of Staff and eight Gurkha Majors, including the latest, Major Hitman Gurung (QG Signals), who was OC Nepal Signals Troop when I arrived in 1997.

Many readers will know that I enjoy my running. I have covered thousands of miles in Kathmandu and Nepal, completed the Kathmandu and Everest Marathons and

pleasingly encouraged others to do the same. What a fantastic way to see the outlying villages and meet some wonderful people.

I leave Nepal with great happiness as I look to the future, with some sadness in memory of friends made and some who are no longer with us. Nepal, Kathmandu and Gurkhas leave a lasting impression, I am a better person for having met and worked with the Nepalese, and, even as the Brigade moves towards UK, I urge you all not to forget where you are from - you will return and you never know I may be here myself.

I leave you with this short prayer given to me by a dear friend to BGN and myself, Padre John Jamieson:

Serenity Prayer

*Lord, grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change,
courage to change the things I can
and wisdom to know the difference.*

Jai BGN!

Communications Systems in British Gurkhas Nepal

By Capt Kedar Rai, OC Nepal Signal Troop

Introduction

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 providing administrative support to units of the Brigade of Gurkhas (BG). As ever, BGN has continued its unblemished service throughout the year, mainly focusing on the core areas of Gurkha recruitment, facilitating transit, and welfare support to BG units.

Accomplishing these functions without an extensive communication infrastructure would not be possible. Thus, in order to help BGN carry out its core functions, Nepal Signal Troop (NST), an element of Queen's Gurkha Signals, is embedded within the HQ for the provision of Communication Information Systems (CIS). In this context, the NST is responsible for providing uninterrupted, robust and reliable CIS capability and support 24/7. NST is primarily responsible for facilitating communications which allow the Commander BGN and his Staff to achieve their missions and tasks. In addition NST also supports the Area Welfare Centres (AWCs) on behalf of the Gurkha Welfare Scheme (GWS). Currently, NST can offer a range of communication services from satellite phones to Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT) Satellite Rear Link, as well as diverse CIS equipment. Below are some of the key capabilities:

Satellite Service

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 the UK via satellite. The VSAT is the backbone of communications used in BGN. In technical terms it provides a gateway for the Land Command Secure System Restricted (LCSSR), Joint Personal Administration (JPA), Unicom, Realities (PABX) Telephone Exchange, Multi Platform Terminal Executive (MPTE) for messaging service, Video Conferencing (VTC), fax and Defence Fixed Terminal System (DFTS) services. Unfortunately, users at British Gurkhas Pokhara (BGP) and British Gurkhas Dharan (BGD) are unable to use these services due to the unavailability of VSAT terminals at their locations.

Emailing Service

BGN has been limited to 24 LCSS(R) terminals which are available only in British Gurkhas Kathmandu (BGK). Those without an LCSS(R) terminal at BGK and BGP, have been totally reliant upon the Broadband Internet System (Local Area Network) provided by World Link Communications Private Limited, a civilian internet provider. As such, there are currently 134 Internet (bgn.com) terminals at BGK and 83 Internet (bgn.com) terminals at the BGP with a speed of 512/640 kbps at each site. Besides these figures, BGD has a number of standalone terminals connected to an Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line (ASDL) internet service. Taking into consideration the existing

bgn/bgp.com users, the allocation of the new DII (F) will not cater for all users within BGN. Therefore, a number of personnel both at BGK and BGP will have to remain on the existing bgn/bgp.com service even after the implementation of DII (F).

Telephone Service

BGK has access to, via satellite, military DFTS lines which allow users to call back to UK units, whereas BGP and BGD are unfortunately currently bereft of this service. However, in the near future such facilities will be available once the planned additional VSAT is commissioned in BGP. In this context, Nepal Telecommunication (NT) plays a key role in the support of telecommunications used within the BGN organization. Should the VSAT fail, then BGN has a number of leased lines both at BGK and BGP from NT for alternative means of communications. These lines can also be used for national and international calls, if required. Taking into account the significant number of telephone lines being used or distributed, the NT lines 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 the 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 the NT provided lines.

Satellite Phones

The NST also holds a total of 18 satellite phones for emergency purposes. The existence of this service has not only proved to be one of the critical communication assets in BGN's Contingency Plan, it is also an essential asset for those personnel conducting official duty treks in remote areas of the country. Similarly each AWC has also been issued with one set of satellite phones, for use should their primary means of communication fail to operate.

Area Welfare Centres

In the event of an emergency, NST on behalf of HQ GWS has established an insecure communications network by deploying High Frequency (HF) radios to all 19 AWCs except the AWC in Darjeeling. The main purpose of the HF radios is to establish both voice and data link between HQ GWS and the AWCs. This network is monitored around the clock and tested twice daily. Although the exchange of information between BGN, HQ GWS and the AWCs is generally carried out by the use of email or telephone, the AWCs are still heavily reliant upon the HF radios for any Situation Reports (SITREPs), with the Satellite phones kept in reserve. Although most of the AWCs have access to Dial-Up Internet and fax machines, the poor quality of telephone lines normally precludes full usage. Every year an element of NST, under the auspices of Exercise PURBA/PASHCHIM SIGNAL KHUKRI, deploy around the country and conduct annual mandatory CIS inspections as well as servicing, and give refresher training to all AWC Staff, in order to sustain these vital communication capabilities. The HF

radios have also played a key role in the passage of information pertaining to formal Signal Messages between Communication Centre (COMMCEN) Kathmandu and COMMCEN Pokhara.

Contingency Planning

BGN has a number of contingency plans should any catastrophic human disasters such as an earthquake, civil disorder or any other incident occur. In all scenarios, NST provides CIS services to establish communications within the BGN organization, reach back to the UK, reach forward to 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 BGN would deploy to the purpose-built Operations Cell where they will be provided 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 two Light Weight Recce Node (LWRN) detachments. The LWRN is used to provide data and voice capabilities both in secure and non-secure modes. All other CIS capabilities will also be utilised to facilitate the passage of information to other BGN locations and then further forward to the AWCs. All these measures are articulated in the BGP Contingency Plan as well.

DII (F)

BGN may be one of the last establishments using LCSS (R). However, change is near at hand with the planned migration to the Defence Information Infrastructure, DII (F), in the first quarter of 2012.

The current plan is for 88 plus two Secret DII (F) terminals in BGK, which includes HQ BGN and the Defence Infrastructure Organisation Nepal (DIO (N)), and 26 at BGP with the allocation of two terminals for GWS. Additionally two mobile terminals will be placed within the Defence Section at the British Embassy, one terminal at Movement Detachment Kathmandu and one terminal at BGD. The implementation of DII (F) at BGN will certainly be a step forward in the provision of Information and Communications Services (ICS) to the Staff.

Conclusion

In summary, without a doubt the use of ICS has become the backbone of HQ BGN, enabling it to accomplish its core functions and assist the AWCs. In all honesty it can sometimes be quite tricky to meet the users' demands or resolve a problem due to the various types of Information Technology (IT) equipment available and the different bits of software being used. This, compounded with the sometimes fragile political/security situation within Nepal, creates a unique and challenging environment. To improve upon this, there is currently a plan to standardize all ICS equipment where possible. This will doubtless be a long and difficult process but one well worth doing. The communication infrastructure at BGN has definitely improved over the last few years, and the introduction of DII (F) will take it a step further towards being on par with the rest of the military.

Exercise PURBA SIGNAL KHUKRI

By LCpl Mahendra Ale, Nepal Signal Troop

Exercise PURBA SIGNAL KHUKRI II Phase I (PSK II/1) was conducted at four Area Welfare Centres (AWC) in the Eastern Region of Nepal. The main aims were to carry out annual maintenance, inspect all Communications and Information Systems (CIS) deployed at the AWCs and provide refresher training to AWC Staff where necessary. The Team was led by OC NST, Capt Kedar Rai, assisted by Cpl Ramesh Rai as Training NCO and LCpl Mahendra Ale as Technician. The team deployed to AWCs Tehrathum, Taplejung, Phidim and Damak over the period 7 - 16 June 11.

On 7 June, the team departed from British Gurkhas Kathmandu (BGK) for Biratnagar airport and were met at the airport by British Gurkhas Dharan (BGD) Movement Detachment (MovDet). After arriving at BGD, the team was met by the OC BGD, Mr Chandra Rasailey, and the Porter Major who briefed the team about porters deploying with the team. The team soon departed for AWC Dharan where they were heartily welcomed by Senior Area Welfare Officer (SAWO), Hon Maj Chandraprasad Limbu MBE. After having had a briefing from the SAWO on the AWC, the team started to co-ordinate administrative arrangements for their onward journey.

In the early morning of 8 June, the team and porters departed for AWC Tehrathum in Land Rovers to start the trek onwards to AWC Phidim. Upon arrival at the AWC Tehrathum at approx 1200 hrs, the team was warmly welcomed by AAWO WO2 (Retd) Narayan Tamang. We were particularly glad to meet the AAWO as he is ex QG Signals and following a brief chat with him, the team started to carry out their task of conducting the CIS inspection and maintenance where necessary. Following the completion of the inspection the team made a short visit to Jiri Khimdi and Myanglung bazaar which was worthwhile for members who had never been there. The AWC covers 56 Village Development Committees (VDC) and currently serves some 200 Service Pensioners (SP) and 233 Welfare Pensioners (WP).

On 9 June, the team left for AWC Taplejung, beginning with a steep trek uphill from the Myanglung bazaar (there were to be no more cosy Land Rovers). The weather was not ideal as it rained most of the afternoon, although it didn't stop the team from traversing the undulating terrain. After having had lunch at Chauki Bhanjyang and a ten hours trek, we eventually arrived at Gupha Pokhari (2,890m), where we stayed overnight. During the evening, the team came to know that the locals were familiar with Gurkhas, Kadoorie and the Gurkha Welfare Scheme (GWS), as the organization had developed a mini-hydro electricity project for them.

After a cup of Yak milk tea early in the morning on 10 June, the team continued its trek, aiming to reach Dobhan by evening, taking into consideration the porters' speed. After walking through dense jungle and valleys for about two hours, we could see all the way down hill leading to Dobhan via Gorji

Siran village. It took us all day to reach Dobhan - a very long down hill walk!! We assumed it would be fairly easy to trek down hill, but that wasn't the case. Walking down hill all day is something that once experienced is enough for a life time.

While walking down to Dobhan, we could clearly make out Taplejung on the plateau of a massive hill on top of which Pathibhara Temple could be seen far above the horizon. At approx 1700 hrs, we finally reached Dobhan, where we stayed overnight, and one of the porters received treatment for a knee problem.

Early in the morning of 11 June, we continued our trek to AWC Taplejung. After three hours of walking we reached the AWC, which covers 50 VDCs and provides a service to some 317 Service Pensioners, 239 Welfare Pensioners and ten Non-Pensioners (pre/post 1947). AWO Hon Lt (QGO) Punendraprasad Limbu and his staff were awaiting our arrival. After lunch we changed HF Dipole guy ropes, fixed minor faults and made sure all the CIS equipment held at the AWC was to the standard required. In the afternoon, we began preparing ourselves for our next trek which was going to be for two long days. Later in the afternoon, we were joined by the new Kadoorie Rep at BGN, Capt (Retd) Al Howarth, and had dinner with him and the AWC staff. Capt Howarth Saheb kindly agreed to take the injured porter in his Land Rover as he was leaving the following morning for AWC Dharan.

On 12 June, we continued our trek to AWC Phidim; another long day of trekking under hot and humid conditions. That day, we reached Panchami just before last light. The following day we continued our trek and reached Phidim, where we were warmly greeted by AWO Maj (Retd) Dalbahadur Limbu MVO and his staff, who were busy at the time distributing Welfare Pensions. This was another opportunity for us to talk to the Welfare Pensioners. Later that evening we were joined by the Rural Water and Sanitation Programme team, who were in the area working on a water project. The AWC is situated not far away from Phidim bazaar, covering 65 VDCs from the whole of Panchthar and half of the Ilam district to take care of 116 Service Pensioners and 270 Welfare Pensioners including ten with Disabled Support Grants (DSG).

From this AWC onwards we didn't require the porters, so we bade them farewell and sent them back to BGD. However, it was almost mid afternoon before the transport arrived for us at AWC Phidim, and as a result the team only reached Phikal that day.

On 15 June, we left for AWC Damak where we were warmly welcomed by AWO Hon Lt (QGO) Premkumar Tamang, ex QG Signals who has ably run the AWC, taking responsibility for a vast area - in the districts of Jhapa, Morang and Ilam, a total of 110 VDCs, where 909 Service Pensioners, 662 Welfare

Pensioners, 52 Non Pensioners and 8 Disabled Support Grants are paid. This is a very significant number of retired Gurkhas and dependants. We again had a chance to meet the Welfare Pensioners.

After lunch with AWO Saheb and his staff and following the completion of our primary task, we departed for AWC Dharan late in the afternoon for an overnight stay to catch a domestic flight for Kathmandu the following day. In Dharan, meeting with Hon Maj Tanghum Limbu, ex GM QG Signals, was a precious moment during which we shared and exchanged our present and his past memories - he had served in the Regiment for 30 years. He is 81 years old but still healthy and his memories of the Regiment were as fresh as if they were yesterday.

On 16 June, after carrying out a survey for the installation of HF radio at BGD, we left Dharan to catch the flight to

Exercise UKALI ORALI 2011

By LCpl Meharsingh Gaha, Nepal Signal Troop

Exercise UKALI ORALI is an annual one-day trek along the Rim of Kathmandu Valley designed for all British Gurkhas Nepal (BGN) serving personnel, their dependants, Locally Employed Civilians (LEC), and British Embassy and Defence Section staff. The exercise is also known as 'The Valley Rim Walk'. This year, the exercise took place on Thursday 28 April, starting from Sankhu and finishing at Nagarkot. The total number of participants was 113.

The objectives of the event were to:

- Provide an opportunity to build team spirit through a one-day trek,
- Develop working relationships between the serving personnel, LECs and Embassy staff,
- Foster BGN tradition through a short adventurous training exercise,
- Allow serving soldiers to refresh their navigational skills as well as develop leadership and organizational skills, and
- Test BGN Contingency capabilities such as VHF radio and Satellite phones.

The day began with the deployment of the Advance Party early in the morning in order to set up the Start Point, which was followed by the Main Body leaving the BGN Chautara at 0700 hrs. Due to the nature of traffic in the Kathmandu valley, the Main Body arrived slightly behind schedule at the Start Point.

Immediately after the arrival, all the participants were briefed about the walking route and safety points, and were then put into groups to prevent further delay. There was much excitement in the air as everyone seemed to be eagerly waiting for the start whistle. The first group was released at 0930 hrs and the follow-on groups were released at five minute intervals under the supervision of a group leader.

Kathmandu. Without a shadow of a doubt, the aims of the exercise were successfully achieved. We were also absolutely delighted to see the AWCs doing such a sterling job and providing excellent support to ex-servicemen, their dependants and the communities in different parts of Nepal. We came to realize more fully the importance of the AWCs, the Gurkha Welfare Scheme and the Gurkha Welfare Trust.

Finally, the team would like to express their heartfelt thanks to the AWOs/AAWOs Sahebs and their staff for providing an excellent service and for their assistance during the team's visit and most importantly for educating us on the roles and responsibilities of the AWCs. We would also like to express our thanks to BGD Staff and the porters for providing vital support, without which the exercise would not have been successful. Jai Nepal Signal Troop!

The first kilometre was mostly flat and provided a good warm-up for the participants, which helped to stretch their legs. After crossing one of the local rivers, the group wheeled towards a fairly steep hill which led them to their first water point and quick break.

As the walk continued, all the groups heaved a sigh of relief when approaching one of the small villages, Jarsing Pauwa, as it signalled the end of uphill walking, the next phase being an hour's hike on the flat. From this point onwards, the exquisite distant views of the Himalayas and the beauty of the immediate surroundings could be enjoyed by all the participants. However, the route took another uphill twist to where the second and final water point was set up at Katike Bhanjyang.

Most of the groups were at the Finish Point after four hours. Awaiting them were a variety of drinks and a delicious BBQ lunch prepared by Master Chef, SSgt Safin Magar and his team. After everyone had been rested, the raffle draw took place. The Chief of Staff then gave a speech which was followed by a group photo. At around 1630 hrs, we all returned to camp after having had an extremely enjoyable and worthwhile day out. Luckily the weather also favoured us, as the day turned out to be perfect.

We managed to raise funds for two very worthy charities - the Homeless, Orphan, Poor, Affected and Dalits Foundation (HOPAD) and the Gurkha Welfare Scheme.

Finally, I would like to thank OC NST for his guidance on organizing the event, and all the participants who turned up and made it a great success.

Jai Nepal Signal Troop!!

Exercise MUKTINATH DARSHAN 2011

By Cpl Chitra Gurung

Exercise MUKTINATH DARSHAN 2011 (Ex MD 11) was an educational and cultural visit to the Muktinath Temple which was designed for all British Gurkhas Nepal (BGN) serving personnel and their dependants over the period 24 - 27 May 2011.

Muktinath Temple is located in Muktinath Valley in the north of Jomsom village at an altitude of approx 3,800 metres within the Annapurna circuit of the Himalaya region. Muktinath means a place of salvation and is a very popular pilgrimage site for both Hindus and Buddhists from Nepal and neighbouring countries. The holy shrine at Muktinath is in a grove of trees and includes a Buddhist gumpa and the pagoda-style temple of Vishnu Mandir, which contains an image of Vishnu and is one of the 100 most visited places in Nepal. The temple itself is the only sacred place shared by devotees from both religions.

A total of 16 serving personnel and their spouses signed up for the exciting opportunity. The original plan was to depart BGN for Pokhara early on the morning of 24 May. However, due to a Nepal-wide bandh, the departure was delayed to the afternoon. After a tiring six hour drive we arrived at the Hotel Meera at Lakeside at 2200 hrs, for an overnight stay.

The following morning, we had originally planned to fly from Pokhara to Jomsom by Yeti Airlines but due to the bad weather the flight was delayed. Having waited for two hours, we were finally able to fly at 1030 hrs. The flight lasted just 30 minutes, but the experience is engraved in all our memories, as the strong local wind at Jomsom created a frightful flight experience. Nonetheless, the flight did allow us to see a glimpse of the area we would visit, known as 'the desert of Nepal'.

As we stepped off the airplane we were extremely thrilled by the view and our close proximity to Nilgiri and Daulagiri Mountains.

We checked into our hotel, the Alka Marco Polo, and after lunch we made our way to Ranipauwa by local jeep. Although the journey was bumpy, uncomfortable and at times frightening (being so close to the edge of the rough tracks), the gorgeous and dazzling landscapes made it worthwhile.

At around 1500 hrs, we arrived at the North Pole Hotel in Ranipauwa, which is located about a 20 minute walk from the Muktinath Temple gate. We spent the rest of the day visiting the local sights and shopping, which allowed us to acclimatize at the same time. Some of us suffered minor altitude sickness but quickly recovered.

Early on the morning of 26 May, we headed uphill to the Muktinath Temple. Upon arrival, we firstly had to shower ourselves under 108 cold pious water taps (Muktidhara) in a clockwise direction (according to tradition, it is believed that showering oneself under the 108 taps brings salvation). After the showers and, in accordance with the ritual, we then had to dip into two Kundas (ponds) in front of the Temple, where a holy dip is believed to wash away negative karma, the results of one's past negative actions.

After we had changed into warm clothes, the temple finally opened and we went to give our offerings and receive blessings. We were met by Jhuma, a Buddhist Nun, who conducts the prayers and takes care of the cultural heritage of the Temple.

After the temple, we visited the Narsingh Monastery, Jwalamukhi Mai Temple, Sri Murthy Mahatma and the monument of Swaminarayan. We finally returned to the hotel just in time to have breakfast, after which we then made our way back to Jomsom.

On our way back, we visited Kagbeni Village (which is situated in the valley of Kali Gandaki) which means 'bolt at the two rivers'. We also visited the Annapurna Conservation Area Project. We finally reached the hotel Alka Marco Polo at 1430 hrs to spend a night there. After a late lunch, we spent the rest of the day visiting the locality, including Marpha village. We also had the opportunity to taste locally-produced Apple Brandy!

The next day, we departed Jomsom for Pokhara at 0800 hrs. Upon arrival at Pokhara airport, we headed straight to Barahi Temple situated in the middle of Phewa Lake. We had a splendid breakfast next to the lake and afterwards the ladies went shopping whilst the men enjoyed boat rides and swimming.

Though there was, again, another Nepal-wide bandh on our return, all 16 participants returned to BGN at approx 2130 hrs on 27 May safe and sound. Without a doubt, everyone had gained an understanding of Jomsom's culture, and the Muktinath in particular.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank everybody for their participation and, especially, Capt Kedar Rai, OC NST, for his guidance and support. In addition, the team would also like to thank Maj Hitman Gurung MVO, GM BGN, for arranging the short but worthwhile visit to the Annapurna Conservation Area Project.

Jai British Gurkhas Nepal!

Nepalese Army High Altitude and Mountain Warfare Course 2011

By WO2 S Roberts Int Corps, SA G2

The Nepalese Army (NA) High Altitude and Mountain Warfare School (NAHAMWS), in Jomsom, Mustang, held its international student course during August and September which lasted seven weeks. The school is approximately 50kms north of Pokhara. The content of the course comprised three weeks rock craft (Jomsom), one week acclimatization (Kesang), one week glacier training (Munang) and the final ten days culminated with the ascent of Mount Thorang (6,154m, 20,200ft) in the Annapurna Conservation Area.

The aim of the course was for international military mountaineering specialists to familiarize themselves with the Nepal Army's mountaineering craft and similarly for the Nepal Army to become familiar with other nations' armies Tactics, Techniques and Procedures in mountainous terrain. There were 12 students on the course comprising: South Korean Special Forces, People's Republic of China's People's Liberation Army, United States of America First Special Forces Group and United States Marine Corps, Canadian Para-Rescue, Indian and Pakistani High Altitude and Mountain Warfare instructors, Bangladeshi and Sri Lankan Commandos and an attached support staff member of the Brigade of Gurkhas. The timing of the international student course coincided with both the Nepal Army's Special Forces and Para Commando courses which allowed for interaction between both mountain warfare specialists and Special Forces.

Despite the joining instructions stating that all attendees must have been proficient in mountain warfare, it was clear from the outset that the school was very willing to cater for all comers, mountaineers and novices alike, which it did with great aplomb throughout the course. 50% of the students were neither mountain warfare specialists nor mountaineers of any description, as became apparent when instructors directed that jumars and prusick knots had to be attached to harnesses, which

was met with a number of blank expressions. However, within the first three weeks all members of the course had become fairly proficient at using their ascender, creating a triple sliding hitch (prusik) and most importantly belaying a climber using either a figure of eight or an ATC (Air Traffic Controller). During the second half of the course every student became acutely aware of safety being paramount, regardless of what rank you were, and even more aware of the effects of Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS) if not diagnosed in a timely manner.

The course was physically very demanding and from Day Two all students were expected to carry 18 kgs every day, except Saturdays, on marches which varied between a one hour run, a two hour endurance march and a six to eight hour forced march between various heights (during the glacier and the ascent period, forced marches of between nine and twelve hours were not uncommon). Marches were followed by rock craft, which was again physically very demanding, and due to it being unsafe to climb after 11am, because of the wind, more regimental physical training followed after lunch.

The highlight of the course was undoubtedly ascending Mount Thorang and, whilst it is acknowledged that Thorang is not the most technical of climbs, the tactical manner in which it was accomplished was no mean feat. We went over the start line (High camp) at 2 am to reach the summit by 6 am. The euphoria mountaineers experience at the summit rapidly disappeared, as I knew that within 20 minutes we would descend via fixed line, which would take its toll on my ageing knees.

In short the course is a unique and very demanding experience which brings 'mountaineers' from numerous nations together and allows them to ascend 20,000 ft, which is not an option outside of the Himalayas.

The Gurkha Welfare Scheme

Field Director's Overview

By Lt Col J D Fenn QOGLR

Once again, the GWS has seen numerous changes and some significant shifts in priorities. However, the core values remain the same, and the determination to support our most needy welfare pensioners remains at the heart of what we deliver.

In terms of changes, there has been a large turn-around of personalities including the key posts of Field Director and Deputy Field Director.

Lieutenant Colonel Adrian Griffith served almost four years in the post of Field Director and his influence cannot be over-stated. His dedicated and compassionate work will endure for many years to come. He was hugely popular and will be much missed by both the GWS and the Army. He was replaced in March 2011 by Lieutenant Colonel Johnny Fenn, freshly arrived from the heat of Abuja following his tour as Commander BMATT Nigeria. He has served with the Brigade in Brunei, East Timor and Iraq; he was DCOS at HQBG, and commanded 94 Sqn QOGLR. He hopes that his passion for photography will bring an extra dimension to 'advertising' GWT and the GWS!

Hon Maj Krishnabhadur Gurung MVO MBE has completed ten years with the GWS and finally retired in December 2011. His contribution has been massive and he is responsible for keeping the GWS in very good shape in terms of manning, accounts, and results. His shoes will be extremely difficult to fill, but Hon Maj Lalitbahadur Gurung has the experience and ability to ensure a smooth transition after trying to extract the vast amount of GWS information contained within Krishna's head!

Turning to GWS operations, the welfare pensioners continue to be well served by staff manning our 20 Area

Welfare Centres. The Welfare Pension was increased this year from 4,200 Nepalese rupees to 4,500 rupees; a very welcome uplift. We continue also to pay Welfare (Hardship) Grants to those in most need - exacerbated this year by the September earthquake in Taplejung District. The GWT very kindly allocated £100,000 to cover the immediate costs of repair to damaged properties.

The medical scheme continues apace providing primary and secondary medical care for almost 200,000 cases last year (including service pensioners living in Nepal). Within this figure are the eight very popular and successful medical camps (funded by KAAA) that we conduct in remote areas each year.

The Residential Home built last year next to AWC Kaski is thriving and the 26 Residents, who were in desperate need of support, are enjoying the surroundings and care provided, enabling them to live out their lives in dignity. Construction of the next Residential Home has begun in Dharan.

The Water Scheme continues to provide 64 projects per year and continues also to have the backing, and substantial financial support, of DFID. Schools are still supported, although migration from the hills has meant that we no longer finance the building of major schools in remote areas. We now focus on supporting those schools that are successful through renovations and extensions.

Maj Gen Pope, on behalf of the GWT, conducted the five year strategy review in 2011. This review points the way forward in terms of how we support our ex-service community; and although the GWS needs to respond to changing priorities, both social and financial, it is well placed to do so and will continue to provide the best support to needy ex-Gurkhas for many years to come.

A Photographic Record of GWS Activities in 2011



Post cataract operations at the Medical Camp at AWC Runjatar



CDS with Welfare Pensioner Resident at the Residential Home in Kaski



Field Director meeting local school children at AWC Phidim



Eye tests at the Medical Camp at AWC Rumjatar



CDS and Lady Richards with Dir GWS and OIC Residential Home at Residential Home Kaski



Welfare Pensioner Rfn Purnesubba Gurung at his home in Bhujung



Gurkha memorial in Darjeeling



Widow with grandson at AWC Kaski



Dir GWS on trek in West Nepal



CDS and Lady Richards with residents of the Residential Home in Kaski



The Royal Gurkha Rifles

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

The Great War - **La 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

Brig J C Lawrence MBE

Regimental Secretary

Maj (Retd) B McKay MBE

Staff List (as at December 2011)

Serving Late RGR Officers

Brig	J C Lawrence MBE MSc FRGS psc+	Late RGR	COS LF FDT, Army Headquarters
Brig	A J P Bourne OBE BA(Hons) MA MPhil(Cantab) psc (j) +	Late RGR	Director Plans, Army Headquarters
Col	G A C Hughes OBE psc	Late RGR	Adv Op Arts Study
Col	I A Rigden OBE MA psc	Late RGR	Col BG
Col	N D J Rowe psc	Late RGR	Assistant Director Plans, Headquarters APHCS, Camberley
Col	I N A Thomas OBE psc+	Late RGR	USA Overseas Staff College

Officers of the Regiment

Lt Col	A G Alexander-Cooper (QCVS) BA(Hons) ph	RGR	A Block, MOD
Lt Col	J N B Birch MA MDA psc(j)	RGR	CO 2ITB
Lt Col	A W A Forbes BA(Hons) osc(FR) (sq)	RGR	(BLO France)
Lt Col	A P M Griffith psc	RGR	CO PRU, HQ 143 (WM) Bde
Lt Col	A G Jones sq	RGR	SO1 Mil & Cap Pol I Nep (MOD)
Lt Col	I St C Logan MA BSc(Hons) psc(j)+	RGR	SO1 Concept and Doctrine LWDOG
Lt Col	G M O'Keefe MA BSc psc(j)	RGR	SO1 Joint CBT Shrivenham
Lt Col	F J Rea LLB MA psc(j)	RGR	CO, 2 RGR
Lt Col	M H Reedman B Eng(Hons)	RGR	SoI FDT Interoperability
Lt Col	D M Rex BA(Hons)	RGR	Equerry to HM The Queen
Lt Col	D J Robinson MA psc(j)	RGR	CO, 1 RGR
Lt Col	J G Robinson psc(j)+	RGR	Chief ANA Force Integration
Lt Col	G M Strickland DSO MBE BA(Hons) psc(j)	RGR	DEFAC JSCSC ACSC SO1 LAND Shrivenham
Maj	R T Anderson MiD BA(Hons)	RGR	OC GURKHA COY
Maj	S A Archer sq (w)+	RGR	SO2 Inf Trials & Development Unit Warminster
Maj	N J Aucott BA(Hons)	RGR	NATO JFC Brunssum SO2 Int
Maj	Bhupjit Rai	RGR	OC TSD, IBS
Maj	B G Birkbeck	RGR	OC Sp Coy, 1 RGR
Maj	R G J Bevan	RGR	DRO Pokhara
Maj	C R Boryer MBE BA(Hons)	RGR	Bn 2IC, 1 RGR
Maj	J M L Cartwright BA(Hons)	RGR	SFSG, IPARA
Maj	G Chaganis BSc(Hons)	RGR	16 AA BDE HQ SO2 J2
Maj	SW M Chandler MiD	RGR	SFSG SO2 J3 15
Maj	C P L Conroy BSc(Hons)	RGR	DI OPS London SO2 CT2/JTAC
Maj	C N A Crowe BA(Hons)	RGR	OC B Coy, 1 RGR
Maj	R J Daines MiD ph	RGR	Exchange Appt USA
Maj	Dammarbahadur Shahi	RGR	GM, 2 RGR
Maj	Daniel Lama MBE	RGR	OC, HQ Coy, 1 RGR
Maj	J P Davies MBE MA(Cantab)	RGR	PJHQ SO2 J5
Maj	Dhyanprasad Rai MVO	RGR	GM, 1 RGR
Maj	A M S Hellier BA(Hons)	RGR	SO2 G5, Plans, HQ ARRC
Maj	Hitman Gurung	RGR	OC, HQ Coy, 1 RGR
Maj	W J Hughes MSc MRPharmS	RGR	OC, Sp Coy, 2 RGR
Maj	M J James BSc(Hons)	RGR	Defence Academy IMT HS Course
Maj	S C Marcandonatos B Eng	RGR	OC, GRC, 1 YORKS
Maj	B R Marshall BSc(Hons)	RGR	SO2 Coord/Visits/Protocol, HQ ARRC
Maj	J C Murray BLE(Hons)	RGR	Bn 2IC, 2 RGR
Maj	E P Oldfield	RGR	OC, SP Coy, 1 RGR
Maj	D T Pack	RGR	OC, A Coy, 1 RGR
Maj	T W Pike BEng(Hons)	RGR	OC, C Coy, 2 RGR

Maj	L M Roberts BSc(Hons)	RGR	SO2 ISTAR, 16 AA Bde HQ
Maj	A P Todd BSc(Hons)	RGR	OC, C Coy, 1 RGR
Maj	Yambahadur Rana MVO	RGR	OC, RMAS
Capt	J E Arney BSc(Hons)	RGR	C Coy PI Comd, 2 RGR
Capt	Badrikumar Rai	RGR	PI Comd GRC 3, 1YORKS
Capt	C P A E Bairsto BSc	RGR	A Block, MOD
Capt	T J A Baker BA(Hons)	RGR	OC Brigade Trg Team
Capt	A S Brown	RGR	IO, 1 RGR
Capt	J W Buckley BSc(Hons)	RGR	SO3 SFATT, OPTAG HQ
Capt	Chandrabhadur Pun	RGR	2IC, D Coy, 1 RGR
Capt	O C Cochran BSc(Hons)	RGR	IO, 2 RGR
Capt	A C Colquhoun BSc(Hons)	RGR	A Block, MOD
Capt	A D B Crawley	RGR	Ops Offr, 2 RGR
Capt	R J Davies BSc(Hons)	RGR	PI Comd, FSG, Sp Coy, 1 RGR
Capt	Dhalindrabhadur Khatri Chhetri	RGR	PI Comd, Gurkha Coy Catterick
Capt	Dolbahadur Gurung	RGR	UWO, 1 RGR
Capt	Gajendra Angdembe	RGR	2IC, A Coy, 2 RGR
Capt	Gyanbahadur Dhenga	RGR	PI Comd, C Coy, 1 RGR
Capt	Hemkumar Tamang	RGR	2IC GRC 3, 1YORKS
Capt	P A Houlton-Hart MiD BEng(Hons)	RGR	Ops Offr, 1 RGR
Capt	J A E E Jeffcoat MiD BA(Hons)	RGR	RMAS PI Instr
Capt	Jogendrasing Limbu	RGR	PI Comd, GCM
Capt	Junkaji Gurung	RGR	2IC, C Coy, 1 RGR
Capt	Kajiman Limbu MC	RGR	PI Comd, C Coy, 2 RGR
Capt	Kulbahadur Gurung	RGR	2IC, Sp Coy, 2 RGR
Capt	Lalitbahadur Gurung	RGR	PI Comd, D Coy, 1 RGR
Capt	Liljung Gurung	RGR	2IC, B Coy, 1 RGR
Capt	N R Lloyd BSc	RGR	Team Leader Liaison Team 4 JCTTAT
Capt	Manikumar Limbu	RGR	2IC, GCM
Capt	Maniram Rai	RGR	Trg Offr GRC 3, 1YORKS
Capt	Manoj Mohara	RGR	Trg Offr, GCS
Capt	A R C Mathers MA	RGR	Adj, 2 RGR
Capt	ST Meadows BA(Hons)	RGR	OC Mor Plat, Sp Coy, 2 RGR
Capt	N J Moran BA(Hons)	RGR	A Block, MOD
Capt	Muktiprasad Gurung	RGR	PI Comd, B Coy, 1 RGR
Capt	Nanibabu Magar	RGR	145 BDE (PRU)
Capt	D P O'Connor	RGR	SFSG ARMY
Capt	Pitamber Gurung	RGR	MTO, 1 RGR
Capt	Prakash Gurung	RGR	2IC, SP Coy 1 RGR
Capt	Prembahadur Gurung	RGR	RCMO, 2 RGR
Capt	Raghubir Rai	RGR	2IC, CSS Coy, 2 RGR
Capt	Rajeshkumar Gurung	RGR	QM, 1 RGR
Capt	Rajkumar Rai	RGR	QM(T), 2 RGR
Capt	Rambahadur Pun	RGR	RCMO, 1 RGR
Capt	Ramkumar Rai	RGR	PI Comd, B Coy, 2 RGR
Capt	Ramprasad Gurung	RGR	2IC A Coy, 1 RGR
Capt	Rembahadur Ghale	RGR	Trg Offr, 1 RGR
Capt	R I Roberts BSc(Hons)	RGR	OC Recce, Sp Coy, 2 RGR
Capt	R W A Roylance BA(Hons)	RGR	OC Mort Pl, Sp Coy, 1 RGR
Capt	Sachinhang Limbu	RGR	QM(T) Des, 2 RGR
Capt	Sarojkumar Rai	RGR	PI Comd, GCM
Capt	Sherbahadur Gurung	RGR	2IC, HQ Coy, 1 RGR
Capt	EV Simpson BA(Hons)	RGR	HQ ISAF SO3 CAAT Advisors
Capt	H P S Stanford-Tuck	RGR	SO3 G3 Media Ops 12 Mech Bde
Capt	Trilochan Gurung	RGR	2IC, GCS

Capt	Tubendrabhadur Limbu	RGR	UWO, 2 RGR
Capt	T D Usher BA(Hons)	RGR	Adj, 1 RGR
Capt	Yubaraj Garbuja	RGR	2IC, C Coy, 2 RGR
Capt	R E Morford MEng	RGR	Fire Sp PI Comd, FSG, Sp Coy, 2 RGR
Lt	BT Ball	RGR	PI Comd, B Coy, 2 RGR
Lt	B C Burrows	RGR	Inf Battle School
Lt	A C Connolly (QCVS)	RGR	Career Break
Lt	BA Cork	RGR	Gurkha Cont Singapore Police
Lt	E Drummond-Baxter	RGR	PI Comd, A Coy, 1 RGR
Lt	MW Evans	RGR	PI Comd, B Coy, 1 RGR
Lt	R C E Evans	RGR	PI Comd, C Coy, 1 RGR
Lt	J R Gartside	RGR	PI Comd, C Coy, 1 RGR
Lt	N H Gross	RGR	OC Mor Pl, Sp Coy, 2 RGR
Lt	T E B Latham	RGR	Inf Battle School
Lt	B E Norfield	RGR	PI Comd, A Coy, 2 RGR
Lt	G E A Norton	RGR	Ops Co-ord Offr - HQ BRIGNEPAL
Lt	W A Plumley	RGR	Inf Battle School
Lt	M B Reardon	RGR	Inf Battle School
Lt	C E F Russell	RGR	RSO, 1 RGR
2Lt	J Devall	RGR	PI Comd, A Coy, 1 RGR
2Lt	J J England	RGR	PI Comd, A Coy, 1 RGR
2Lt	A Genillard	RGR	PI Comd, A Coy, 2 RGR
2Lt	J A Lawson	RGR	PI Comd, B Coy, 2 RGR
2Lt	M Rose	RGR	PI Comd, D Coy, 1 RGR
2Lt	S R Nightingale	RGR	PI Comd, C Coy, 1 RGR
2Lt	A Rose	RGR	PI Comd, D Coy, 1 RGR

Attached Officers

Capt	T R FT Barry	AGC(RMP)	G1/G4 Coord, 1 RGR
Mr	Bhishmaraj Niraula		Religious Teacher, 1 RGR
Maj	G R Blewitt	R WELSH	QM, 2 RGR
Maj	S Burton	YORKS	OC, B Coy, 1 RGR
Lt	E Darling	AGC(ETS)	Edn Offr, 1 RGR
A/Maj	M D Hosegood	RIFLES	OC Sp Coy, 2 RGR
Capt	Kamansing Rana	GSPS	Det Comd, 2 RGR
Maj	D O Lee	PARA	OC CSS Coy, 2 RGR
Capt	Manbahadur Gurung	GSPS	Det Comd, 1 RGR
Maj	J E D McInally	AGC(SPS)	RAO, 2 RGR
A/Maj	K A Page	R WELSH	OCA Coy, 2 RGR
Mr	Shankarmani Nepal		Religious Teacher, 2 RGR
Maj	P G E Starkey	RAMC	RMO, 1 RGR
Capt	D J Thompson	AGC(ETS)	Edn Offr, 2 RGR
Lt Col	A D Tredget	RAMC	RMO, 2 RGR
Maj	J M W Williamson	SCOTS DG	OC B Coy, 2 RGR



First Battalion

I RGR in 2011 - An Overview

By Major C R Boryer MBE

The beginning of 2011 saw I RGR embark on a period of consolidation and recovery, following the return from Op HERRICK 12 and ensuing Post Operational Tour Leave (POTL). At its close the year sees the Battalion poised to launch into Mission Specific Training (MST) to prepare for the deployment in October 2012 on Op HERRICK 17. The period in-between has been busy, often frenetic as the Battalion has focussed on conducting Hybrid Foundation Training (HFT), whilst concurrently addressing those vital functions and activities which by necessity often take a back seat during MST and subsequent deployment on operations. The highlights of 2011 have been numerous, including: the Op HERRICK 12 Medals Parade, a notably demanding Junior Leadership Cadre (JLC), the formation of D (Kandahar) Company, victory in the Nepal Cup, noteworthy success in an international skill-at-arms-meet (SAAM), the arrival of the new intake from Gurkha Company, a tracking cadre in Kenya and, most recently, a good performance by the I RGR Battlegroup (BG) on Ex WESSEX THUNDER in November. For the companies the tempo of activity has been consistently busy as they have focussed on conducting adventure training, preparing for the various inter-company competitions, and generating and exploiting opportunities to conduct Collective Training Level 1 (CTI) training in preparation for Ex WESSEX THUNDER.

The end of 2010 saw the Battalion welcome Maj Dhyansprasad Rai as Gurkha Major, with Captain Tom Usher taking over as Adjutant in January 2011. With POTL complete, January witnessed the preparations for and execution of the Op HERRICK 12 Medals Parade at Sir John Moore Barracks. The VIP list was impressive with the Colonel of the Regiment taking the salute and Field Marshal Chapple, Colonel Commandant Brigade of Gurkhas and Colonel RGR in attendance. The parade served as a fitting conclusion to a challenging, successful tour of Nar-e-Seraj. Following the parade the Colonel of the Regiment presented the families of the Battalion's fallen comrades with the Elizabeth Cross medal to mark the sacrifice their loved ones had made. Worthy of note is the number of I RGR BG officers and men who were recognized for their efforts on Op HERRICK 12: Lt Col Gez Strickland MBE was awarded the Distinguished Service Order, Cpl Dipprasad Pun the Conspicuous Gallantry Cross, Rfn Sunil Limbu the Military Cross, Capt Pete Houlton-Hart, Capt Suresh Gurung, LCpl Nabin Rai and Rfn Maniraj Gurung were all Mentioned in Dispatches; whilst Cpl Manoj Gurung received the Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service.

Additionally six men were awarded the Joint Commander's Commendations: Capt Rafe Roylance, Cpl Kamare Budha, LCpl Khagendra Gurung, Rfn Praveen Rai, Rfn Binod Gurung and Rfn Hancock Thapa; with a further seven receiving Commander Joint Operations' Commendation: Capt Philip Kaye (KRH), Sgt Govinda Gurung, Cpl Michael Harrold (QRL), LCpl Suman Ale Magar, A/LCpl Levi Webb (RDG), Rfn Amrit Gurung and Rfn Manbahadur Thapa. This level of recognition is testimony to the supreme professionalism displayed by all men and women of the I RGR BG throughout an arduous, challenging and successful tour.

The remainder of Spring saw the Battalion attend to a number of important activities which needed addressing following the previous year's focus on Afghanistan. C Company was tasked with running a double-intake JLC, with clear direction from the Commanding Officer that it was to be akin to P Company in terms of physical challenge. C Company, under the command of Maj Dave Jones, duly delivered a cadre at Otterburn which was both physically and mentally demanding; testing the mettle of all students whilst also developing their soldiering and leadership skills to the benefit of them and the Battalion. Whilst JLC was going on the remainder of the Battalion focussed on conducting CTI training, to refresh section and platoon level drills, upgrading our communications proficiency in line with the latest iteration of Bowman software, and in many cases getting away on collective adventure training trips to remind the boys that life is not all about hard soldiering and twiddling dials. A number of the young officers got away to Nepal to attend the Language Course, during which Lt Rory Evans set a new record, amongst British Officers of the Brigade, in the Doko Race with a time of 39 minutes and 26 seconds. In May Support Company ran its reinforcement cadre, precipitating a rebalancing of manpower across the Battalion.

As summer approached the pace of life started to pick up as the prospect of the test events of the HFT phase of the operational training cycle started to loom large. 13 June saw the formation of D (Kandahar) Company through the re-attrition of manpower made available by the disbandment of Gurkha Reinforcement Company 2 (1 Mercian). D Company formed up under command of Maj Charlie Crowe, with Capt Chandrabahadur Pun and WO2 Ganesh Gurung as Company 2IC and CSM. Charlie handed over B Company to Capt Liljung Gurung who evidently relished the opportunity to



HRH The Prince of Wales presents Op Herrick 12 Campaign medals to soldiers of 1RGR



The Prince of Wales meets 1 RGR families

command. As RAAT tasking (manpower support to external training events) recommenced, C Company were deployed to support Ex LION'S STRIKE (the Combined Arms Tactics and Command Course final exercise) where they got to witness first hand the brushing-up of skills and drills by majors fresh out of staff appointments prior to assuming sub-unit command. June and July saw the staging of the main inter-company competitions, with C Company taking first place in the Bullock Trophy (military skills), and B Company winning the Wallace Memorial sports competition. B Company also won the Roberts Cup shooting competition with the best shot being LCpl Keshbahadur Thapa of C Company. Following completion of all the various competitions it was B Company that was crowned 'Champion Company', with Rfn Suresh Gurung of Support Company winning the Parish Trophy for the overall Best Rifleman.

The last week of June saw Brigade Week take place at Sir John Moore Barracks and the bidding farewell to Col David Hayes CBE as Colonel Brigade of Gurkhas. Colonel Commandant Brigade of Gurkhas led the field in offering the Brigade's thanks to Col David for his many years of astute endeavour and commitment in steering the Brigade through perpetually turbulent waters, whilst maintaining its uniqueness and character. One of the highlights of Brigade Week was the final of the annual Nepal Cup football competition which this year was won by 1 RGR, with the Sam Cowan Trophy (Man of the Match) awarded to Rfn Santosh Shrestha of B Company.

July brought further sporting success for the Battalion with the swimming team, under the leadership of Capt Sherbahadur Gurung, taking second place at the 4th Division Swimming Gala; and CSgt Bhakta Sherchan of A Company winning the individual best rifle shot in the operations in urban environments shoot at Bisley. Including CSgt Bhakta, eight men from the Battalion were placed in the Army Top 100 this year. In the meantime soldiers from Support Company deployed on RAAT to Canada in support of Ex PRARIE THUNDER, and a platoon from A Company flew to Belize to provide training support to Ex GRIM WARRIOR, both providing good opportunities for those involved to expand their horizons and hone their skills in an unfamiliar environment. Continuing the international theme the second week of July saw Maj Ben Birkbeck lead a group of battalion officers and NCOs on a battlefield tour to the Somme, providing an enjoyable and informative opportunity to discuss the pros and cons of attritional warfare.

Speaking of attrition, July and August bore witness to a comprehensive change-over of key players within the Battalion. Throughout July and early August farewell was bade to Capt Will Godwin (Ops Officer), Maj Neil Richardson (Battalion 2IC), Maj Dave Jones (OC C Company) and Maj Ben Birkbeck (OC Sp Coy). In their place Capt Pete Houlton-Hart assumed the post of Ops Officer and the Battalion welcomed Majors Chris Boryer (2IC), Andrew Todd (OC C Company) and Edd Oldfield (OC Support Company). On 25 August the Battalion bade farewell to the Commanding Officer, Lt Col

Gez Strickland. Having been thoroughly garlanded Col Gez was towed by the officers and SNCOs to the front gate, where he gave a poignant address which left the Battalion in no doubt as to the enduring importance of its efforts over the course of Op HERRICK 12. Having bid farewell to Col Gez, the Battalion welcomed Lt Col David Robinson back to the Battalion as Commanding Officer on 30 August. Hot on his heels followed Maj Shane Burton, on secondment from the Yorkshire Regiment, to assume command of B Company.

September saw the tempo increase once again as the new team settled in for the imminent challenges of Combined Arms Staff Training (CAST) and Ex WESSEX THUNDER, whilst also preparing for the arrival of the new intake of riflemen from Catterick, and then Dashain. Early in the month the results of Tranche 1 of the Army's Redundancy Programme were announced and sadly mean the impending departure from the Army of a number of 1 RGR soldiers. The training focus of this month was on conducting section and platoon level live-firing at Sennybridge, utilising the recently issued Future Integrated Soldier Technology (FIST) equipment (advanced night-optics for personal weapons which can be used in conjunction with infra-red illumination flares/rounds). For its part the Battalion planning team was put through a number of battlegroup planning cycles on mini-CAST, in preparation for CAST in mid-October. The arrival of 49 new riflemen at the end of the month, a week prior to Dashain, ensured that the month remained busy right to its conclusion and left little chance to draw breath prior to launching into the Dashain celebrations.

Due to Dashain falling during Op HERRICK 12 in 2010, the Battalion was more than ready for a collective celebration this year. The Gurkha Major and his team worked hard to lay on a tremendous event and Panditji Bishmaraj Niraula brought alive the religious significance of the occasion with his customary energy and good humour. Phulpati was a joyous day with the company parties getting everyone into the mood for the subsequent battalion Kalaratri party. Thankfully Maar passed successfully with all the kubindo appropriately decapitated and all pigeons suitably airborne, meaning that all could enjoy Tika in the knowledge that the signs for the year ahead were auspicious.

The good luck started the following week as the Battalion was put through its paces on CAST. With tented BG HQ established outside the garrison gymnasium, the gym itself was transformed into an information-technology hub from which Exercise Control, Brigade HQ HICON and the company LOCONs all operated. Set in the notional country of Jela (Kenya) the scenario saw the BG HQ team tested through two full planning and execution cycles, the second mission requiring planning concurrently with the execution of the first. It was a good test and provided an excellent vehicle to develop the cohesion and proficiency of the new team. At the end of four long and enjoyable, although thanks to the IT often frustrating, days the BG had achieved success in both missions and, whilst there were inevitably areas for improvement, we were commended for a strong performance.

Whilst BG HQ was being put through its paces, on the other side of the world soldiers from 1 RGR were demonstrating their world-class proficiency at skill-at-arms. Led by CSgt Bhakta Sherchan six men from the Battalion formed the nucleus of the British Army's team at the Canadian Forces Small Arms Concentration, a tri-service international SAAM. Involving pistol and rifle shoots the competition put firers through their paces in 'judgemental shooting', casualty evacuation and room-clearance drills, in addition to march and shoot and obstacle course shoots amongst other team events. When the dust settled at the end of the competition the team had come 1st, 2nd and 3rd in the Falling Plate competition and thrashed the remainder of the field in the Section Match competition. CSgt Bhakta, LCpl Kesh Thapa, Rfn Amar Ale and Rfn Dhan Ghale were selected to represent the UK Combined Services Team which won the International Match. Individually all six men of the 1RGR contingent came in the top 23 of 297 firers with CSgt Bhakta taking first place, Rfn Amar coming second and LCpl Kesh coming fourth. Job done, the team enjoyed a well deserved period of R&R prior to returning home justifiably proud of their achievements.

October also saw the RSM, WO1 Dipakraj Ghale, lead a deployment of ten staff and thirty students from 1RGR to Kenya to conduct a tracking cadre. Deployed under the auspices of Ex ASKARI THUNDER the cadre trained forty students, including ten from other 4 (Mechanised) Brigade units, in tracking and ground-sign awareness skills at Archer's Post in northern Kenya. For nineteen days the students learned how to identify and interpret ground-sign, with particular emphasis placed on the identification and exploitation of improvised explosive devices. On completion of the cadre, and following a couple of days adventure training, the RSM and his team became the core of the enemy force against which the 1 SCOTS Ex ASKARI THUNDER BG operated on their final exercise. The plaudits which followed the team back from Kenya spoke volumes about both the success of the cadre, and the vigour with which the RSM and his team battled 1 SCOTS during the FTX.

With CAST complete the training focus switched to the company CT level 3 (company combined-arms group) live-firing phase of Ex WESSEX THUNDER. Conducted at Sennybridge this saw Live Fire Group putting the companies through their paces in platoon and company day and night attacks with Fire Support Groups, Mortars and 105mm Light Gun in support. Whilst the ranges were somewhat constrained by real-estate and regulations the companies nevertheless got excellent training value out of the package. Witnessing a company night live-attack conducted almost entirely in the dark (using FIST kit to minimise white-light) was most impressive. When not live-firing, the companies utilised the opportunities offered by the dry training areas to the full to conduct some worthwhile, imaginative training in a non-Afghanistan / non-counter-insurgency context. With the assistance of the demanding terrain and some particularly inclement weather it provided a first-class, challenging environment in which to re-acquaint the boys with some more traditional infantry skills.

With a successful performance at Sennybridge behind them the companies returned to camp for a hard-earned Tihar break prior to a rapid turn-around and deployment on Ex WESSEX THUNDER phase 2 on Salisbury Plain. Organized by Field Training Unit, and supported with Tactical Effects Simulation (TES) equipment, the exercise is a CT3 event which sees BGs deploy to the fictitious country of Pokharistan. As an HFT event the focus of the exercise is on developing more conventional tactics (vice Afghanistan ones) but nevertheless in a contemporised operating environment. Thus the exercise saw the BG confronted with a scenario involving a 'conventional' enemy force operating synergistically with an insurgent force, often in urban areas populated by civilians. Nine days of company level battle-exercises tested the companies in different phases of war and types of operations, whilst BG HQ, Support Company's ISTAR Group and the AI Echelon elements were given their own bespoke training events. The culmination was a five-day BG FTX which saw the BG fight, influence and target its way across Salisbury Plain from west to east in order to defeat the Samarkistan Islamic Guard and the Berian Islamic Army. It was, as intended, a challenging and varied event with all elements of the BG being thoroughly put through their paces. As always the boys rose to the challenge and the BG put in a competent performance, generating some very positive feedback from the FTU observers. Particularly gratifying, at a time when soldiers' employment of the 'the Basics' is attracting much attention from the higher echelons of the Army, was the praise bestowed on the soldiers of the 1 RGR BG for their unstinting maintenance of high standards of battlefield discipline and basic skills and drills. Of note, Ex WESSEX THUNDER was the last throw of the dice in command of A Company for Maj Dammarbahadur Shahi, at 48 the oldest rifle company commander in the British Army, who has departed on posting to assume the post of Gurkha Major of the Second Battalion.

All in all 2011 was a busy and successful year during which 1 RGR personnel threw themselves into a wide variety of activities and challenges; and many success were achieved. Now, at the culmination of HFT, the Battalion finds itself well positioned to re-enter the rigours of MST in order to build on the foundations laid this year in preparation for deployment on Op HERRICK 17. At this stage it seems likely that the Battalion will return to areas with which it is very familiar on the forthcoming tour, but much is subject to change over the forthcoming months. Sadly this 'reporting period' has not been without sorrow: The death of Rfn Sachin Limbu at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital on 2 January 2012, after a Herculean 18-month battle for survival against the odds, has been keenly felt by all ranks of the Battalion. As plans are executed to fly him home to Nepal the Battalion mourns the loss of his inspirational, indomitable spirit. As 1 RGR once again embarks on the frenetic roller-coaster that is MST we will ensure that one eye is kept firmly on the home base and the welfare of those who returned injured from previous deployments.



Second Battalion

Newsletter

2 RGR led by Commanding Officer, Lt Col Fraser Rea, deployed to Afghanistan on HERRICK 14 on 29 March 2011 to take over the role of the Police Mentoring and Advisory Group (PMAG). B Company led by Officer Commanding, Maj Jamie Murray, were attached to 45 Commando Royal Marines and A Company, who deployed six weeks later with Maj Nick Thom in the lead, were attached to 1st Battalion The Rifles. Having completed six months of pre-deployment training on windy Salisbury Plain, and after a short respite of pre-deployment leave in February, the Battalion were well-trained, very well-equipped with the new Multi Terrain Pattern uniform and looking forward to getting the job started.

Once the majority of the main body had completed seven days of Reception Staging and Onward Integration (RSOI) and had had a chance to adjust to the hot, dusty climate (as opposed to the hot, muggy climate of Brunei), movement to the various final destinations began. The five Police Advisory Teams (PATs) deployed across the Helmand Area of Operations supported by small teams in Operational Coordination Centres. 70 soldiers making up the Regional Training Centre (South West) (RTC (SW)) flew directly to their new home, 4km outside Lashkar Gah (LKG), with the remainder of PMAG HQ going to Main Operating Base LKG. B Company flew to Shawqat to settle into Patrol Base Chill in Nad-e-Ali (South). Having taken advantage of being part of the last Battlegroup to deploy, A Company conducted further training and preparation in Brunei before deploying at the beginning of May to join 1 RIFLES based at Patrol Base I in Nahr-e-Saraj (South) (NES (S)).

After a successful handover/takeover with the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders (5 SCOTS) on 5 April 2011, PMAG HQ were well placed to continue developing the Afghan National Police (ANP) and in particular the Afghan Uniformed Police (AUP). Each police district in the British Area of Operations in Helmand (Nad-e-Ali, Nahr-e-Saraj, Lashkar Gah and the smaller precinct of Babaji) has an Operational Coordination Centre-District (OCCD) which answers to the Operational Coordination Centre Provincial (OCCP) based in the AUP Headquarters in Lashkar Gah. Maj Wes Hughes, along with Maj Tom Pike and Capt Alex Crawley, deployed nearly two months in advance to man these small cells that help District Chiefs of Police coordinate Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) activities and de-conflict their patrols and operations with ISAF activities.

PMAG HQ oversaw all the various moving parts with

the Chief of Staff, Maj Marcus Reedman, keeping everyone on the straight and narrow; Capt Ollie Cochrane ensuring the intelligence picture and threat assessments were analysed and distributed accordingly and Capt Danny O'Connor, as part of his role as Ops Officer, attending numerous meetings in Task Force Helmand HQ as Liaison Officer for the PMAG; not forgetting the Adjutant, Capt Angus Mathers, who was based in Bastion working tirelessly at ensuring all aspects of the Battalion administration continued to run smoothly.

During the first few weeks in April the various PATs led by Capt Jason Buckley, Capt Kaji, Lt James Arney, Lt Barry Cork and CSgt Bhupal, got to know their Afghan police counterparts by establishing key relationships through regular visits to police checkpoints spread throughout their respective AOs. Numerous shuras were conducted between the police and local nationals. During visits to the checkpoints, which can be conducted on foot (regularly wading through irrigation ditches), or in vehicles, the PATs collated information to ensure a safer working environment; carried out checks on manpower, firepower, accommodation standards, sanitation and water issues and passed the information up the relevant chain so that any necessary changes could be put into effect.

An important aspect of the role of a PAT is to conduct continuation training for the AUP to prevent skill fade and to further enhance their capabilities. This training is conducted by attached personnel; Royal Military Police (RMP), RAF Military Police and in the district police headquarters the Ministry of Defence Police (MDP). Every effort was continually made to ensure the AUP commanders were thinking and planning effectively themselves. PATs also encouraged the ground holding troops, such as B Company 2 RGR in NDA (S), to include the police in their operations, from the planning stages through to execution, as this is the most effective method of learning. Most of the AUP are locals from the area and therefore bring an added advantage to the troops on the ground because their understanding of the general atmosphere is second to none.

Before they are able to deploy out on the ground with the PATs, the AUP recruits must complete their training at the RTC (SW); a training centre located on the outskirts of Lashkar Gah. RTC (SW) is run primarily by 2 RGR soldiers along with RMP, MDP, US Marine Corps and AUP instructors. It provides an eight week training package for patrolmen, NCOs and Officers. With Maj Dave Lee at the helm the

physical training programme was considerably increased and discipline amongst the recruits was high. Passing out parades are the highlight of the month when the Provincial Chief of Police, along with local dignitaries, mullahs, local and often international media, view over 150 policemen graduating. 4 May 2011 saw the Graduation of the first Officers' to pass out of the RTC (SW); a grand affair that was marked out by everyone wearing a rose.

Even before A Company arrived in Nahr-e-Saraj (S), the insurgents were attempting to undermine them by spreading disinformation about Gurkha cruelty. However, this didn't wash with the locals who quickly welcomed the Gurkhas into the area. After a successful Relief in Place and TOA with D Company 2 PARA on 1 May 2011, the immediate activity focused on understanding the Area of Operation. This involved ground familiarisation patrols, forging relationships with key ANSF personalities, facilitating religious engagements and conducting shuras with influential Afghan personalities. All of this was overseen by Ops Officer, Capt Rob Morford. Although the AO was reputedly an area of active insurgency this has been suppressed to a large extent by ISAF activity. As part of Op OMID HAFT, Platoon Commanders Lt Ben Ball, Lt Ben Norfield and 2Lt Genillard led their platoons on numerous partnered patrols with Afghan National Army (ANA), Afghan Uniformed Police and Afghan Local Police (ALP), all of which entailed maintaining freedom of movement along key routes and disrupting insurgent activity in the AO.

Op TORA GORGA Ti 23 (Brave Badger in Pashtu) on 19-21 April 2011 was the first of B Company's big operations that set the precedent for the remainder of the tour. The operation saw many parts of the Company operating in close partnership with the ANSF and deploying to clear an area believed to be influenced by the insurgents. The operation was coordinated by Ops Officer, Capt Sam Meadows, and launched at first light with Gurkhas and Afghans moving stealthily into position in order to surprise the enemy at dawn. The Company conducted over 200 foot patrols throughout the area; from the dense population centres of Shin Kalay and Loy Bagh in the south, to the more remote, and underdeveloped villages of Noorzo and Zorabad in the north. Lt James Lawson developed a fine understanding of Loy Bagh and helped the Afghan Local Police during deployment to an area of previous insurgent activity. Elsewhere, Lt Nick Gross and his platoon dominated the population centre of Shin Kalay. This was a challenging undertaking since the village has often been associated with the insurgents and many residual sympathisers are still believed to live in the area. In the north, Lt Richard Roberts also achieved a great deal in a massive area of operations. Relentless patrolling, multiple shuras and meetings and several deliberate pulses of activity, culminated with OPTORA GORGA Ti 34 from 5 - 7 June where over ten detainees were captured.

Despite all the hard work, the multiple patrols, the long shuras, the conduct of training and more, time was always made to relax and recoup. Regardless of the standard of the FOB or CP, messing in the evening was the norm, as well as playing volleyball and staying fit in the gym. With mid-tour R&R

kicking in and the visit from the Lama and Pundit, morale was high as people went home back to their families in Brunei for a short respite.

July was significant for the Police Mentoring and Advisory Group as it saw the official transfer of authority of Lashkar Gah to the Afghan National Police. The Afghan Uniformed Police had been challenged on a number of occasions, but consistently responded in a professional, organized manner. A key example was the attack on the Provincial Governor's compound where the AUP, trained by Gurkhas, led by Maj Dave Lee, at the Regional Training Centre (South West) stopped a determined suicide bomber. The suicide bomber self-detonated early due to the stringent police checks and only caused minor injuries. The immediate follow-up saw a multi-department response led by a Bronze-level commander controlling an AUP Counter-IED team, CT officers and CID supported by a QRF, who immediately started an investigation. This was all monitored by a Silver-level commander under the tutelage of Maj Wes Hughes from the Operational Coordination Centre Provincial (OCCP) and was a display of the real professionalism that has developed. It is these advances that are allowing the rapid transition of responsibility for their own security to the Afghans.

With the departure of Capt Dan O'Connor for P-Company, PMAG saw the first change of Ops Officer with a few more to go before Capt Alex Crawley was in place to take on the ever-expanding PMAG role. PMAG expanded significantly throughout the summer months; firstly, taking the lead on the PRC, Helmand's 'SWAT' of the future, with a provincial reach coordinated by Capt Jason Buckley. The Afghan Local Police (ALP) came on line and is growing rapidly in Nad-e-Ali and Nahr-e-Saraj. PMAG embraced this and moved forward towards developing the SO3 ALP role. The third layer of complexity added was the mentoring of the Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP) in barracks, with an incoming four ANCOP mentoring teams for the newly formed 5th Brigade.

Over the course of Op HERRICK 14 the Police Advisory Teams have overseen the transfer of 18 Check Points to the AUP, representing nearly three companies of Infantry freed up in the process. The five teams continued to operate across Helmand visiting CPs, providing continuation training, supporting operations and routine framework patrols and acting as the liaison between the AUP and the relevant Coalition Forces on the ground.

The Afghan National Security Forces, particularly the AUP, were known as being part of the problem, now they are looking to be part of the solution, but some serious barriers remain, namely - ill-discipline, illiteracy, corruption and extortion. PMAG are working to change this, expanding literacy lessons, encouraging AUP self policing, and the 'spoilers' anti-corruption working group, which all point towards positive changes.

The PMAG role was handed over to 1st Battalion The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment on 8 October 2011 and slowly saw the PATs extracting from all over Helmand. PMAG,

RTC (SW) and B Company left Bastion soon after on various flights back to Brunei where rear party received every last man with a home-coming reception in Toker Lines. With the return of A Company at the start of November the final troops arrived at Brunei Garrison at three in the morning to be greeted by the whole of the Battalion. Two weeks of Normalization followed which was packed with parties ranging from company-level 'messing' to a huge post-Dashain party on the sports fields.

On 11 November Capt Rich Roberts led the Khasam Khane parade. 15 November was the medals parade

The Flying Kukris RFC -The Story So Far

By Maj Jamie Murray RGR, Club Chairman

After an enforced break of three years due to Op HERRICK and the 2 RGR Arms Plot to the UK, the Flying Kukris RFC, the Brunei Garrison resident rugby club, returned to the South East Asia touring scene in mid 2009. Since then the club has participated in tournaments in Bali, Singapore (twice), Brunei, Bangkok, Manila and Hong Kong. 22 Officers and Men. Six countries. One epic season. This is their story.

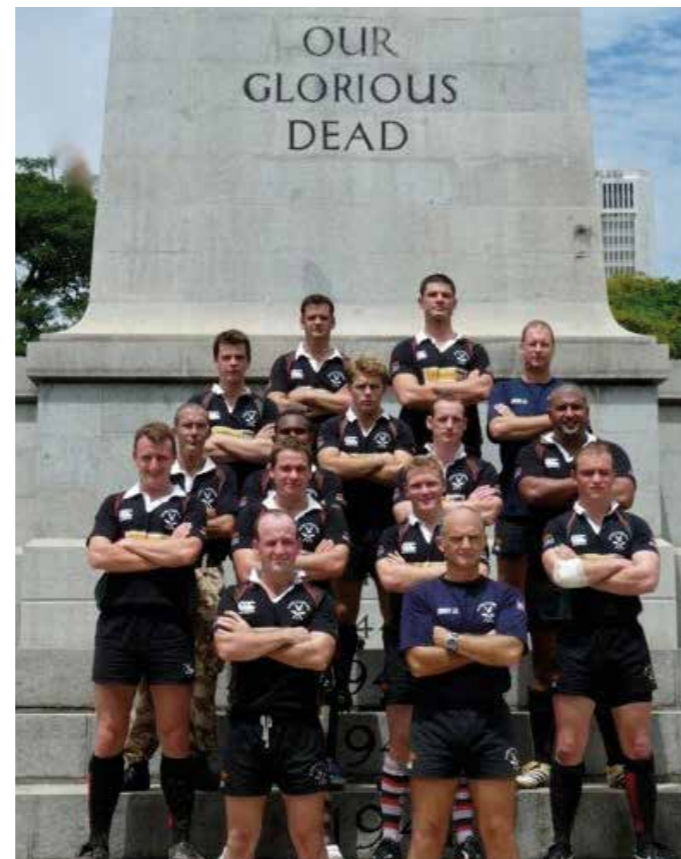
As these things do, it began with an evening in a tartan-carpeted gentleman's club in Mayfair and a shadowy meeting - a coming together of two Gurkha officers, both veterans of rugby touring in SE Asia, both past members of the Flying Kukris RFC. One was the grizzled, returnee from HERRICK 9 and Commanding Officer of 2 RGR, Lt Col Chris Darby; the other a frustrated MOD-desk wallah and soon to be Officer Commanding B Company 2 RGR, Maj Jamie Murray. Some claret and an idea. What about we put the club back together again? Dismiss the idea. No time. No money. HERRICK 14 PDT looming. Some more claret and another idea. What about putting the club back together again and embarking on the most audacious season of rugby touring ever undertaken in the Far East? Dismiss the idea. Not possible. Who would have us? No kit. No money. No sponsorship. No time. Some more claret. Now where were we? Bali first I think Sir.

And thus, in early October 2009, barely four weeks after the completion of Post Operational Tour Leave and the 2 RGR Battalion Arms Plot back to Brunei, 16 men drawn from across the resident Garrison boldly burst onto the SE Asian rugby scene once again. Bali it was. The Bali International 10's to be precise. Rugby for Brunei Garrison soldiers was back - and what a re-entry it was. On the sun-baked idyll that is Bali, in front of a packed house at the terrific Changu Sports Club, 24 teams from across the Australasia region met to do battle. From our soon-to-become nemeses from Fiji - Cobra and Devetelevu RFCs - both feeder sides for the national team; to the old-fashioned, tour-virgin dominated social squads from the parts of Australia that only see red; to the usual tribal suspects from Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia. And the Flying Kukris, who had

where GOC 4 Division, Commander 2 Brigade, the High Commissioner to Brunei and CO 2 RGR presented medals to 83 of the 94 officers and soldiers who had been on their first tour. The evening followed, with a very fitting beating of the retreat and Ladies Dinner Night with the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas in attendance.

The Battalion started their well-earned Post-Operational Tour Leave on 18 November 2011 ready to return to work in the New Year for JLC cadres, an overseas exercise in New Zealand and an abundance of personal and professional courses. Jai 2 RGR!

a spread of quality, a smattering of representative experience, a smudge of tour-virgins and a solidly defining feature - all soldiers and all set to enjoy themselves on and off the field. The inaugural skipper Capt Tom Rose RGR, aided by Sgt Scott Kelly AAC and Cpl Max Masikau AAC, led the way. Five games later which included desperate defence against the Fijian siege guns and free-running try scoring against the hapless Aussie, the Kukris had well and truly announced their return.



Maj Jamie Murray, Chairman, and Lt Col Chris Darby, President, architects of the club revival, with the team at the cenotaph in Singapore

With something in the rugby bank and a third-half already won, the quest then switched to finding real money to fuel the habit. Army Sports Lottery, NAAFI, CAT-FINNING and FBH (the contracted helicopter provider for Brunei Garrison) all augmented the Commanding Officer's fund. We were up and running. New gear was ordered. Fees for our next sojourn squared away. Now where we? Singapore next Sir.

he Singapore Cricket Club International 7's to be precise; the scene of a British Army rugby victory in bygone days. Remembrance Weekend on the Padang. Rugby. Big crowds. BFBS in attendance. Let's put on a show. Hard lessons in 7's rugby followed - our Fijian friends again put us to the sword on Day One. But not to be outdone nor outshone the squad rallied later in the day and gaining in confidence, began to play Sevens as it should be - out of contact. Wins followed. And by the end of Day Two - after a dignified and well-received ceremony to mark Remembrance Sunday - the club found itself under the lights playing in the final of the Jug competition. Our opponents - the home-side - the Singapore Barbarians

boasted an ex-overseas international and a plethora of young Singaporean internationals. On our side, Sgt Bryon Lutunatabua AAC and Capt Rob Morford RGR whilst not capped players per se (they at least come from different countries) stepped up to the mark. Supported from the bench by Capt O'Connor RGR and the President, Lt Col Darby RGR himself, the team put in what was surely one of the gutsiest performances by a scratch side ever seen on the Padang. A nail-bitter which was lost on the last kick of the match in extra time. The standing ovation that followed indicated that winning was indeed not everything. And then it was time to unveil the now-trademark Kukri party piece - the Warriors Haka. Led by the indefatigable and very Welsh QMSI Taff Jones APTC, the assembled members of the Kukris stormed the after-show dinner with the unveiling of 'We Are Warriors'. An indescribable mix of Welsh valley lyrics, hand-actions, jerseys over heads and tongues in lips - in the style of the famous haka. The effect? Third half won. Hearts and minds secured. Defence diplomacy achieved. Encore. Free beer. Re-runs available on YouTube. Immediate invite to next year's tournament. Job done.



Welcome back. Out-jumping the Fijian tournament winners, Capt Ash Hough RGR soars high for the Flying Kukris first run-out in Bali, Oct 2009



Capt Rob Morford and Cpl 'Max' Masikau combine to put one past the hapless Hong Kong Wanderers en route to winning the Plate in the Manila Tens in March 2010

Now where next Sir? Ah yes - Bangkok. February 2010 and the Bangkok International 10's. By now a familiar pattern; slow starters on Day One (possibly due to first night excesses on D-1's), followed by tenacity, guile and sheer grit by the end of the tournament. But now a new phenomena and one that would bedevil us until the next tour. Our squad, averaging at least five years per man older than our sprightly opponents, began to show some susceptibility to injury. In the pre-tournament warm-up in Brunei, Major Murray hit the sick-note list, with the roll steadily growing as we punched above our weight on the hard-baked, high humidity fields of Bangkok. From a limited pool of players, the onus was now on preservation as the club prepared itself for the tour to end all tours in March. Where was that one going to Sir? Of course, the Manila International Tens, followed by the Hong Kong Football Club Tens and a weekend at the Hong Kong IRB Sevens. Just your average tour then.

A venture of this magnitude, in a busy schedule, with even more limited funding is a feat which had eluded the club in the past. But not this year. Thanks to our sustained defence diplomacy and on and off field feats, invites were forthcoming, fees waived and red carpets dusted off. It seemed everyone wanted a piece of this mysterious, stylish yet self-effacing group of British Army officers and men from Brunei. The scene was set for the Tour of Tours and what was set to become our very own Thriller in Manila.

Manila has long been a happy hunting ground for British Army squads, most noticeably our friends from 4 SCOTS (The Black Watch). And so we were delighted to renew our acquaintance with the kilted Scots and Fijians again this year - some eight years since the two clubs had joined forces at the same tournament. And as the play began it became immediately obvious that here was our best chance to win something and

- in a small way - attempt to live up to our forefathers who won the inaugural tournament in 1986 (when The Flying Kukris were a major part of the Hong Kong rugby scene - indeed remnants still exist there today, focusing on mini-rugby but carrying our name).

With early wins under our belts, the Kukris found themselves in the unusual position of group leaders entering the last round of the Day One play-offs. Yet, as is the norm in the more popular tournaments on the circuit, at least one team is sprinkled with international stars. And so it was that the Australian select side - complete with World Cup stars Joe Roff and Jeremy Paul - trundled out of their corporate tents and spanked the Kukris out of sight in a seminal display of rugby talent. Although it was gratifying to remind our friends, on a balmy evening on the Manila strip, of another balmy evening in Sydney in 2003.

On to a very early start on Day Two, and with the casualty list mounting (Lt James Arney RGR - shoulder, Sgt Byron and Capt Morford - blood bins, Capt Ash Hough RGR - bad tummy and WO2 Rorrison AAC, Capt Jock Reid R SIGNALS and Lt Col Darby RGR - all age), the squad mustered for another day of terrific rugby. And a win. And then another. And then the Final of the Plate. Without blinking but by running themselves into the ground as is the Army way, Sgt Scott Kelly, Cpl Christopher Oakes, Cpl Max and Sgt Bryon all AAC and Capt Tom Rose, Mark Brightwell and Rob Morford all RGR, stepped up, quite literally, to the Plate. Our opponents were a strong expat team drawn from Australia and The Philippines, who had beaten us on Day One (late starters remember). Perhaps they were complacent. Perhaps the heavy downpour aided our dig-in and die mentality. But it didn't matter. A win is a win. Cue celebrations. Cue Haka.

All waves must crash. And so too did ours. At the feet of some of the world's best proponents of the short game in Hong Kong at the Hong Kong Football Club Tens - the most prestigious tournament of its type anywhere. Just to be playing was a coup. But barely three days after our exploits in Manila, and with a sick bay reaching crisis point, the big hits of Fiji legend Waisale Serevai and England's Michael Lipman, as well as all the slightly smaller ones from our much-loved Fijian chums, left the Kukris battered and scattered. Still there was a third half to be won. A haka to perform to the delight of the luminaries of the Football Club. And, as a result of our endeavours, the beginnings of a fruitful and happy collaboration with Kukri Sports. So impressed were the tournament sponsors with our showing - not least our name - that a partnership is now in place which has propelled our merchandise front and centre in the marketing halls of Twickenham and elsewhere. Good news indeed. Even better news was the Kukris attendance in the South Stand and then, by special invitation, the Royal Box, for the world-famous Hong Kong IRB Sevens.

And so the season drew to a close and minds turned to the imminent return of the RGR elements to the UK for three months of pre-deployment training for Op HERRICK 14. The squad dismantled after a post-season dinner in Malaysia and the presentation of club colours to all of the 26 men and one woman (special mention to Capt Charlie Walsh AGC for Treasurer/Manager duties). Regardless of size, shape, and experience everyone who signed up for the club in those heady early days in late 2009 played - from the novice Cpl

Jackson REME to the aged and infirm bodies of the Chairman and President. All stood up to be counted.

But a postscript is necessary. Where now Sir? Singapore again of course. And so it was, six weeks into PDT, that the Kukris again flew into Singapore. Courtesy of the excellent Army Sports Lottery funding the team arrived within hours of the kick off of our first match. Tired limbs and a distinct lack of match preparation (BARMA drills do not constitute handling drills) the squad suffered from its normal slow start. But, once again, a rally occurred on Day Two, and it took only a much-debated penalty try to end the Kukris involvement in the superb tournament in the Semi-Finals. Cue Haka. Cue defence diplomacy. Invitation to next year in the bag? Job done again.

Rugby in Brunei Garrison is alive and well. With thanks to our extremely generous sponsors and the Army Sports Lottery, the Officers and Men of the Garrison have travelled extensively and enhanced not only the image of the club itself, but of the British Army as well. From the Chief Executive of Hong Kong and former Prime Ministers to salt-of-the-earth rugby players and supporters from around the world, the Flying Kukris were met with universal acclaim and consistent gratitude for the endeavour of the British Army on operations. The Club had to pause whilst Afghanistan took central stage again, but like the proverbial Phoenix (or Eagle in our case), we shall rise again and fully intend to re-enter the Asian rugby scene. Come and join us.

Follow us on Facebook at Flying Kukris' Brunei RFC!



The Flying Kukris RFC 2009-2010



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

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

69 Gurkha Independent Field Squadron re-formed on 1 March 1981 in Hong Kong and moved to Kitchener Barracks, Chatham later that month. Re-designated 69 Gurkha Field Squadron and incorporated into 36 Engineer Regiment on 1 April 1993. Moved to Invicta Park Barracks, Maidstone 13 September 1994.

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

On 6 August 1982 Support Squadron 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.

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

Current Organisation

Regimental Headquarters The Queen's Gurkha Engineers

69 Gurkha Field Squadron (Search) QGE

70 Gurkha Field Squadron (Search) 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 Sir David Bill KCB

Officers of the Regiment (as at December 2011)

RHQ QGE

Lt Col E G Robinson	Commandant
Maj Ekbahadur Gurung	Gurkha Major
Capt T D Wootten	Adjutant
Capt Bishnubhadur Ghale	GRCMO

Field Officers

Maj A A Gooch

Maj A C J Rowson

Maj Dudhprasad Gurung

Maj Yogprasad Thapa

Maj Rajen Gurung

OC 69 Gurkha Field Squadron (Search)

OC 70 Gurkha Field Squadron (Search)

OC 7 Cadet Training Team

2IC 518 STRE 63 Works Group RE

Ech Comd 70 Gurkha Field Squadron (Search)

Captains

Capt Devkumar Gurung

Capt E J De M Thompson

Capt S I Ahmed

Capt Tarabahadur Pun

Capt Tulbahadur Ale MBE

Capt Mohankumar Tamang

Capt Meenjang Gurung

Capt Yambahadur Pun

Capt Ashokkumar Gurung

Capt Mohan Gurung

Capt Dirgha KC

Capt Buddhibahadur Bhandari

Capt Bishwabhadur Rai

Capt Kamalbahadur Khapung Limbu

Capt Purnasingh Tamang

Subalterns

Lt D W Luttig

2Lt D C Snook

2Lt M J C Romaniuk

2Lt H M G Bailey

RHQ QGE Newsletter

By Capt Bishnubhadur Ghale

For The Queen's Gurkha Engineers, the last 12 months have been characterized, as is the case for all the Brigade of Gurkhas units, by considerable commitments to Operation HERRICK, as well as overseas exercises.

The Queen's Gurkha Engineers has played its full part in current operations in Afghanistan. With Op ENTIRETY driving significant changes in the Corps Structure and the QGE, both 69 and 70 Squadrons re-roled to Counter-IED High Risk Search from February 2011. This is very new to the QGE and of course a challenging role to face. The new role will put the QGE in better shape to remain strong for the future force structure

beyond 2015. Both squadrons are now fully reorganized as search squadrons and 69 Gurkha Field Squadron (Search) will soon be preparing to deploy to Afghanistan in September 2012. At the same time, and on current plans, 70 Gurkha Field Squadron (Search) will provide search teams for the London 2012 Olympic Games and Airborne Task Force Search Commitment. This change of role for the whole of 36 Engineer Regiment (Search) is a boon for the QGE in particular. It has enabled RHQ QGE to restructure the sub-units and to re-examine the trade structure of the organization allowing for a more balanced and progressive career profile for our soldiers.

69 and 70 Gurkha Field Squadrons supplied high-risk search teams in both Operation HERRICK 11 and 12 tours. Whilst on operations, we lost two of the finest members of the QGE, Military Plant Foreman (MPF) WO2 Markland and Spr Ishwor Gurung; this was the saddest moment of the Regiment and we will not forget them. The Gurkha Commando Troop from 24 (Cdo) Regiment deployed on Op HERRICK 14 and returned in September 2011. The Gurkha Troop in 33 Armoured Engineer Squadron, 26 Engineer Regiment is also making history by conducting mechanized engineer training. The Troop deployed to Kenya to complete several construction projects and will deploy to Afghanistan in March 2012.

24 February 2011 will be remembered as an historic day for The Queen's Gurkha Engineers. The Queen graciously agreed to visit us in order to witness the 5000th Gurkha Sapper being attested, to commission three QGE Late Entry Officers and also mark the change of 36 Engineer Regiment's role from a General Support Engineer Regiment to a specialist High Risk Search Regiment. We were honoured to host General Sir Peter Wall KCB CBE ADC Gen, the Chief of the General Staff (QGE Training Officer 1984 - 1986) and Lieutenant General Sir David Bill KCB, Colonel of The Queen's Gurkha Engineers, Colonel BG and a plethora of civic dignitaries from the Maidstone area at the parade. It was a wonderful day for all of those involved in the visit and it is understood that it was the talk of the Palace, not withstanding an impending wedding or two.

The Regimental Headquarters have been extremely busy in order to ensure better careers and futures for officers and soldiers. Having had some significant successes, the QGE is very grateful to the RE wing for providing the opportunity to transfer our officers and soldiers on promotion to the

Royal Engineers capbadge and for allocating several places on technical courses. So far, 97 QGE personnel have transferred to the wider Army - mainly to the Royal Engineers. This year 18 new recruits are joining the QGE.

The QGE also bade a fond farewell to its Commandant, Lt Col S J Hulme MBE RE and family and Gurkha Major, Maj Prembahadur Ale MVO and family. To replace these officers, the QGE welcomed its new Commandant Lt Col E G Robinson RE and Gurkha Major, Maj Ekbahadur Gurung. The Regiment also celebrated its 63rd birthday.

Beside all these busy activities, QGE had a successful year in the Brigade's sporting events and on the ranges. QGE reached the final of the Nepal Cup and came third and fifth on Ex TRAILWALKER 2011. Capt Devkumar Gurung, ably supported by both RE and QGE soldiers, secured 16 of the 20 trophies at the Corps SAAM/Divisional Meeting and capped an already superb performance by winning the Inter-Corps Falling Plate competition for the first time. Six team members got into the Army 100. The individual Champion was Capt Devkumar Gurung and the Young Sapper Champion was Spr Manoj Gurung at the Corps SAAM. The Commandant and Gurkha Major QGE wholeheartedly congratulated them and all the personnel who have represented the Regiment, including those who have taken part in various other sports such as badminton, volleyball, Tae-Kwon-Do and running.

As with previous years, The Queen's Gurkha Engineers endeavours to fulfil its mission to the highest standard and looks forward to the challenges ahead, whatever changes there may be to the Army in the future. Jai QGE "Hami Jasto Kohi Chhaina"



69 Gurkha Field Squadron (Search) - Ex Northern Quest

By Capt E Thomson

Introduction

110 personnel of 69 Gurkha Field Squadron (Search) deployed on Ex NORTHERN QUEST 11, a squadron level Joint Force Enabling Exercise in Kenya in May 2011. We were tasked to complete infrastructure development projects, to increase the size of the BATUK training estate and better reflect the 'Contemporary Operating Environment'. We remained in country for three months and constructed elements of the new Forward Mounting Base at Laikipia Air Base; approximately four hours north of the capital Nairobi.

The project offered an unrivalled opportunity for 69 Gurkha Field Squadron (Search) to practise its combat engineering and artisan trade skills in an austere environment. Furthermore due to the complexities of shared plant, vehicles and equipment, it tested our ability to co-ordinate and control assets and resources and keep up with an ambitious programme of works. It was undoubtedly a challenge.

Task Sites

We had three independent sites running concurrently, all commanded by different Task Commanders. Yam Saheb had technically the most complex site, generally requiring more technical skill from his tradesmen. He built two ablution blocks, one to completion and the other to roof height. The Dining Hall was the single largest task - a 45 x 10m building constructed by Kamal Saheb and his team. Although technically not difficult, it needed a lot of forethought and planning to ensure his tradesmen were at the right place, at the right time.

Whilst out there we took over an incomplete task from 32 Armoured Engineer Squadron. This consisted of finishing off the Main Entry Point (MEP). Sgt Birendrakumar Kambang and his gang of locally employed civilians (LEC) were hard at work constructing and weather capping the walls to the MEP. All the tradesmen in all departments worked flat out, in the heat, giving up their nights and some of their days off to ensure their tasks ran to schedule.

Camp Outline

Whilst deployed, we lived in a tented camp close to the task site. Each troop had its own line of tents. ORs and SNCOs were housed in 18' x 24' tents with eight men to a tent. Our washing facilities consisted of private hessian cubicles and plastic bowls. Hot water for washing came from either issued solar showers or the ever faithful puffing billys. Everything was basic but comfortable. As always the boys made every effort to develop the facilities. They built an excellent volleyball court, table tennis table and a basic gym which afforded them the luxury to use while the sun set. To relax in the evening, the 'Jumpa n Chuppa' bar in the dining hall provided the boys with a big screen digital TV while they sat around playing cards and drinking a cold beer after a hard day's work in the sun. Every night the Master Chef

and his team cooked up a mouth-watering Gurkha curry with all the accompaniments, so there was no desire to eat out as you would not have got a better meal in town.

Relaxation

We made the most of the local area and sent groups away on Troop functions. A few groups stayed overnight at two different luxurious Safari Game Lodges. The Lodges were all full board; with spectacular African settings in the bush and a pool to cool down in in the heat. Lately, Troop functions were also organized at the local Sportsman's Arms Hotel. The hotel catered to our needs, providing an excellent, rough but ready 'messing' area. Contained within the hotel grounds were some excellent facilities; the pool providing unlimited fun and the first squadron best and worst diving competition was held. On days off there were an array of activities available for the boys to take part in, ranging from horse riding lessons and camel rides to game flights and safaris. The men were encouraged to make the most of these opportunities as they provided a once in a lifetime luxury at a low cost.

Adventure Training

The OC's intent was to get everyone in the Squadron to complete two three-day adventure training (AT) packages - one package being compulsory and the second voluntary. We had three AT packages available. Rift Valley Adventures was a tented camp within a Safari Park affording us with outstanding views of wildlife right on our doorstep. They provided excellent mountain biking, a Safari game drive and an adrenaline-filled day canyoning (abseiling down the middle of a 30m waterfall, and four cliff jumps into crystal pools). Savage Wilderness Safaris was set on the banks of the Nana River two hours from camp. Their package included kayaking, climbing and mountain biking, ending with an exciting white-water rafting trip. Later, 75 of the men climbed the second highest point on Mt Kenya. This was a three-day expedition, two days to ascend and one day to descend. Meanwhile, those who went on safari saw everything from hippos and elephants to cheetahs and lions! Furthermore the AT providers also provided us with live goats for 'Messing' and we were amazed by the number of hidden chefs who produced delicious curries.

Conclusion

We completed our task within the time available. It undoubtedly aided our development and preparation for future tasks. We were naturally sad to be away from our families but were content that they were safe at home with friends and loved ones. We returned to them in August and took some well-earned leave before our next task. Jai 69, Jai QGE.

70 Gurkha Field Squadron (Search)

By Capt S I Ahmed

2011 has been another busy year for 70 Gurkha Field Squadron (Search), not least in terms of the change in the Squadron's title and role. No longer a Field Support Squadron, we have seen a significant change in manning structure and the change in direction to carry out Advanced Search.

As a Field Support Squadron, 70 were ideally suited to supporting conventional operations on a large scale. The Squadron was equipped with the knowledge and skills to set up workshops behind the front line of a conflict and repair and replace engineer equipment to allow the battle to be conducted with full engineer support. In the last 12 months 70 Squadron, along with the rest of The Queen's Gurkha Engineers, have re-rolled into search and are committed to supplying search teams for Op HERRICK for as long as troops are deployed. 70 Squadron is no stranger to change and since its establishment in April 1960 the Squadron has been re-titled five times and re-formed three times, most recently on 1 April 2000 as 70 Gurkha Field Support Squadron, a title it held until 1 February 2011 when our change of role was heralded by a visit from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

The Squadron deployed early in the year on Ex INVICTA GOLD II, the Regimental FTX, which was held in Otterburn, UK. The weather was not ideal as we arrived on the cold and barren training area, surrounded by snow and ice. Conditions did not improve much over the course of the fortnight and the live firing was interspersed with attacks from the heavens in the form of hail, snow, wind and rain. The second phase of the exercise comprised the Section Competition and six brave section commanders led their soldiers out onto the area to complete a series of arduous challenges including the construction of a Medium Girder Over Bridge, a casualty simulation and extraction and a section attack over very difficult terrain. The men stuck to their tasks resolutely and not only did they complete the exercise without a single section pulling out, but they achieved a very creditable second place overall.

The second major deployment for the Squadron was to Wyke Regis to conduct combat engineer training. The weather for this exercise was far better and, although not as sunny as had been hoped, there was, at least, no snow or ice.

The high point of the exercise for me was during a sports session one evening, where training was being conducted in preparation for the inter squadron sports competition in September. Rugby is not a traditional Gurkha sport, and after that training session I have the feeling that it never will be. Certainly, playing 20 a side touch rugby on a pitch that was 20m by 10m was more akin to last year's re-enactment of the charge at the Battle of Killikrankie than a six nations final!

70 Squadron also took on the majority of the QGE entry into this year's Trailwalker competition. Capt Tara Pun Saheb and Sgt Kamal Gurung planned and executed a well-organized and remarkably comfortable Checkpoint Six, with the Gurkha Major commenting on the excellent standard of breakfast being served on the Saturday morning. The real heroes of the event, however, were the men who took part; LCpl Nishan Lama and Sprs Bashanta Rai, Parbat Thapa and Topjang Rai put in a sterling effort, sadly crossing the line in third place behind QG Signals and QOGLR. The QGE B team also put in an amazing effort and crossed the line shortly after, still looking remarkably fresh.

While the Squadron has not deployed on a Joint Force Enabling Exercise this year, we have remained busy with a variety of tasks around the country to keep us going. In May Capt Mohan Gurung Saheb deployed with his Support Troop to the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst with the task of building a new messing facility for Gurkha Company Sittang. In five weeks of hard work, the area was transformed to provide the Company a first-class space in which to conduct events of all descriptions. Elements of Support Troop have also been involved in the construction of a C-IED training lane as 33 Engineer Regiment, Wimbish to support the training of C-IED and Search teams preparing for Operation HERRICK, as well as the construction of a training FOB at 3 Royal School of Engineering Regiment for the use of recruits going through Phase 2 training.

2011 also saw the celebration of the QGE's 63rd birthday - an occasion marked this year by exceptionally mild weather. It was an excellent event, the highlight of which was the award of the Bowring Trophy to LCpl Suman Ghale from 70 Gurkha Field Squadron (Search).

Her Majesty visits The Queen's Gurkha Engineers



On Thursday 24 February 2011, Her Majesty The Queen visited The Queen's Gurkha Engineers, for the first time since 1987.

The plan to invite Her Majesty had been initiated by the Regimental Headquarters The Queen's Gurkha Engineers in June 2010. The Adjutant QGE Capt James Walker liaised with the Regimental Colonel of the Royal Engineers to arrange this important and memorable visit which marked the attestation of the 5,000th QGE recruit and the Regiment's transition to the Advanced Search role.

Prior to the visit, the home of The Queen's Gurkha Engineers was a tremendously busy place with cleaning and preparation of the Barracks; the men even painted streetlights during weekends and whenever they could between the numerous parade rehearsals which were carried out by the Regiment.

On the day, the wives and families of the Regiment eagerly awaited the Queen's arrival in an atmosphere of hushed anticipation, which soon turned into excitement when the Regiment and the bands marched on to the Parade Square.

Once the Queen arrived all spectators craned forward as far as they could to catch a closer glimpse. Wearing a turquoise outfit with black accessories, including a black flower on her

matching hat, Her Majesty stepped out from the car, paused for the briefest of moments, and smiled.

Her Majesty was greeted by Lt Col Simon Hulme MBE, the Commandant QGE and Commanding Officer of 36 Engineer Regiment, who guided her onto a glass-sided dais in front of the Regiment. The Parade Commander Maj Warhurst, the Regimental 2IC, addressed Her Majesty and invited her to review the short parade. When she was inspecting the QGE attestation party, she was introduced to Spr Bal Budha Magar, the 5,000th recruit and champion trainee. He said afterwards: "The Queen asked me where I came from and if I had enjoyed my training so far. She also congratulated me on being awarded the champion recruit prize. It was a real honour to meet her".

Her Majesty also commissioned three Queen's Gurkha Engineers Late Entry Officers, Captain Ashokkumar Gurung, Captain Dirgha KC and Captain Kamalbahadur Khapung Limbu. They are the first officers of the Regiment to be commissioned by the Queen in person, the importance of which was not lost on them. Captain Kamal said afterwards, "I am really proud and honoured to be one of the only officers commissioned by the Queen. I doubt that we will ever see it again."

Once the parade was completed, Her Majesty was introduced to local and military dignitaries including the Lord Lieutenant of Kent, Allan Willet, the Chief of the General Staff,

General Sir Peter Wall KCB CBEADC Gen, who was attending in his capacity as Chief Royal Engineer, and Lieutenant General Sir David Bill KCB, Colonel of The Queen's Gurkha Engineers. The Mayor of Maidstone, the Member of Parliament for Maidstone and the Weald and the Chief Constable of Kent Police were also present.

There followed a capability display which gave Her Majesty an opportunity to speak to more soldiers and to ask about the tasks performed by the Regiment. In particular, she met Lt Luke Johnston-Smith who described 69 Gurkha Field Squadron's achievements on Op BAM and LCpls Kaniyal Thapa, Joseph Subba and Dalbahadur Rinjali who described artisan trade training and its application on operations. The Queen then moved on to meet Sgt Krishnabhadur Pun and Cpl Bikash Shrestha who spoke of their experiences in Royal Engineer Search Teams on Op HERRICK. She then took her place for an historic Regimental photograph.

Prior to taking lunch in the Officers' Mess, the Queen met Regimental families and spoke to the wives and children of

those who have recently returned from operations, bereaved families, and families of soldiers who are about to deploy. She was keen to hear how our Nepalese families enjoyed life in Maidstone and especially admired the colourful saris worn by the ladies. She was presented a Queen's Gurkha Engineers Regimental Brooch and a Mala by Miss Dilasa Rai, the daughter of LCpl Bhimal Rai.

We were honoured that the Queen joined the Officers and selected Warrant Officers for lunch in the Mess. Rather than bhat, we had a meal of pate, lamb and lemon meringue, all expertly prepared by our chefs.

For the Queen's departure after lunch, the whole Regiment and all the families lined her route, applauding enthusiastically and cheering as the Royal procession left the camp. Everyone was overjoyed by the Queen's visit, which will be a treasured memory for all those fortunate enough to be present.

Armoured Engineers in Africa - Ex ASKARI THUNDER 7

By Spr Ujjwalkumar Glan, 8 Mechanised Gurkha Troop, 33 Armoured Engineer Squadron

8 Mechanised Gurkha Troop from 33 Armoured Engineer Squadron, with a supporting element from SHQ and Support Troop, deployed on Ex ASKARI THUNDER 7 (AT7) from 30 March to 12 May 2011 in support of the 1st Royal Welsh Battlegroup. Ex AT is a Land Warfare Centre-sponsored Hybrid Foundation Training (HFT) Light Role Infantry Battlegroup (LR BG) Collective Training (CT) Level 2/3 event which is run in Kenya by the British Army Training Unit Kenya (BATUK). It provides the opportunity for LR BGs to conduct instrumented dry training and Live Firing Tactical Training (LFTT) in an austere, expeditionary and contemporary context in order to achieve CT3 competency.

The Activation Party deployed two days before the main body to take over the resources and engineer assets required for the exercise. On April Fool's Day, we landed at Nairobi International Airport and headed to Turaco Farm, a holding area near the Nanyuki Show Ground. There have been lots of changes since we left Kenya in July 2010 after completing Ex NORTHERN QUEST, a squadron-level construction task. Most notably, the roads have improved; giving us a lot less grief on the long trip north.

After spending a night in Turaco Farm we headed to FOB SWARA in a long convoy led by the Troop Commander, Captain Meenjang Gurung. Obviously, it was a long bumpy ride in the back of a Bedford but the landscape and the view of wild animals were awe-inspiring. At FOB SWARA we spent four days, and from there we deployed to three different locations and constructed Enhanced Harbour Areas (EHAs) for the Companies. At the FOB we established a Water Point to produce drinking water for the BG and carried out

maintenance of the FOB. Each EHA comprised a 150 x 120 m (approx) Cat Wire Type 1 perimeter fence, a Deep Trench Latrine complete with three bay toilet cubicles, Desert Roses for urine, Shower Frames, an Ablution Bench and Kitchen Soakaways. After handing over the EHAs to the respective Companies' CQMS, we returned to Turaco Farm leaving a Support Section for Plant Tasks and to man the Water Point at FOB SWARA.

On arrival at Turaco Farm, we all rushed to collect our TES kit. After a quick familiarisation with the kit we were all involved in preparation for the next phase; Ex ASKARI WARRIOR, a period of Special to Arm (STA) Training. On the way to Archer's Post to commence this training we stopped at the School of Kenyan Combat Engineering where last year we had spent three months constructing the Range Control Complex during Ex NORTHERN QUEST. As soon as the Bedford stopped we all ran to the complex to find out if there had been any changes since it was handed over to BATUK. It was good to see that all the infrastructure was still standing with the Squadron Plaque proudly displayed at the front of the Office Building.

During the STA week we had a fantastic training package consisting of two days of Counter Mobility, a day of Mobility including erecting the Infantry Assault Bridge and 5, 8 and 12 Bay Armoured Portable Ferry Bridge, and live firing on the last day. During this phase, we were also visited by Brig Robinson, Commander, on 8 February, who was very impressed with our training package. After this phase our three sections were attached to their respective companies for the rest of the exercise.

The third phase of the exercise was Ex ASKARI CENTURION. It was a three-way 48-hour rotation including a Combined Arms Live Firing Exercise (CALFEX), a FOB-based TES Air Land Integration and patrolling exercise and a TES battle run. We were heavily involved in all aspects of the exercise on engineering tasks including route clearance (SCATMIN), and vulnerable point and area clearance drills, Explosive Method of Entry (now known as Forced Entry), construction of a 5 Bay APFB, the use of Mini Fascines, and much more. The CALFEX was the hardest phase of the exercise and involved a 7 km long non-stop live firing range conducted in extremely hot weather. After this phase the entire Battlegroup returned to Turaco Farm for the Final Exercise known as Ex ASKARI SPARTAN. While we were preparing for the Battlegroup Engineer (BGE) Capt Mike Barry, Troop Commander Capt Gurung and Troop Staff Sergeant, SSgt Dilkumar Rai were involved in a command level exercise known as Ex ASKARI MARAUDER which involved a series of ROC drills and TEWTS, with the engineer contribution focusing on obstacle crossing drills.

The final exercise lasted for six days and was conducted around the area of Lolldaiga. We were all attached to our respective companies leaving the Troop Staff Sergeant and his supporting element with A1 Echelon. The BGE had yet again disappeared into the depths of BG Main and the Troop Commander was seen running around on recce tasks until his eyes bled. Once again the exercise included several heavy engineer tasks making us one of the busiest supporting elements in the Battlegroup. Every aspect of training was tested in this Phase which we had been practising since day one of the Exercise. The last day of the exercise was particularly memorable for us, especially for the section

attached to A Company. A Company deployed ahead of the others and seemingly attacked every position at the top of the surrounding mountains. A long, tiring and at times emotional exercise finally came to an end with the words "Stop! Stop! Stop!" around 1100 hrs, although it took until after dark to return to Turaco Farm after clearing the Training Area.

I must mention the BBQs which we had before and after the final exercise, which boosted the morale of the Battlegroup. We were also fortunate enough to have a squadron of QOGLR attached to the BG who invited us for a goat curry on Nepalese New Year's Eve. It was a great evening.

After cleaning and handing back all vehicles and resources, we were split into groups for the long-awaited Adventure Training. Some of us went to Savage Wilderness Camp in the local area to conduct rafting, kayaking, cycling and climbing. A group climbed Mount Kenya and 27 of us went to Watamu which is 120 km north of Mombasa for a water sports package. We flew from Nairobi to Mombasa then took a coach to the luxury hotel on Watamu Beach, which is classed as the eighth best white sandy beach in the world - what more can you say!. Snorkelling in the Indian Ocean, mountain biking through small and beautiful villages, kayaking on fabulous waves and of course wind surfing and scuba diving, were all wonderful. Everyone had a splendid time and enjoyed what can only be described as a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

But every good time has its ending, and all too soon it was time for us to pack up and fly back to UK, safe in the knowledge that we had worked hard, supported the Battlegroup well and had enjoyed ourselves in the process. 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 organization.

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 - 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
Afghanistan	Op HERRICK		Aug 2010 - Jan 2011
Italy	Op ELLAMY		Apr - Nov 2011
Libya	Op ELLAMY		Apr - Nov 2011

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

Regimental Headquarters Queen's Gurkha Signals (Bramcote)
 246 Gurkha Signal Squadron (York)
 248 Gurkha Signal Squadron (MOD Stafford)
 250 Gurkha Signal Squadron (Bramcote)
 11 (RSS) Signal Regiment (Blandford)
 Brunei Signal Troop (Brunei)
 Nepal Signal Troop (Nepal)
 Alpha Troop 217 Signal Squadron (MOD Stafford)
 Royal Signals Infantry Support Team 1 RGR
 Royal Signals Infantry Support Team 2 RGR
 Royal Signals Infantry Support Team 1 YORKS

Also personnel in Gurkha Company (Sittang), Gurkha Company/Language Wing ITC Catterick, 10 Sig Regt, 15 Sig Regt, 16 Sig Regt, 18 (UKSF) Sig Regt, RSIT, BOWTAG(N), BOWTAG(S), DHU Chicksands JAMES Project, DES ISS, HQ SOinC(A), 5 Div, 1 MI Bde, 2 (SE) Bde, 11 Signal Bde.

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

Staff List

Colonel of the Regiment:

Maj Gen N A W Pope CBE

British Officers of the Regiment

Lt Col R J Watts MBE	Comd	RHQ
Maj D R Orr	OC	246 Gurkha Sig Squadron
Maj D Farragher	OC	248 Gurkha Sig Squadron
Maj P C Wettenhall	OC	250 Gurkha Sig Squadron
Capt L Bell	Ops Offr	246 Gurkha Sig Squadron
Capt M Gray	Ops Offr	248 Gurkha Sig Squadron
Capt J Sillito	Ops Offr	250 Gurkha Sig Squadron
Capt D Mitchell	SO3 G6	HQ Brunei Garrison
Capt I Ashan	SO3 G2/G3/G6	HQ BGN
Lt R Greener	Tp Comd	246 Gurkha Sig Squadron
Capt K G Hudson	Tp Comd	248 Gurk Sig Squadron
Lt A Cave	Tp Comd	248 Gurkha Sig Squadron
Capt M Bucknall	Tp Comd	250 Gurkha Sig Squadron
Lt R J Rowe	Tp Comd	250 Gurkha Sig Squadron

Gurkha Officers of the Regiment

Maj Dhanbahadur Gurung MVO	Gurkha Major	RHQ
Maj Narayanbahadur Bhandari MVO	RCMO	RHQ
Capt Prembahadur Ale	Gurkha Adjutant	RHQ
Capt Ambar Gurung	2IC	246 Gurkha Sig Squadron
Capt Tesharjang Gurung	2IC	248 Gurkha Sig Squadron
Capt Ganeshbahadur Gurung	2IC	250 Gurkha Sig Squadron
Capt Surje Gurung	CII Squadron	11 (RSS) Sig Regiment
Capt Hebindra Pun	OC	Brunei Sig Tp
Capt Kedar Rai	OC	Nepal Sig Tp
Capt Omprashad Pun	Tp Comd	246 Gurkha Sig Squadron
Capt Amritkumar Gurung	Tp Comd	246 Gurkha Sig Squadron
Capt Lokbahadur Gurung	Tp Comd	250 Gurkha Sig Squadron
Capt Shankar Gurung	Tp Comd	250 Gurkha Sig Squadron
Capt Bharat Shrestha	Tp Comd	217 Sig Squadron
Capt Dhiraahadur Khokaja Pun	PI Comd	Gurkha Coy, ITC (C)

Gurkha Officers holding E1/E2 Appointments

Maj Hitman Gurung MVO	Gurkha Major	British Gurkhas Nepal
Maj Yambahadur Rana	SO2 G6 CIS	1 MI Bde
Maj Yamkumar Gurung	SO2 G6 CIS	2 (SE) Bde
Maj Nirmalkumar Bhattachan	SO2 G6 CIS	5 Div
Maj Ratnabahadur Pun	OC GCN	15 Sig Regt
Maj Buddhahadur Gurung (1)	QM	15 Sig Regt
Maj Buddhahadur Gurung (2)	Trk Asset Manager	DES Net
Maj Tolbahadur Khamcha	SO2 Ops/Plan	DES ISS
Capt Purna Gurung	MTO	30 Sig Regt
Capt Rajeev Shrestha	SO3 CS Continuity	11 Sig Bde

Regimental Newsletter

By Lt Col R J Watts MBE Comd QG SIGNALS

Introduction

2011 has been another successful year for the Regiment. All three field Squadrons [246, 248 + A Troop 217 and 250 GSS], the independent troops (BST and NST) and RLDs have been extremely busy on operations and in high profile training and exercises throughout the year providing robust CIS Support to respective units and Headquarters. Members of the Regiment currently serving in UKTAP posts including Human Intelligence and 18 UK Special Forces Regiment are relishing the challenges and opportunities to work in the wider E1/ E2 arena, and we anticipate more serving with other specialist units in the very near future. This can only be a good thing for the Regiment.

Manning

As I write this note (14 Dec 11) the Regiment is 578 strong including 30 trainees (Intake 2010) who are at Phase 3 training at Blandford Camp. 30 further trainees (Intake 2011) have had their Attestation Parade on 9 Dec 11 and have completed their Basic Signalling Skills in Bramcote. They are now waiting to go to Blandford for their trade courses after the Christmas break.

Promotion

Last year, we had very few promotions, but it is starting to pick up. This year saw a total of 38 promotions (1 to Maj,

1 to SSgt, 1 to Sgt, 10 to Cpl and 35 to LCpl). The Regiment also had two candidates selected for commissioning at the R SIGNALS Late Entry Commissioning Board. WO1 Surendra and WO2 Nim will be commissioned into QG SIGNALS in the next 12 months. Despite excess strength across all ranks, promotion continues and we anticipate the situation to get better post 2012.

Redundancy

A total of 18 QG SIGNALS personnel were selected for redundancy in Tranche 1, which was announced on 1 September 2011. This is extremely unfortunate and our hearts go out to those individuals and their families affected by redundancy. We wish them every success in whatever they choose to do next and all the very best for the future. Unfortunately, the bad news does not end here as further redundancies will follow for another 3 - 4 years as part of the Government's Strategic Defence and Security Review. The announcement of redundancy 'fields', figures and eligibility for Tranche 2 is expected to take place in January 2012.

Transfer

To date, a total of 91 QG SIGNALS personnel have successfully transferred to other Arms and Service Directorates, namely R Signals and the AGC with 26 additional applications currently in progress. Due to the quality and qualifications of our soldiers, transfer prospects continue to remain high.

Squadron Updates

246 GSS had an outstanding tour of Afghanistan last year with 2 Signal Regiment and will deploy again to the same theatre of operations in 2012. They are currently immersed in their pre-deployment training. 2 Signal Regiment won both the Corps and the Army Operational Shooting Championships this year with, as expected, the majority of the team coming from 246 GSS.

248 GSS had an extremely busy but highly successful year with 22 Signal Regiment at Stafford. A number of officers and soldiers from the Squadron deployed on Op ELLAMY in support of the NATO mission in Libya. Like 2 Signal Regiment, 22 Signal Regiment too has had a huge success shooting this year. They finished 3rd and 4th overall in the Corps and Army Operational Shooting Championships respectively, and almost the entire 22 Signal team consisted of firers from 248 GSS.

As the Squadron responsible for Joint Task Force HQ1 (JTTFHQ1), Early Entry HQ1 (EEHQ) Squadron and the provision of a number of Operational Liaison and Recce Team (OLRT) tasks, 250 GSS had a very productive start to 2011. The Squadron deployed a bespoke Early Entry HQ to Cyprus to support the evacuation of entitled personnel from Egypt (Op KIRKDALE) and again to Malta to oversee the more complex evacuation of personnel from Libya (Op DEFERENCE). Under Op ELLAMY the Squadron also deployed soldiers into Bengazi to provide UK military officers with communications. The second half of the year has seen a rapid change for the

Squadron which is now focussed on preparing FALCON, the latest strategic communication system of the British Army, to deploy to Afghanistan.

Akin to 2 and 22 Signal Regiments, 30 Signal Regiment too has had a huge success at shooting this year. They finished 2nd and 3rd overall in the Corps and Army Operational Shooting Championships respectively, and almost the entire 30 Signal Regiment team consisted of firers from 250 GSS.

Brunei Signal Troop (BST) continues to deliver robust and reliable CIS Support to the British Forces Brunei. The Troop has performed superbly by providing secure and secret messaging through NSTN, Secure Fax, JOCS and VTC and also by maintaining the Military Telecommunication Network. With the installation of the latest state-of-the-art Telephone Exchange and a high speed IPLC (International Private Lease Circuit), the CIS capability in Brunei Garrison has increased significantly this year.

2011 has been a particularly busy year for BST as they have been engaged in various activities in support of the Garrison. The Troop was heavily involved in Flood Rescue Operations for the whole of December and January. The Troop also deployed to Melaka and Sheremban in Malaysia on an educational tour with the aim of visiting the Regiment's birthplace over the period 16 - 19 February 2011.

Nepal Signal Troop (NST) continues to deploy its military capability in support of BGN 'core functions', consistently achieving outstanding results against the tasks set. The Troop provides much-improved CIS support to HQ BGN, GWS and AWCs across the country as well as taking lead roles in various other BGN commitments.

NST continues to play a vital role in the maintenance of CIS equipment deployed at all AWCs in Nepal (excluding AWC Darjeeling) whilst providing a Forward Repair Team (FRT) throughout the year as required. They have had another extremely busy but highly successful year and continue to be in the vanguard of all BGN activities upholding the Regiment's reputation with style in Nepal.

Other Noteworthy Achievements in 2011

Other achievements have included:

- Promotion - Colonel of the Regiment to the rank of Major General.
- Meritorious Service Medals - SSgt Praveen Kumar Ghale & Sgt Laxmanbabu Rana.
- Joint Commander's Commendation (Op HERRICK 13) - Cpl Minbahadur Gurung.
- Top Shot of the Army (Queen's Medal Winner) - Sig Sudin Gurung.
- Corps Champion Shot - SSgt Devprakash Gurung.



Trainees of Intake 2011 taking the Oath of Allegiance to the Queen on 9 December 2011

- Trailwalker - second and fourth positions overall out of approximately 500 teams.
- Shooting - Our marksmen secured seven of the top ten positions in the Army 100. This is an unprecedented success, which perhaps no other unit has achieved in the history of the British Army Operational Shooting Competition. As in previous years, the Regiment played a significant part in assisting R SIGNALS win both Corps and Army Shooting Championships including the Methuen Cup for a second year in a row.



Commander 1 Sig Bde, Brig D G Robson being welcomed to RHQ QGS on 28 February 2011



Commander, GM and Cpl Debendra at the start of the Doko Race during their duty trek in October 2011



Commander QGS cutting the 30th Anniversary cake during Trailwalker 2011

Summary

Despite the uncertainty surrounding changes and cuts, the Regiment remains on the front foot and continues to punch above its weight. Operational commitments have seen QG SIGNALS soldiers supporting Op HERRICK and also at the forefront of new operations in North Africa and the Middle East. With the delivery of FALCON to 250 GSS, the Regiment is in the vanguard of delivering the next generation of CIS to the British Army. Our men continue to display the ideal balance between technical intelligence and robust soldiering. Success continues in the wider sporting and charitable arenas. Trailwalker 2011 was

the largest and most successful Trailwalker yet. Over 500 teams entered, with approximately £1.3 million being raised. Teams and individuals have competed, and won, at the highest levels, with the Shooting Team providing a historical moment for the Regiment. In spite of the busy schedule and competing demands, the family spirit within the Regiment remains equally strong and the support for the Regimental Dashain and Regimental Birthday demonstrates the unity across our disparate family.

2011 has proved to be yet another outstanding year for the Regiment and will surely be a significant chapter in the Regimental history.



Colonel BG, Col I A Rigden OBE MA, being briefed on FALCON during his visit to QGS on 30 November 2011



Commander and GM with BST and RLD personnel during their visit to Brunei in October 2011



Trailwalker 2010 winners - QGS 'A' Team approaching the finishing line

The Freedom of Nuneaton and Bedworth

By Cpl Jayaram Puri



The High Sheriff, Richard Hardy, talking to soldiers on parade while the Gurkha Major and OC 250 GSS look on

250 Gurkha Signal Squadron and the Regimental Headquarters of Queen's Gurkha Signals, which are part of 30 Signal Regiment, have been stationed in Gamecock Barracks, near Nuneaton, since 1993 and 1996 respectively. The Regiment maintains a strong relationship with the people of the Borough of Nuneaton and Bedworth. It is due to this trust and the friendship between the Regiment and the local residents that the Borough Council granted the Regiment the Freedom of the Borough.

On Sunday, 26 September 2010, officers and soldiers of the Regiment preceded by the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas proudly marched through Nuneaton to the market place and halted in front of the Town Hall at about 1100 am, warmly applauded by members of the public and the ex-service community. The parade commander, Lt Col R J B Spencer, gave the order for the General Salute, which was received by the Mayor, Councillor Don Navaro and Col D B Warne. The Mayor then delivered his speech and presented the Freedom Scroll to the Regiment. In return, the Commander presented the Mayor with a Kothimara Kukri, a symbol of the pride and bravery of

the Gurkhas. Col Warne expressed his thanks to the Mayor and people of Nuneaton and Bedworth for granting such an honour to the Regiment. The parade was then inspected by the Lord Lieutenant Martin Dunne, High Sheriff Richard Hardy, Chief Executive Christine Kerr and the Mayor, accompanied by Colonel Brigade of Gurkhas, Colonel D G Hayes and the Gurkha Major, Major Dhanbahadur Gurung.

RQMS, WO2 Nim Pun played the pivotal role of Parade RSM on the day, whilst Gurkha Adjutant Captain Prembahadur Ale was the Parade Adjutant. There was much media interest and Captain Narayan Bhandari MVO, the Regimental media officer was kept busy briefing and marshalling reporters.

After having been granted permission to march off by the Mayor, the Regiment then marched through the streets of Nuneaton Town with pipes playing, banners flying and drums beating.

So ended a very significant day in the history of Queen's Gurkha Signals.

QGS 62nd Anniversary Celebration and Association Dinner 24 September 11

By Sgt Sanjeev Rai



Commander Memsahab cutting the 62nd Regimental Birthday Cake, assisted by Col of the Regiment and GM Saheb

On the glorious morning of 24 September 2011, Queen's Gurkha Signals serving and retired members, with their families, gathered in Bramcote to celebrate the Regiment's 62nd Birthday; also present was the Colonel of the Regiment, Maj Gen N A W Pope CBE.

Individual awards for the Best Sportsman, the Most Hard Working Soldier, the Best Trainee, the Best Piper and the Best Shot were presented by General Pope on the day.

This year, all those who had made a significant contribution to Queen's Gurkha Signals were paraded in front of the Regiment. SSgt Devprakash Gurung and Sig Sudin Gurung were congratulated by Maj Gen Pope, the Commander and Gurkha Major, who gave each of them a Khada. SSgt Devprakash was the Corps Operational Shooting Competition Champion in 2011, whereas Sig Sudin was the winner of the Queen's Medal in the Army Shooting Competition - the first in the history of QGS.

The Inter-Squadron Sports Competition began in the afternoon after the big birthday lunch. This year, basketball, football and tug-of-war were played and musical chairs was organised for the ladies. Everybody seemed to enjoy themselves, cherishing the moment. The tug-of-war was the event to watch. 250 GSS became victorious claiming the brand new champion's trophy.

The Association dinner was held in the evening. It was delightful to see so many ex-Commanders and Gurkha Majors; they are the giants on whose shoulders we are standing tall. The Colonel of the Regiment explained in his speech that, despite the challenging time ahead, we will still give our best for Queen and Country. We are confident we will succeed. Jai Queen's Gurkha Signals!



OC 250 GSS, with the winning trophy, flanked by Col of the Regiment and GM on the left and Sig Uttam and Comd QGS on the right



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.

Organization:

- 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 November 2011)

Officers of the Regiment

Lt Col T R Blackmore RLC	Comd QOGLR
Maj P T Smith RLC	Second in Command
Maj Khimprasad Gauchan	Gurkha Major
Capt H P M McCullough RLC	Adjutant
Capt A Jenkins RLC	Operations Officer
Maj C R Woodley RLC	Regimental Quartermaster
Maj G N Priestley RLC	Regimental Technical Quartermaster
Maj S Bates AGC (SPS)	Regimental Administrative Officer
Capt Kumar Gurung	Regimental Career Management Officer
Capt N S Homer RLC	Regimental Welfare Officer
Capt Tik Gurung GSPS	AGC (SPS) Detachment Commander
Capt A Hutcheon RLC	Regimental Training Officer
Capt Nandprasad Kala	Gurkha Chef Manning Officer
Capt O Chaney RLC	Regimental Signals Officer
Capt J M Murley REME	OC LAD
Maj E J M Osborne RLC	OC 1 Sqn QOGLR
Capt M A Boomer RLC	2IC/Ops Offr 1 Sqn QOGLR
Capt Chakrabahadur Neupane	Admin Offr 1 Sqn QOGLR
Capt Rudrabahadur Chhantyal	Tp Comd 1 Sqn QOGLR
2Lt A Mortimore RLC	Tp Comd 1 Sqn QOGLR
Maj A F West RLC	OC 28 Sqn QOGLR
Capt R A Baker RLC	2IC/Ops Offr 28 Sqn QOGLR
Capt Baldeep Tamang	Admin Offr 28 Sqn QOGLR
Lt A R Norman RLC	Tp Comd 28 Sqn QOGLR
Maj A C Punter RLC	OC 36 (HQ) Sqn QOGLR
Capt I K Bartlett RLC	2IC/Ops Offr 36 (HQ) Sqn QOGLR
Maj C Hampton-Stone RLC	OC 66 Sqn RLC
Capt D J Smith RLC	2IC/Admin Offr 66 Sqn RLC
Capt S P Banks RLC	Tp Comd 66 Sqn RLC
Lt D M Bransby RLC	Tp Comd 66 Sqn RLC
Lt N E Gomersall RLC	Tp Comd 66 Sqn RLC
Maj P M K Beaumont RLC	OC 91 Sqn RLC
Capt Diwan Limbu	2IC 91 Sqn RLC
Capt Hariprasad Rai	Tp Comd 91 Sqn RLC
Maj J Hoban RLC	OC 94 Sqn QOGLR
Capt Palijar Tamang	2IC 94 Sqn QOGLR
Capt Ganeshkumar Tamang	Tp Comd 94 Sqn QOGLR
Lt J McBride RLC	Tp Comd 94 Sqn QOGLR
Capt Bhimprasad Gurung	OC Gurkha Tp, DST
Maj Rudrabahadur Sahi	OC 86 Sqn RLC, 25 Regt RLC
Maj Tirtharaj Gurung	Trg Maj OHSG, RHQ RLC TA, Grantham
Capt Devendra Ale	SO3 Instr BOWTAT BOWTAG(S), Bulford
Capt E Bowman RLC	OC/SO3 Log Sp QOGLR Det Brunei
Capt Indrabahadur Tamang	Det Comd
Capt Rajpati Gurung	2IC/MTO British Gurkhas Kathmandu
Capt D Smith RLC	SO3 Tpt/Mov
Capt Ganeshbahadur Gurung	PI Comd, Gurkha Coy, 2ITB

Commander's Overview

By Lieutenant Colonel T R Blackmore RLC

It is a great honour and a privilege to command The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment, especially at such a pivotal time in its history. I have inherited a Regiment rich in culture and tradition and with a family ethos and reputation rivalling the most revered anywhere in the British Army. I understand the unique responsibilities of this custodian role and will steward the wider Regimental family through what is likely to be a very challenging period.

The exploits and adventures of the squadrons and soldiers during the past year speak for themselves in the testimony they bear to the legacy of previous generations who have worn our cap badge. Their collective achievements - exemplified in 2011 by Captain 'Hutch' Hutcheon (training), Lance Corporal Rudra Limbu (shooting) and Private Bikash Kerung (Operation HERRICK 11) - are truly remarkable and the latest intake of recruits, who took their oath of allegiance during the Kasam Khane parade on 9 July, certainly have a lot to live up to.

Nevertheless, the Regiment faces many challenges in the immediate future, not least multiple concurrent operational deployments and Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) reductions to the Army, whilst re-rolling the Regiment to a multi-disciplinary supply and distribution organization.

Following a much-praised deployment on Operation HERRICK 11 in the Close Support role, we again find ourselves preparing for multiple operational tasks. In Afghanistan, the RHQ, 94 Squadron, a Petroleum Troop and members of the REME LAD will form the nucleus of the Theatre Logistic Group, also taking under command a plethora of other logistic support functions. At the same time, 1 Squadron deploy in the police-mentoring role with the Welsh Guards with a Troop detached to 4 Logistic Supply Regiment engaged in Combat Logistic Patrols. Meanwhile, 66 Squadron will deploy concurrently

1 (Pahilo) Transport Squadron QOGLR

The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment is rightly well known throughout the Army and 1 Squadron has done much this year to underline why the Regiment is held in such high regard. The pinnacle of this, during the first half of 2011, was the Squadron's deployment with the Royal Welsh Battlegroup on Exercise ASKARITHUNDER in Kenya. An infantry exercise, the Squadron displayed its worthiness to be considered for an out-of-trade position on Operation HERRICK 16.

The Squadron has now formally re-ORBAT'ed into its forecast operational lay down although inevitable changes came thick and fast for a while with the morphing military and political climates as Task Force Helmand (TFH) moves into the 'transitional' phase within the Province. The reputations of the Regiment and the Brigade of Gurkhas have greatly assisted in

to Cyprus on Operation TOSCA, leaving the remainder of the Regiment on stand-by for other duties, the most notable being the likely task of providing support to the London 2012 Olympics.

Whilst the focus of our immediate efforts will continue to be operational, the success and reputation of the Regiment does not lie solely on our preparation and performance on operations. In light of the SDSR, the Royal Logistic Corps (RLC), and as such the QOGLR, will reduce. Over a four-year period a number of redundancies will unfortunately have to be made. I am pleased with the pragmatism and positive approach of our personnel and at the support we have received from ex-serving members of the Regiment in smoothing the transition to civilian life for those selected. In this regard I am clear that we will not forget those who choose to transfer or, indeed, leave the Army, and they will remain part of our wider Regimental Family and continue to receive our full support.

As the wider RLC itself adapts to posture more efficiently for future operations, the Regiment is likely to re-role to become a Theatre Logistic Regiment. This would see the movement of 94 (Supply) Squadron QOGLR from Hullavington to Aldershot and the re-rolling of 28 and 1 Squadrons to a Fuel and General Transport Squadron. I am in no doubt that our soldiers' flexibility, strong work ethic, pride and professionalism will ultimately allow the Regiment to emerge stronger at the end of any restructuring process.

The greatest strength of The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment is our enduring sense of pride and purpose. Whilst I am sure the myriad challenges currently facing the Regiment will require close management and a forward leaning approach, I am sure that we have a depth of talent and resolve to deliver to the QOGLR's traditional high standards. Jai QOGLR!

the opportunities available to the Squadron. This has resulted in the Squadron now being attached to the 1st Battalion, The Welsh Guards (1 WG) in a Police Advisory Training Team (PATT) role, a police Regional Training Centre (RTC) capacity and a separate Transport Troop being attached to 4 Logistic Support Regiment (LSR) within the Combat Logistic Support Regiment during the 12 Brigade deployment - this clearly displays the diversity of our soldiers. Their eagerness to get amongst the challenges ahead is tremendously encouraging. Already in higher formation training, this comes with a significant training burden and one that the Squadron is utterly dedicated to meet.

The Squadron has undergone much cascade training, attended the first 12 Brigade Confirmatory Field Exercise (CFX), which although early in the training cycle due to the

late notice of the Squadron's deployment, enabled an excellent opportunity to develop the skills learnt from the previous two squadron exercises in Sennybridge and Minley. The feedback from the Operational Training and Advisory Group (OPTAG) was positive, with areas to develop further but continually underlined by the value of the Gurkha soldier and the enthusiasm and drive to be better in this largely out-of-trade role. This highlights the words of Brigadier Fay's foreword from the 2010 Regimental Journal: "...we are rightly judged to be an operationally excellent regiment..." With the delayed 'green light' for deployment and in a multi-faceted role, they have done the Regiment proud.

One can only be impressed by the attitude and professionalism of our soldiers, at what is a difficult time in a changing environment, at home and on operations. The Squadron will ensure that it remains flexible and agile, probably more so than ever before. The Gurkha ethos will endure and is something which is greatly admired in our soldiers. They uphold the reputation of the Brigade of Gurkhas and the Royal Logistic Corps with their continuing achievements, in sport as well as in the field. The encompassing family environment, as always, assists the demands that are being placed on the Squadron. There is no doubt that our soldiers will be outstanding ambassadors on the forthcoming tour. Jai 1 Squadron!



1 Squadron on Ex SHARP KUKRI

28 Transport Squadron QOGLR

The past year has been one in which 28 Transport Squadron has settled back into barracks life, following the successful tour in Afghanistan on Operation HERRICK 11. However, as we would expect, the Squadron has still been kept busy. We are not, currently, committed to operations but this period has been dominated by the need to support the elements of the Regiment that will deploy on operations in 2012 as well as training for contingency operations ourselves. This year has also seen the first tranche of redundancies with a total of 17 individuals from the Squadron affected (including attached personnel). Sadly, they will leave the Army in August 2012.

The first noteworthy event of 2011 was a short deployment, in March, of a 90-man Squadron Group to Gibraltar on Exercise TARIK PATROL. The purpose of the deployment was to assume the responsibilities of the Royal Gibraltar Regiment but maximum use was made of the facilities on offer. A demanding training package, including tunnel warfare, was undertaken, a good deal of fundraising was done on behalf of the Gurkha Welfare Trust (achieved by a Kukri Dance, curry stall and Pipes & Drums display in the town centre) and, crucially, many friends were made.

In the summer, 28 Squadron welcomed a new command team with a new Officer Commanding, Major Alex West, a new Second-in-Command, Captain Ross Baker, a new Administration Officer with the welcome return of Captain Baldeep Tamang, as well as a new Sergeant Major, with the welcome return of WO2 (SSM) Dipendra Yakso. A number of exercises before and after summer leave gave the new team the opportunity to scrutinize the Squadron in the field: Exercise KHUKURI DANCE was a live fire range camp in Brecon and Exercise SUMAN WARRIOR was a defence diplomacy exercise in York with the 28 Squadron contingent commanded by Corporal Giriraj Limbu. The most significant event of this period was Exercise GRIFFIN VIPER 11, the yearly 101 Logistic Brigade exercise - the first pure logistic green exercise the Squadron had undertaken since 2005. The aim was to relearn our core transport skills to ensure we remain ready for any contingency operations; this was achieved with a four-day training phase at Swynnerton training area and a four-day tactical phase based at Bicester airfield with loops made to Salisbury Plain. The Squadron delivered 30 Flatracks of simulated ammunition to Old Carter Barracks for the Staff College Demonstration; brought our driver skills up to scratch and even conducted a



28 Squadron during Ex GRIFFIN VIPER

polished Convoy Support Centre for the rest of the Regiment. In November, the Squadron deployed on Exercise TIMBER TRUSS to support the RLC Troop Commanders' course on their final exercise. This was a useful additional period of training for the Squadron and the Gurkha soldiers, once again, proved ideal mentors to the young officers.

Since 28 Squadron returned from exercise, the focus has been support to the other elements of the Regiment that are committed to operations. Just before summer leave, the majority of M Troop under Lieutenant Alex Norman moved across to I Squadron to conduct Mission Specific Training (MST) and will deploy on Operation HERRICK 16 with 4 Logistic Support Regiment in the transport role. In return, the Squadron has been bolstered by the arrival of B Troop from I Squadron under the command of Captain Rudra Chhantyal. In the New Year we will also receive elements of 66 Squadron that are not deploying.

The Squadron is providing individual augmentees for the RHQ deployment to Afghanistan as Theatre Logistic Group next year as well as to 66 Squadron's deployment on Operation TOSCA in Cyprus. Furthermore, 28 Squadron is supporting I Squadron's MST by providing range safety staff, minibus drivers, CIVPOP (civilian population) and a guard force. In the background, 28 Squadron has taken over I Squadron's vehicles, is preparing vehicles for back loading to Whole Fleet Management, remains committed to Operation

QUICK THORN (in the event of prison warder strikes) and Operation BANKNOTE (to support the repositioning of 120 containers on Salisbury Plain) and is supporting Sandhurst exercises. This period is proving to be a challenging one with multiple moving parts.

Away from work, 28 Squadron was the lead for the Dashain festival preparations with Captain Baldeep Tamang planning and executing a superb event. This success was even more notable bearing in mind this was the first Dashain celebration to take place in Gale Barracks and Captain Baldeep had to work around our neighbours in the shared camp. In addition, the Squadron provided manpower for the regimental team that entered the RLC Military Skills Competition; the Regiment won the event for the second year in a row with Staff Sergeant Mekh Thapa and Private Bikash Kerung part of the victorious team. A regimental team also participated in the arduous Exercise CAMBRIAN PATROL and, with little training, did extremely well to be awarded a Silver Medal; half of this team was from 28 Squadron.

Mention must be made of Private Kiran Gurung. Kiran was wounded in action on Operation HERRICK 11 and, following his time in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham, is now living in a residential care home in Kent. The Regiment's Visiting Officer, Corporal Nagendra Nembang, has, without fail, made bi-weekly trips to see Kiran as well as ferrying many of Kiran's numberies with him. Thankfully, Private Kiran has made considerable progress this year and he is now engaging with



Sgt Samsher conducting a force protection lesson during Ex GRIFFIN VIPER

those who visit him. Kiran's parents have also stayed with him recently, which has aided his recovery greatly. Whatever he does in the future, Kiran will remain part of 28 Squadron. We will continue to visit him and he will not be forgotten.

Finally, we look forward to 2012 and the challenges ahead. The New Year will bring a new structure to the Regiment and a new name to the Squadron; from January we will cease to be a Transport Squadron and will reform as a Fuel and General

Transport Squadron with a British Troop (a Petroleum Troop) permanently with us for the first time. It is a relief that 28 Squadron, the original Gurkha Transport Squadron, will endure. We anticipate further pain with regard to redundancy in 2012 and this will be a leadership challenge for us all. In terms of our role next year, 28 Squadron may be called on to provide assistance to the Olympic Games in London or could even be used as a surge on operations. Come what may, we remain operationally focussed, relevant and ready. Jai 28 Squadron! Jai QOGLR!



Capt Baldeep briefs 66 Squadron personnel on arrival at the Convoy Support Centre in Bicester



The successful orienteering team

36 Headquarters Squadron QOGLR

The past year has seen a significant change within 36 Headquarters Squadron QOGLR. With the arrival of the new Officer Commanding, Major AC Punter RLC, Regimental Signals Officer, Capt Owen Chaney RLC and Admin Officer/Regimental Technical Officer, Captain IK Bartlett RLC, coupled with a turnover of senior personalities within Communications Troop, the Squadron has undergone a major period of upheaval. However, the new team reacted quickly and bedded themselves in with relative ease.

The early part of the year saw the Communications Troop heavily involved in G6 preparations. They provided G6 assistance on both Spearhead Lead Element and a dismounted close combat exercise in Kenya. Further to this, they have also provided personnel for a deployment to Gibraltar, in support of 28 Squadron, and a number of other mission specific training exercises in support of, and part of, 1 and 66 Squadrons, in readiness for Operation HERRICK 16 and Operation TOSCA respectively. In preparation for their role as Theatre Logistic Group Headquarters on HERRICK 16, the Regimental Headquarters under the Commander, Lieutenant Colonel TR Blackmore, have completed their all-ranks briefing and subsequent training requirements. They are currently ramping up, in liaison with 9 Regiment RLC, for their Technical Measure of Readiness Exercise in 2012 and, after visiting 102 Logistic Brigade's exercise in Germany, are ahead of the game. As well as being involved with HERRICK 16, the Squadron has an involvement on HERRICK 15, with Captain Bartlett deploying as the HERRICK Reconciliation Team Commander.

With just over a month under his belt, the Officer Commanding found himself bouncing from one exercise to another. He deployed with the Regimental Signals Warrant Officer, WO2 Porter, and other Squadron personalities, on Exercise SUMAN WARRIOR (5-16 September). This was in Strensall Camp in York and was in support of a multi-national exercise, with troops from Singapore, Malaysia, Australia and New Zealand, as well as Britain. Major Punter and the other Squadron members then subsequently deployed on

Exercise GRIFFIN VIPER 2011 (21 September-1 October). ABy supported by Captain Owen Chaney and WO2 Porter, Major Punter commanded the convoy support centre, allowing the remainder of the Regiment to transit through and gain the requisite training as part of their preparation for Afghanistan.

Probably the most significant task undertaken by Communications Troop this year was the uplift to BCIP 5.4, training vocational and non-vocational signallers whilst completing the infrastructure and platform uplift seamlessly. On GRIFFIN VIPER 11 the Regiment really took the exploitation of BCIP 5.4 to extremes, successfully conducting a number of long-range communications moves throughout the UK. This was achieved through rigorous planning and sighting of command nodes. Latterly, Sergeant Uttam played a pivotal role in the preparation of the parade format for the Regimental Birthday and training for the Kasam Khane.

Throughout the year, Catering Troop have been heavily involved with everything that the Regiment has done. They have supported numerous exercises, most notably being praised for their performance earlier in the year when the Regiment was visited in the field by the General Officer Commanding Theatre Troops. They also provided a high quality lunch for the Regiment's 53rd Birthday celebrations, with Lance Corporal Bhawani being singled out for the effort he put into baking a cake for the event. They deployed on GRIFFIN VIPER 2011 providing the highest level of catering support to the Regiment and then, on returning, readied themselves for Maha Chaad Bada Dashain. They then followed this up with exquisitely prepared food for the night of Kalaratri and the celebration of Tihar.

In displaying the Squadron's versatility, away from operations, a few key successes must be mentioned. Captain A Hutcheon was awarded a QOGLR Gold Medal, for his continued contribution to regimental training and, in April, WO2 Porter successfully completed the Marathon des Sables and in doing so raised over £1800 for charity. Later, in November, Scott Porter also took part in the Druid Challenge, a multistage race along

the oldest roads in the UK. This covered a total distance of 84 miles following a route along the Ridgeway from Ivinghoe Beacon, Buckinghamshire, to Barbury Castle near Swindon.

Success flows through the Squadron. Corporal Rohit was a key member of the winning Gore Trophy team and on 2-3 November, the Squadron provided members to compete in the regimental team that took part in the RLC Orienteering Championships. The Championships were open to all RLC Regular and Territorial units. The team performed excellently,

66 Fuel Squadron RLC

Major Hampton-Stone, together with his right hand man Sergeant Major McHugh, has led 66 Squadron this past year. The Squadron has seen a huge amount of change and most importantly progression within its ranks since the beginning of the year. From its peacetime ORBAT of a petroleum troop (X Troop), and two transport troops (Y and Z Troops), it adapted to provide a troop to 1 Squadron for Operation HERRICK 16, a separate petroleum detachment of 25 personnel for Operation HERRICK 16, a contingent of around 55 for deployment on Operation TOSCA and a supporting rear party element. The squadron also provided the Spearhead Lead Element throughout its training from March until September, being on 48 hours notice to move. This obviously threw up many challenges and has been a tricky balancing act, especially when conducting essential mission specific training for two different operations. With trade training, including upgrades, and with the plethora of other outside taskings also hitting the Squadron from all directions, we have been extremely busy. Plenty of concurrent activity has been required with the soldiers working flat out to get the Squadron to the high state of readiness it is in at present.

After sitting down and planning, then conducting some more planning, it was identified that during the forthcoming operational deployments, mission command would be essential to success. This would allow the JNCOs and below freedom of movement, entrusting them with huge amounts of responsibility, to achieve the greatest success and effect on the ground. This is where training had to be directed to; low-level command, section level orders, individual skills including radio training, navigation and topping up on the green skills.

The first major exercise of the year, Exercise PHOENIX SOLDIER 2, took place in late January at Deepcut. This was a low-level infantry based exercise and was designed as a 'shake out' to ensure the soldiers implemented the basic skills and drills correctly. In the morning of the first day, the soldiers carried out numerous stands in preparation for the days ahead in the field. These stands were instructed by the Squadron's JNCOs and included patrolling, ambush and anti-ambush drills and Operation BARMA drills. After a short break for lunch, the Squadron broke down into three separate troops. Everyone loaded their kit on to their backs, and then patrolled out on to the local training area, where each troop set up a harbour location before nightfall. Over the next three days each section within each troop carried out different infantry objectives in a hybrid operational environment. Tasks included recce patrols,

with a win in the under-25 category due, in part, to the individual success of Privates Sibbo and Nom, who came first and second respectively. Further to this, Lance Corporal Himel finished second overall in the junior non-commissioned category.

All in all a busy but successful year with many Squadron individuals performing to the highest standards. In a time of uncertainty it is good to see that quality still breeds quality.

Jai 36 Squadron, Jai QOGLR, Jai Gurkha!

observation posts, vehicle checkpoints, with the exercise culminating in a final attack on the last day.

To expand and build on knowledge and skills learnt already, the Squadron then deployed on Exercise PHOENIX SOLDIER 3 held at Longmoor Camp. The two Troops conducted two phases for this exercise with a swap over in the middle. Again, the exercise mainly focused on the JNCO level, with the troop commanders and sergeants also being tested. One of the phases was back to basic fieldcraft and infantry skills and living in the field. Practising orders, patrolling and contact drills helped raise the bar of squadron proficiency.

During the second phase, each Troop found itself in an urban environment to throw an alternative dimension into the training. They had to engage with the local population and react to shootings and IEDs, culminating in a public order scenario with the Troops deploying in riot gear to control a crowd.

The end of July saw the Squadron conduct a well-deserved break during its adventure training package, Exercise DROWNING KUKRI. Based at Chickerall Camp in Weymouth, the men were split into syndicates and conducted seven different activities over four days. One day was spent out on the Solent; half a day deep sea fishing then swapping over to enjoy speeding across the sea on a powerboat (thanks to WO2 Smith). Memorable moments included the OC catching a thorny back ray (a type of fish apparently) the size of a DROPS wheel, which seemed to turn the seasoned fishermen on board into hyperactive children. The next funny moment was when Lieutenant Nick Gomersall was taking pictures with the OC's camera (please bear in mind this is the type of camera only OCs and above can afford) of WO2 Smith and his powerboat. Q came tearing up to the fishing boat and banked, initiating a tidal wave, eating the troop commander and the camera, which was poised for the perfect picture. Needless to say, cameras cannot swim. The next day saw the syndicate mountain biking, led by Lance Corporal Yogendra. A steep climb to the top of Portland Bill shook off any cobwebs from the previous night in the bar and exposed some stunning views of Weymouth. The men were taken to a quarry to cycle round on top of Portland. With a nearby café, everyone had a chance to relax and enjoy themselves. The following day, the same syndicate went dinghy sailing and kayaking in a small bay next to Portland Marina. On the final day of the exercise, the syndicate enjoyed a guided tour of Bovington Tank Museum followed by a coastal

trek starting from Lulworth Cove. The route was around ten miles and covered seriously undulating ground along Dorset's beautiful Jurassic coast.

There were a series of social events throughout the week. Being a Wednesday evening the centre of town was fairly quiet. However the soldiers were smiling when they came across the Spanish ladies Olympic sailing team, and some were even lucky enough to stumble into the Weymouth under-21 beauty pageant. A bar was available on camp for the week, and the exercise was rounded off nicely with a squadron BBQ. Warm thanks have to be given to the Treasury, HQ RLC and the Regiment for providing essential funds. Without their kind contributions, Exercise DROWNING KUKRI could not have taken place.

The period after summer leave has been just as busy, if not more so. Suitably refreshed, the Squadron hit the ground running. September offered a series of exercises and taskings. Lieutenant Gomersall went on Exercise SUMAN WARRIOR, an exercise involving the armed forces of Singapore, the United Kingdom, Malaysia, Australia and New Zealand at Strensall Camp near York. The exercise was based on natural disasters and used a scenario of the River Humber flooding the local area. With the earthquake in Wellington, and recent large-scale flooding in Australia, this was very pertinent and participants took home valuable input and ideas. Next year, Exercise SUMAN WARRIOR will be held in Australia, with some lucky individuals able to experience the local culture.

At the back end of September the entire Regiment deployed on Exercise GRIFFIN VIPER 11 as part of 101 Logistic Brigade. Presented with an ideal opportunity to practise trade skills, the Squadron naturally lapped up the chance. The drivers in the Squadron hammered their driving skills home, including convoy drills, and vehicle navigation, with the highlight being at Driffield Driver Training Area. Lance Corporals Kamal and Suren deployed as a recce party to plan a tremendous driving package for the remainder of Driver Troop's arrival. With some TA bolted onto the Troop, around 25 people gained valuable cross-country driving skills, both day and night, and tested a variety of vehicles around the area. The petroleum operators were given an invaluable opportunity to hone their trade skills by operating a Bulk Fuel Installation in real time with real fuel. The Squadron provided the bulk fuel installation and refuelling capability to the Brigade for the duration of GRIFFIN VIPER. The BFI, served as a small 24-hour fuel depot, allowing every other unit in the Brigade to fill up on site, or request a delivery of fuel in one of the Squadron's Close Support Tankers (CST), which are each capable of carrying up to 20,000 litres of diesel.

On Monday 3 October, 66 Squadron re-organized into its operational ORBATs. This meant Captain Simon Banks and WO2 Smith headed the Operation HERRICK petroleum detachment, with the OC additionally in command of three Operation TOSCA troops ready to tackle the Mobile Force

Reserve, to be based in Nicosia, Cyprus. Staff Sergeant Freebry took command of the rear and support contingent. The pace of life instantly intensified from this date. With the Squadron officially now in pre-deployment training, the Operation TOSCA personnel underwent Personal Safety and Public Order training for a week. With a huge variety of courses ranging from Skill at Arms instructors, PTI courses all the way to training lifeguards, all ranks have been kept busy. The Petroleum Troop concurrently underwent its specific training including ranges, briefings and upgrades to prepare itself for Afghanistan. A recent MATT's Camp ensured everyone is up to date and current with mandated training. With the plethora of courses, tasking, public order training, leadership cadres continuing, the pace will not ease in the build up to operations. The Squadron now looks forward to its final exercise of the year, Exercise PHOENIX SOLDIER 4. This will act as a confirmatory exercise for the Squadron hierarchy to ensure that the soldiers are in a strong position to conduct their final pieces of training in the New Year, before the deployments to Afghanistan and Cyprus in the spring.

Other activities have included members gaining a silver medal in the Cambrian Patrol competition, winning the Gore Trophy and having representatives in the team which won the Army Volleyball. Lance Corporal Nishan has to be mentioned at this point as he took part in all three of these events. Well done, you have done the Squadron proud.

The Squadron has competed and performed well during the annual Commander's Sword competition. Coming in first and third place for the march and shoot, first place for the football and third in cross-country.

Overall, the year has proved to be extremely busy, particularly varied and complex. Some fantastic training has taken place, allowing the Squadron to progress exponentially.

From adventure training, potential officer familiarization visits, Gurkha 'messing', patrol competitions, plenty of physical training, providing the Spearhead Lead Element, trade training, mission specific training for operations on top of the daily life of a busy RLC unit, the Squadron has achieved an awful lot. Following the 'crawl, walk, run' theory, each and every soldier is well on the way to being in the best position to face any situation they may encounter on operations. With only polishing and the fine-tuning of tactics, techniques and procedures yet to come, we are very nearly there and well ahead of schedule. The result is high morale, excellent team spirit, professionalism and above all, a well-drilled effective fighting unit, mentally and physically ready for the operational challenges of 2012.

Finally, a special mention goes to Corporals Corkish and Fairburn who have been promoted to Sergeant, and to Privates Curtis and Moody who have now been welcomed into the Corporals' Mess. Huge congratulations and well done to all of them.

Jai 66 Squadron!

Ladies Silk Scarf



This beautiful, high quality, silk scarf, 90 cm square, with an exclusive pattern inspired by the Rhododendrons of East Nepal, was produced for the Gurkha Brigade Association by Alice Gregory, a young and accomplished British textile designer, who is the daughter of Lt Col L S J T Gregory and the granddaughter of Lt Col H C S Gregory OBE.

The first production run was quickly sold out and another batch has now been ordered. The scarf can be obtained from ASM Designs (Hamsell Lake Cottage, Eridge, Tunbridge Wells TN3 9LH, Email: alice@hamsell-lake.co.uk, Tel: 01892 864641), price £16 (plus postage and packaging £2 for one scarf, £3 for two scarves, over two scarves an additional £1 per scarf). Cheques should be made payable to 'Gurkha Brigade Association Trust'.

[The scarf is being sold at cost price and therefore should anyone wish to add a small donation to the Gurkha Brigade Association Trust this would be most welcome.]

Kasam Khane and the Regimental Birthday Celebrations

By 2Lt A Mortimore RLC

The annual Kasam Khane parade took place this year on 9 July 2011 in Gale Barracks, marking the Regiment's 53rd Birthday and the official welcoming of the new recruits to the Regiment. Colonel D G Hayes CBE, Colonel Brigade of Gurkhas, taking part in his last parade before retirement, took the salute from the 100 or so soldiers on the parade square and watched with delight the perfectly executed drill movements, which came from hours of practice. Colonel Hayes also commissioned Captains Ganeshkumar Tamang and Ganeshbahadur Gurung and offered a warm welcome to the Officers' Mess to both of them.

The parade also served as a prime opportunity to honour Private Bikash Kerung who won the Wallace-Dutton Trophy. This new award was given to him to mark the outstanding all round performance he has given and for best representing the qualities for which a Gurkha soldier is known. This identified him as top private soldier in the Regiment and recognised his fearless acts on Operation HERRICK II, where he found multiple IEDs and undoubtedly saved the life of a seriously injured comrade in a high threat environment.

The QOGLR Gold Medal is presented annually to individuals whose contribution to the Regiment is above the call of duty and was awarded to Captain Hutcheon, Lance Corporal Rudrabahadur Limbu and Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Chris Green.

The parade was followed by festivities which involved a traditional Nepalese curry lunch and the inter-squadron tug-of-war competition as part of the Commander's Sword Competition.

It was a great honour for the Regiment that Mrs Wallace-Dutton was present to open the John Wallace-Dutton Memorial Messing Village. This facility, built by the soldiers for the soldiers, is a space where Gurkhas and invited guests can go and enjoy a Nepalese style party and relax amidst the busy schedule of regimental life.

The day was rounded off nicely with a culture show featuring traditional Nepali dancers and a martial arts display from the tae kwon-do black belt, Lance Corporal Hitman. The family focus and warm weather made for an exceptionally enjoyable and memorable day in our new barracks. Jai QOGLR!



Mrs Wallace-Dutton presenting the Wallace-Dutton trophy to Pte Bikash Kerung



Mrs Wallace-Dutton opening the newly built messing area



Col DG Hayes CBE, Col BG, delivering his speech at the parade



The new QOGLR recruits during the Kasam Khane Parade

New Territory - The Reflections of 28 Platoon attached to B Company, 1st Royal Welsh for Ex ASKARI THUNDER 7

By Lt Alex Norman, Pl Comd, 1 Sqn

When looking back, going on an Infantry exercise and being integrated into an Infantry company in one of the most austere and unforgiving environments you will ever come across, should have been much more daunting. However, having spent time away on Exercise COLD DRAGON in Sennybridge with the men of 28 Platoon, there was great confidence that they would be able to match our Infantry counterparts in both military skills and spirit.

Having arrived in Kenya and been transported through BATUK in Nanyuki, the Platoon eventually finished the first of many arduous travels at the base of Mount Kenya, at our Admin base, Taraco Farm. It was here that 28 Platoon finally met up with B Company and their esteemed Officer Commanding, Major Ed Hill. Having received a good initial impression from 1st Battalion The Royal Welsh, it was battle preparation for our move to the Lykipia Game Reserve, for phase one of the exercise, Platoon level operations. Lykipia itself was bustling with wildlife. This became much more apparent for one of the vehicles in the

move out to the area. When it unfortunately broke down, its occupants had to spend the night surrounded by hyenas!

Notwithstanding these logistical problems, the exercise itself, eight days long, allowed every man to get into the mindset of how they would operate as a company group. Live ranges up to Section Level would fill the first two days, only interrupted by the odd elephant straying onto the range. It would then be down to the serious business of re-educating the men in platoon-level Advance to Contact, Deliberate Attack, Ambush and Cordon and Search Operations. The week would be full of highs and lows: A terrible Advance to Contact, followed by an excellent Ambush would be a typical day in the first week. As the week progressed the terrible would turn to average and the good to outright outstanding at times. Indeed, not even a 200 strong herd of cows could break the Outer Cordon on the Company Cordon and Search Operation to finish the first week.



Sergeant Prakash briefing 1 Platoon at Taraco Farm, April 2011



From the left: Pte Milan Rai, Pte Prem Pun, Pte Pandab Rai, Pte Durga Tamang, Lt Alex Norman, Pte Rohit Gurung, and Pte Saugat Gurung, April 2011

Now we were up to speed, fully integrated and raring to go, Phase 2 would be a real test in both mental and physical robustness. Having moved up to Main Operating Base (MOB) SIMBA at Archers Post, the intensity and the heat seemed to be increasing rapidly. Thrust into a company Advance to Contact that would last eight hours in the searing heat, the Platoon now knew what it felt like to be Infanteers. This would be followed by a Night Preliminary Move, across close country to an Assembly Area, two hours' rest and then thrust straight into a company Deliberate Attack up an immense ridge line. Having had half of the Company killed by the enemy and especially incoming Artillery, it was left to two sections of 28 Platoon to secure the Objective and save the day, the 'Crowning Glory of the week' for the Platoon or so we thought. The rest of the week would be a Forward Operating Base (FOB) based exercise, including Framework Patrols, Cordon and Search Ops and platoon level ambushes. Our Ambush on the last night was swift and lethal, killing five enemy and expertly extracting from the area. BATUK staff

rated our Ambush the 'best of the exercise'. Having left behind week two, we were now in the realms of battlegroup planning for several days and some downtime at Taraco Farm. These days were spent reflecting on how much we had progressed during the exercise but also being conscious of what we needed to continue to work on.

Phase 3 would be a series of BG deliberate attacks in various parts of the training area surrounding Taraco Farm. Mentally the biggest test, this last exercise would see mass sleep deprivation and some seriously long tactical moves just to reach many of the objectives. The highlight was our Advance to Contact to secure the African Aid Camp. 28 Platoon were at the forefront for the majority of the ten hour advance and a hugely satisfying day all round. At this point, the final attack could not come soon enough and before I knew it I was having my first beer for two months at the Mount Kenya Country Club. Surreal, extreme and ultimately enormously rewarding sums up my experience on Ex AT 7.



Lt Norman preparing to de-bus

Life in the Far East - QOGLR Detachment Brunei

By Captain Indrabahadur Tamang QOGLR

I still remember the first step I took in Hong Kong after landing at Kai Tak International Airport on 23 November 1989, the first slap by a section commander in the arrivals whilst queuing to come out and the extensive six months' training at the Training Depot Brigade of Gurkhas (TDBG) followed by three months' driver training at the Gurkha Mechanical Transport School (GMTS), Sek Kong. I cannot forget those hills, reservoirs and most importantly the 'Nameless Hill' where the treacherous Khud Race used to be organized. In December 1993, I moved to the United Kingdom with 28 Squadron in Colchester where I began a western sort of life and learnt a lot about the UK and European society and their culture. Having spent several years in the UK, I totally forgot about the life I spent in the Far East.

Fortunately, my wife and I have had the opportunity to witness life in the Far East once again when I was posted to the QOGLR Detachment in Brunei in June 2010. When I landed at Brunei International Airport, I could see why Brunei is one of the fascinating tropical kingdoms in the world. After a few days of settling down, I took over the Detachment Commander's responsibilities from Captain Kumar Gurung. Initially I thought the work and daily routine was going to be easy and was also expecting the working style to be different compared to the UK. More-or-less, I had an impression of Brunei like I had of Hong Kong 21 years ago. After a few weeks, most of the Detachment personnel had changed over and we had a brand new team with a new dream. Slowly we started to face more challenging jobs and I wondered how busy we were going to be for the next two years.

With steady work we learnt and discovered that many commitments were waiting for us and we focused on how to make them successful. Detachment soldiers worked very hard and soon learnt to tackle many challenges such as Equipment Care Inspection (ECI) and Logistics Support Inspection (LSI) and to support many important exercises. We have a total of 34 personnel on the Detachment strength, but the Locally Employed Civilians (LECs) occupy 70% of that strength. Currently, the Detachment is offering transportation to the entire British Forces Brunei (BFB) Garrison, the resident battalion and outside units. Current resources are seven serving members, 27 LEC drivers, seven bus escorts and 86 vehicles such as coaches, trucks, minibuses, VIP Prados, 4x4 pick-up-trucks, cars, 4-Tonners, Land Rovers, JCBs and Hysters.

The Detachment operates 20 standing details, including school runs, charter inbound/outbound, plus seven to ten casual details daily, including the hospital run. On top of that, vehicle inspection and maintenance is the top priority to meet schedules and fulfil customer requirements. Out of 86 vehicles, 36 are provided for self-drive in the Garrison, but maintenance and servicing falls to the Detachment. The composition of Brunei Garrison is varied with personnel from different arms and corps and, with the number of visitors increasing significantly; the Detachment has not failed to provide different classes of vehicles and drivers. It is a challenging and a non-stop commitment with the drivers sometimes having to drive four-star Generals.

The Detachment plays a vital role when the resident battalion conducts their C1-C3 exercises and subsequent deployment on an operational tour, providing necessary transportation to carry passengers and their freight to the exercise area and air terminal. When the resident battalion is deployed, welfare tasks are significantly more frequent with vital roles to support the dependants in all aspects in order to keep soldiers' morale high. Geographically, Brunei is one of the tough places to conduct tropical exercises and training; SAS selection also takes place here twice a year and the Detachment is fully committed to providing vehicles and drivers.

Apart from work, the Detachment along with Chefs and Ex QOGLR Gurkha Reserve Unit (GRU) personnel has observed festivals such as Dashain, Tihar, and regimental birthdays; still maintaining the tradition and upholding the Kaida. Outside of our own comfort zone, the Detachment has to play a significant role in supporting the Battalion's social commitments as well as

their regimental birthdays, Garrison Open Day, coffee mornings and wives shopping trips.

Being part of the Garrison support troops the Detachment is responsible for providing transportation in case Operation NEPTUNE is activated. If flooding is imminent, the Detachment is responsible for carrying soldiers and their dependants to safe havens. Many other activities and fastballs arise in the Garrison and the Detachment always makes its contribution.

My intention in writing this article is to highlight the roles and commitments the QOGLR Detachment is offering to BFB, our position in the Garrison and future prospects. The future is unpredictable with the current Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) and global turmoil but, if we continue with our fine performance on behalf of the Regiment, I think it will go in a positive way in the future. Jai QOGLR Detachment Brunei!



QOGLR Det Brunei: L-R front: LCpl Pramod Rai GSPS, LCpl Maheskumar Wanem, Cpl Mahendra Budha Magar, Sgt Laxmiprasad Pangma, Capt Indrabahadur Tamang, Cpl Purnabahadur Gurung, LCpl Donju Subba and Pte Ngadi Sherpa, together with LEC drivers



Det personnel with GM QOGLR and the GCMO during their Brunei visit in Feb 2011

Gurkha Troop, DST Leconfield

By Captain Bhimprasad Gurung QOGLR

Having completed 22 years' both as a Driver and Supplier in QOGLR, once again I am back here in Gurkha Troop, Defence School of Transport (DST), Leconfield, as Officer Commanding. I took over the appointment from Captain Baldeep Saheb on 24 July and as usual the Troop tasks have been plentiful, challenging and busy. It is massively different from my days in the Far East where I was initially trained for my capbadge. We had various types of 'Green Fleet' vehicles for training but here there are no more green Land Rovers and 4 Tonners but a similar ethos. As a whole, DST has been expanding all the time and is getting better, though the current SDSR has severely affected uniformed personnel in terms of manpower reduction. The Gurkha Troop is no exception.

The Troop's present instructor number will reduce and amalgamate within 110 Squadron's establishment from next year. Proposed possible retention numbers are three NCOs and one captain. NCOs are to retain DLAI qualifications to assist with slow learners and language problems and the captain could be the Training Officer. Other ranks will be positioned to look after Gurkha students when present but will have different responsibilities at other times.

Since I took over the Troop, the last group from the 2010 Intake have completed their driving training and we have started to receive Intake 2011 students. In contrast to previous years, QOGLR have only received 24 trainees, who will be split into two groups with 12 students on each course. The first group started on 30 October and completed their induction training and Cat B Theory. They are currently undergoing Cat B driver training. By the end of February 2012, the first group will have completed Cat C & C+E and will be doing General Service

(GS) familiarization training with the second group starting on 19 February 2012. Once the second group complete their training, the Troop will start to take other capbadge students from Hanger 1 until we receive Intake 2012.

Although we are a small community here, we are very fortunate that we have our own Gurkha Temple where we follow the Nepalese calendar to observe our religious festivals and conduct fortnightly temple services. The condition of the Gurkha Temple is getting better and usage is more frequent. However, improvements are required. I am trying my best to find resources and funds to refurbish the temple. This year Gurkha Troop celebrated the prestigious festival, Dashain in its own traditional kaida and once again this was a special and enjoyable event for all permanent staff and their families.

Despite a busy training schedule Gurkha Troop has been taking part in public relations projects to increase the reputation of DST and the image of Gurkhas within with the local community. Recently the Troop took part in two events - for the Master Brethren of Sky Lodge, Driffield and the Royal British Legion, Bridlington. Both events involved providing Gurkha curry and a Kukri dance. It gave us immense pleasure to see huge support being given by the local people to the Gurkha Welfare Trust. All profits from the events will be presented to the Trust in due course.

So far life has been very interesting and testing but I am certain that there are more challenges to come. I am extremely privileged to have such a capable and highly motivated team of instructors, who are helping me to succeed in our plans for the future. Jai Gurkha Troop!



Gurkha Troop permanent staff and their families

Gurkha Company - A QOGLR Perspective

By Captain Ganeshbahadur Gurung

Gurkha Company is sub-unit of the 2nd Infantry Training Battalion (2ITB), Infantry Training Centre (ITC) Catterick. The Permanent Staff (PS) are tasked to support the Regional and Central Selection processes in Nepal but as a company we are most well known for what happens once the newly-selected Trainee Riflemen (T/Rfn) arrive in the UK in January each year. The aim of this article is to inform the reader about Gurkha Company but also to provide an insight into the way in which the QOGLR support 2ITB and the career opportunities that exist for the members of our Corps.

Background to Gurkha Company

Gurkha Company is unique within ITC because the PS are selected from across the Brigade of Gurkhas (BG) units. BG Corps units and the Royal Gurkha Rifles (RGR) combine to produce the PS that runs the 37 week long Combat Infantryman Course (Gurkha) (CIC (G)). The Corps unit / RGR split is approximately 50:50. The QOGLR carries out several functions

for 2ITB and Gurkha Company. PS within Gurkha Company have a unique opportunity to influence and train the future generations of Gurkha soldiers. Despite the mixture of BG units the mission for us all remains the same:

"To deliver trained Gurkha soldiers in order to meet the operational requirements of the BG"

Current performance from across the BG on operations illustrates that the success starts with the selection of T/Rfn in Nepal and subsequent training in Gurkha Company. The unique zero or near zero wastage figure (176 T/Rfn start the course and 176 T/Rfn complete it) often causes an eyebrow to be raised here. But it is a figure of real significance and one that is only sustainable due to the quality of T/Rfn arriving after the selection process, the quality of NCOs sent by BG units to be instructors and the quality of the CIC (G) itself. A failure in any of these would result in fractures that would have a serious impact.

QOGLR within Gurkha Company

I have served in Gurkha Company as a Section Commander, Platoon Sergeant and currently as a Platoon Commander. In every appointment I have been challenged and have returned to Regimental Duty better off for having been posted to Gurkha Company. For QOGLR there are various opportunities to support future generations of Gurkhas, many trades represented and it is appropriate to use the current ORBAT of Gurkha Company to illustrate this point.

The most obvious opportunity is that of the platoon instructors (Corporals, Sergeants and Officers). These appointments run the CIC (G) at its grass roots, day-to-day, at an intensity that is far more than other CIC programmes. An example is that the training staff between January and October



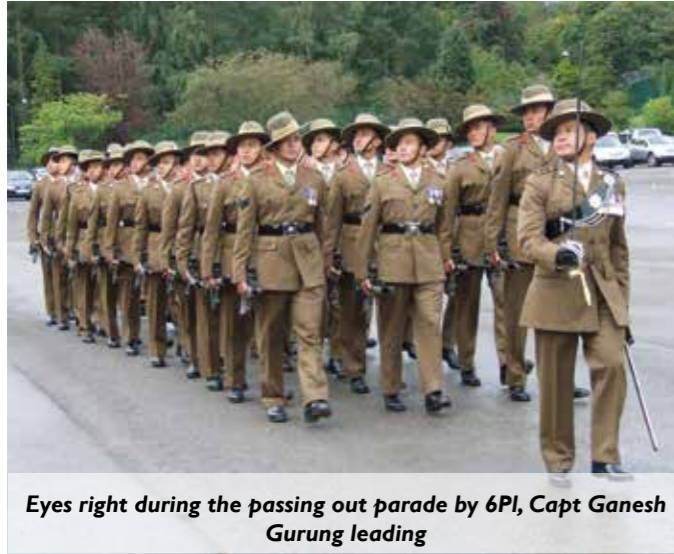
Champion Shot of intake 2011, Pte Youkesh Gurung



Cpl Timothy Limbu receiving Champion Section Trophy from Lt Gen MFN Mans CBE



Pte Samir Rai receiving QOGLR Champion Recruit Kukri from Lt Gen MFN Mans CBE



Eyes right during the passing out parade by 6PI, Capt Ganesh Gurung leading

Gurkha Company, and arguably across the Infantry training fraternity, for their fruit carving and sculptures (made from lard). At a national level competition in Bournemouth, Cpl Kedar was awarded Silver (best in class) for his fat carving and a Bronze for his fruit carving. LCpl Krishna was awarded a Bronze for his fat carving but walked away with Gold (best in class) for his fruit carving.

Cpl Deepak Gurung QOGLR is the Section Commander, but often gets the opportunity to deputize as a Troop Sergeant, in 400 Troop. He and his QOGLR drivers are responsible for ensuring that Gurkha Company are transported in a timely manner and safely for all aspects of training. 400 Troop shows that it is not just JNCOs, SNCOs and LE officers that make up Gurkha Company PS. 21172004 Pte Nirmal Chongbang is the most junior member of the staff and plays an absolutely vital function. OC Gurkha Company endeavours to reach every single BG merit batching in order to represent his staff; Pte Nirmal has ensured he gets there on time!

Other support staff for Gurkha Company include a CQMS group, PTIs (Cpl Ram Gurung QOGLR is located here), and medics.

Future Challenges and Training

As ITC strives to be in line with Op ENTIRETY there are future changes around the corner for Gurkha Company and CIC (G). Afghanistan-specific training and driving qualifications (for RGR soldiers only) will soon be introduced to the CIC (G) programme and the recent operational experience of the QOGLR will ensure that those from our Corps that are posted here will be well placed to instruct.

My postings to Gurkha Company over the years have been rewarding, and challenging and have ultimately benefitted my career. A posting here, whether as an instructor or member of the supporting elements, should be considered essential to any QOGLR personnel intending to give something to the future generations of soldiers for our Brigade, while enhancing their profile for career progression. Jai Gurkha Company, Jai QOGLR!



GM QOGLR presenting cap badges to new intake 2011

are required (to some extent) to work 80% of weekends. The 'duty of care' commitment to the T/Rfn is greater than that of a British training company and whilst it sounds daunting it must not be watered down any further. Whilst the intensity of training is clearly high, we are capable here in Gurkha Company of stability. We know the training programme for months ahead and will not be expected to deploy overseas on operations.

The QOGLR have demonstrated that we are capable of bridging the infantry gap here in Gurkha Company. It is about 'Values Based Infantry Leadership' (VBIL), which centres on using the infantry values of selfless commitment, discipline, integrity, respect for others, courage and loyalty to provide the leadership to T/Rfn. In 2011, Cpl Timothy Limbu QOGLR proved up to the challenge and stood proudly as Champion Section Commander. He was presented the trophy by the Adjutant General, Lt Gen M F N Mans CBE, during the Pass Out Parade. Other QOGLR success within the training side of Gurkha Company life came through our T/Rfn (now QOGLR). 30142388 T/Rfn Youkesh Gurung was the champion shot from his intake and overall QOGLR best T/Rfn was 30141946 T/Rfn Samir Rai. We wish them well in their careers.

The platoon staff provides a key role in moulding newly arrived Nepalese boys into T/Rfn and beyond. But the support staff functions, made up of QOGLR, are crucial to enabling the training to be effective.

SSgt Dewanuri Sherpa and his catering staff (both QOGLR chefs and civilian chefs) are always at the heart of a successful Gurkha Company event; whether this is the delivery of food to Gurkha Company when deployed on exercise, catering for our Pass Out Parade and Dashain festival or simply hosting a senior visitor for lunch. His staff consistently maintain high standards and not just for Gurkha Company. The quality they produce attracts PS from all 2ITB training companies and Battalion HQ every day. The QOGLR chefs enjoy the stability that Gurkha Company offers and there have been some notable achievements outside of Catterick. Cpl Kedar Singjali and LCpl Krishna Limbu have been gaining a reputation throughout

RLC Military Skills Competition

By WO1 (RSM) Kurt Roberts RLC

10 QOGLR entered the 2011 RLC Military Skills Competition (the Gore Trophy) with high expectations following last year's success. In order to prove that 2010 was no fluke, training commenced almost immediately on our return from summer block leave under the watchful eye of Captain Hutcheon and WO2 (SSM) McHugh with all three teams committed to retaining the title.

The Men's, Veterans and the Mixed teams all started the competition early on Saturday 24 September and by 0900 hours all three teams were on the course battling for success. The Men's Team, led by WO2 McHugh, appeared to acquit themselves well on both the assault course and the ranges and could feel a real opportunity to compete for the winner's trophy as they started their strongest event, the six-mile loaded march. The Veterans, led by Captain Hutcheon, worked hard over the assault course although they knew that they were not the quickest team. The pressure was now on to perform on the ranges, which they did with confidence and

efficiency and all ten targets were despatched with five rounds spare. The Veterans knew they were back in the competition with only the six-mile loaded march left! The Mixed Team led by Staff Sergeant Cox performed beyond expectations throughout the competition, in particular in the six-mile march giving them a real hope of a top five finish.

As all the competitors paraded for the prize giving, rumours were rife as to the results. The organizers had done a great job running the event and equally in keeping the results a secret. When the 10 QOGLR Men's Team was announced as the overall winner of the RLC Military Skills Cup for the second year in a row and the Veterans Team was announced as winner of the Veterans' competition, it was a fantastic feeling for all those present from the Regiment who had worked so hard to retain the title. All three teams performed above expectations, emphasising the strength in depth within the Regiment, and the importance of good training and preparation.



10 QOGLR Gore Trophy Champion Teams

Exercise CAMBRIAN PATROL 2011

By Private Sonic Thapa Magar QOGLR

Exercise CAMBRIAN PATROL, believed to be one of the toughest patrolling tests of its kind, is organized annually by HQ 160 (W) Brigade. The event takes place in the Elan Valley area and covers some of the harshest mountainous terrain in Wales. A total of 104 teams from across the British Army and international army teams from sixteen different countries such as India, Pakistan, Australia, Canada, the United States, New Zealand and France took part in this physically and mentally demanding competition.

Although 10 QOGLR was busy with Operations HERRICK 16 and TOSCA deployment training, the Regiment entered a team, which formed up two weeks before the actual event. Training started under the direction of the Regimental Training Officer and Team Manager, Captain Hutcheon. After three days in the local training area, we headed to Wales in order to replicate the conditions for the real event. We spent five days in the mountains practising the tactical and navigational elements required for the exercise. The weather was horrific; wind, rain and the experience of carrying a Bergen weighing 60 pounds and marching over the Brecon Beacons at night was both mentally and physically draining. However, it proved to be a fantastic training opportunity and boosted the confidence of all team members.

On 26 October, the team started their journey to Wales to face the ultimate challenge. They woke at 0430 hours and moved to the Line of Departure (LoD), which was located

in a small town called Builth Wells. At 0700 hours, the Patrol Commander, Staff Sergeant Bhim Shreesh, was called forward to receive orders from the Company Commander, while the team carried out concurrent activity under the Patrol 2IC, Corporal Dilip Rai.

During the competition, the team carried out day and night navigation and specialist challenges, including: observation and reconnaissance of enemy forces, casualty evacuation, clearing an enemy position, POW handling and crossing a very cold river in full kit. The team had trained hard which enabled them to successfully complete the competition in 42 hours. The teamwork, personal administration, military skills and leadership practised by our Patrol were the key to success.

Teams that successfully completed the competition were awarded a Gold, Silver or Bronze medal based on the total number of points gained and a Certificate of Merit for those who completed it but not as a whole team. Almost one third of all teams did not complete the patrol and only six teams, including three international teams, were awarded a Gold medal.

The 10 QOGLR team was awarded a silver medal, the highest medal won by a RLC team. Exercise CAMBRIAN patrol is all about teamwork, military skills and physical fitness and, most importantly, the determination to carry on when all you want to do is stop. I would highly recommend everyone to give it a go, if they haven't participated in this event! Jai QOGLR!



The 10 QOGLR Cambrian Patrol Team

Trailwalker 2011

By Captain Bhimprasad Gurung QOGLR

The Regiment registered a team to take part in Trailwalker 2011, which took place over the weekend 16-17 July. It is well documented that QOGLR have been successful in this event since the Far East days and once again the Regimental team proved victorious in the gruelling 100 km competition.

Just a few weeks prior to the event I was tasked to lead the team. It was a great privilege to be asked to represent our Regiment. However, my initial concern was on the timeframe to meet training. We were already busy with the preparation for the birthday celebrations on top of our routine commitments.

One of the most essential responsibilities was to select potential runners from the Regiment and establish a training regime for the team. Soon, I was able to gather all the potential runners and I then tasked Sergeant Nilkumar Thapa to train them. I have been fortunate to have in him someone I could rely on. He was pivotal in providing vital support and had all the necessary skills to train the team. As the training continued we were able to identify the strongest runners.

Finally the day arrived and the Commander, Gurkha Major and other QOGLR officers and SNCOs were present to support us. It was early morning and the weather was not on

its best behaviour. The day started rather cold, rainy and dark as, alongside 520 teams, we set off to tackle one of the most inspiring team challenges of the year. Despite terrible weather, the team started off well and managed to lead the race from about half way, a lead that lasted right to the end. The route was completed in just 10 hours, 42 minutes and 17 seconds. This event is a once in a lifetime opportunity and our boys should be very proud of their achievement.

I would like to pay tribute to the ten-man support team who themselves endured the ghastly conditions in supporting the boys and helping maintain a winning spirit, which contributed to the overall achievement of the team; all their hard work must not be forgotten. This has been one of the most demanding personal challenges I have undertaken. I have learnt so much about team spirit and myself.

As Team OIC, I am extremely proud of the team and congratulate the group for showing such outstanding determination, courage and teamwork to achieve the goal. This victory has added another chapter in QOGLR's history. I admire the endurance and hard work that the team maintained throughout training, as well as during the event. Jai QOGLR!



The QOGLR Trailwalker Team before the start of the competition



The Gurkha Staff and Personnel Support Company

Company March	Imperial Echoes
Affiliated Corps	Adjutant General's Corps (Staff and Personnel Support)
Colonel GSPS	Brig N P Moffat CBE
Company Officers (as at December 2011)	
Maj D A A Ronaldson	SO2 Gurkha, APC (OC GSPS)
Maj Hemchandra Rai BEM	DCOS, HQBG
Maj Bijayant Sherchan	COS, HQBG
Maj Samundra Gurung	XO, APC
Capt Pimbahadur Gurung	SO3 G1/MS, HQ BGN
Capt K A Brewster	SO3 G1 MS, HQBG
Capt Suryakumar Rai	RAO, 19 Lt Bde CSS Bn
Capt Manbahadur Gurung	Det Comd, 1 RGR
Capt Ashwin Rana	SO Admin, British Embassy Kathmandu
Capt Kamasing Rana	Det Comd, 2 RGR
Capt Narendrakumar Gurung	Det Comd, 1 YORKS
Capt Tikbahadur Gurung	Det Comd, 10 QOGLR

Newsletter

Gurkha SPS Company Formation

The Gurkha SPS Company formed up on 30 June 2011, with a formal parade at Shorncliffe; eight officers and 69 ORs were on parade. New cap badges were presented by CDS, President GBA and Colonel GSPS.

As at 1 December 2011, the Company had a strength of ten officers and 124 ORs, against a liability of seven and 95. As at this same date, two officers and 13 ORs were employed outside the BG in UKTAP posts.

Operational Deployments

In 2011/12, 2 RGR's GSPS Detachment deployed on Op HERRICK 14 (March to October 2011) and GSPS Clerks from GRC 3 deployed with 1 YORKS on Op HERRICK 15 (September 2011 to March 2012).

In 2012/13, GSPS Clerks from 10 QOGLR (1 and 94 Squadrons) are due to deploy on Op HERRICK 16 (March to October 2012). 1 RGR GSPS Detachment and Clerks from 69 Squadron QGE are due to deploy on Op HERRICK 17 (September 2012 to March 2013).

Personal Achievements

WO2 Jitbahadur Hamal (Chief Clerk, SPS Training School) was selected in November 2011 for a commission in Gurkha SPS, the first Gurkha to pass the AGC Late Entry Commissioning Assessment Board since its application to the BG in 2010.

WO1 Bikram Ghale became the first Clerk to be selected to fill the RSM's appointment in BG Kathmandu, taking up post on 25 April 2011.

Service Initial Personnel Administration Course (SIPAC)

Gurkha Clerks from Intake 2010 took three out of the five awards on the January 2011 SIPAC at the SPS Training School at Worthy Down. Rfn Nischal Rai (2 RGR) won the Best Student award, Rfn Suresh Limbu (2 RGR) won the Best

Academic Student award and Rfn Mukum Hembya (1 RGR) won the Best PT award. It is also worth noting that one of the other awards was won by an ex-Gurkha (from QGE) who had transferred to AGC (SPS).

Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA)

AWO2 Anil Thapa (Course Design WO, RMAS) was the first Gurkha to be selected for the CIMA strategic level residential study course, to be run at the Defence Academy, Shrivenham, commencing in June 2012.

Representative Sport

AWO2 Jitendra Shakya (RAWO, HQ Arborfield Garrison) continues to represent the Army at Karate.

In Memoriam

On 19 July 2011, WO1 Somprasad Gurung died in Gartnavel Hospital in Glasgow after a short illness. Som had been serving as the DCMO in Gurkha Division at the APC, the first soldier to be selected to fill this officer's appointment. His funeral service in Maidstone on 9 August was carried out in accordance with Gurung rites and tradition, and was attended by more than 500 people. He was cremated on 9 August and his ashes interred at Chatham military cemetery the following day in a small private family service.

Summary

Despite its relative infancy, the Gurkha SPS Company is in very fine form and is proud of its unique identity and the new formal link with SPS. The Company continues to support units of the BG and the wider Army, both on operations and in barracks, world-wide, with a dedication, thoroughness and professionalism that have become universally recognised. Members of the Company look forward with eager anticipation to the undoubted opportunities that the new concept and structure are opening up, plus the chance to show the wider Army just what they are capable of. Jai Gurkha SPS!





Seated (L - R) - WO2 Jaibahadur Dura, WO2 Nareshkumar Khawas, WO2 Pajung Moktan, WO2 Tarachandra Thapa, WO2 Ashok Gurung, Capt Tikbahadur Gurung, Capt Pimbahadur Gurung, Col D G Hayes CBE, Maj Hemchandra Rai BEM, General Sir Sam Cowan KCB CBE, Maj D Ronaldson (OC GSPS), General Sir David Richards GCB CBE DSO ADC Gen, WO1 Deokumar Gurung, Brig N Moffat (Col GSPS), Maj Samundra Gurung, Capt Suryakumar Rai, Capt Kamansing Rana, Capt Narendrakumar Gurung, WO2 Jitbahadur Gurung, WO2 David Rai, WO2 Suraj Gurung, WO2 Ramkumar Lingden and WO2 Bishan Rai

Standing 1st Row (L - R) - Pte Sangam Gurung, Pte Anandabir Gurung, Pte Muneshkumar Ghale, Pte Ajit Gurung, Cpl Tankabhadur Rai, Sgt Ashish Lepcha, Pte Sanjay Gurung, Pte Sagar Sherchan, Pte Nishan Rai, Cpl Nabin Rai, Cpl Samir Rai, Pte Pratap Gurung, Cpl Anjit Gurung, LCpl Ambika Kambang, Cpl Niraj Gurung, Cpl Dewan Rai, Cpl Saujanya Subba, Cpl Devijung Gurung, Cpl Yogesh Pun and Cpl Aakash Limbu.

Standing 2nd Row (L - R) - Sgt Mulbir Rai, Pte Roshan Syangbo, LCpl Manoj Thapa, LCpl Rohit Gurung, Sgt Amrit Tamang, Sgt Hemanta Gurung, Sgt Narayan Thapa, Sgt Minkumar Sunuwar, Cpl Surendra Limbu, Sgt Pritam Gurung, Sgt Ramesh Rai, Cpl Bijay Limbu, Cpl Nawaraj Gurung, Cpl Samichhya Gurung, Cpl Angmingma Sherpa, LCpl Mimlal Thapa, Cpl Raju Rai, Cpl Bikash Gurung and LCpl Gautam Subba.

Standing 3rd Row (L - R) - SSgt Kulbir Limbu, SSgt Anil Gurung, Cpl Anil Thapa, WO2 Jitendra Shakya, WO2 Jitbahadur Hamal, WO2 Arjinkumar Rai, Sgt Surendrakumar Lingden, SSgt Khadgajung Gurung, SSgt Laxman Rana, SSgt Kritiman Barali, Sgt Purnabhadur Thapa, Sgt Sushil Gurung, Sgt Ram Gurung, Sgt Mukesh Subba, Sgt Suren Limbu, Sgt Taranghang Lawoti, Sgt Kishor Gurung, Sgt Hariprasad Gurung, SSgt Anil Thapa, SSgt Dhanbahadur Lama, Sgt Bhaktabhadur Gurung and Sgt Lokbahadur Jirel.

Formation of Gurkha SPS Company

By Sgt Suren Limbu

Background

The recruiting history of Clerks into the Brigade of Gurkhas (BG) goes back to the 1920s, many originally coming from Darjeeling. They were initially recruited into the individual regiments of the Brigade. Since the early days they were very efficient and highly regarded by their commanders. In the latter part of the 20th Century due to the structural drawdown of BG they were centrally cap badged as RGR but still employed throughout the Brigade.

In 2007, one of the key principles of the Gurkha Terms and Condition of Service Review was the requirement to ensure that the BG was able to continue to deliver its military capability whilst providing an opportunity for all Gurkha soldiers to meet their full career aspirations in the Army. In contrast to the other regiments of the BG, the Clerks were the only cohorts who were not aligned to their employing Arms and Services Directorate (AS&D). In order to address this issue the Executive Committee of the Army Board (ECAB) gave the go ahead in July 2009 for the Clerks to form their own unit within the BG, with the Directorate of Staff and Personnel Support (Army) (DSPS (A)) as their employing A &SD. After nearly two years of extensive and comprehensive planning between DSPS (A), HQBG and the Army Personnel Centre, the formation of a Gurkha Staff and Personnel Support (GSPS) Company was agreed. As well as providing the Clerks of the BG with their own unique identity, this will afford GSPS personnel wider employment opportunities both on the staff and, perhaps more significantly, in the finance sphere. The date for the GSPS formation parade was set for 30 June 2011 at Sir John Moore Barracks in Shorncliffe.

“A New Dawn”

“Today’s Gurkha is better educated, better qualified and in every respect able to compete with his British born peers. So I think this gives an extra opportunity to branch out across the whole of the army which they deserve” - General Sir David Richards GCB CBE DSO ADC Gen

Since the majority of the BG Clerks are scattered all over the globe, it is always a daunting task for the organizers to bring together all the Clerks in one location at a specific time due to the range of individual unit commitments - and the GSPS formation parade would be no exception. Officers and soldiers travelled from as far afield as Brunei and Germany, bolstered by a significant attendance from Glasgow. On the morning of the parade, courtesy of 1 RGR, GSPS personnel were given a few hours parade rehearsal. For some, if not most, it was the perfect opportunity to sharpen their rusty drill skills, whilst vaguely recalling their last participation in a parade. Given the importance of the event and the seniority of many of the spectators, timing, turn-out and perfection were of the essence. We all came together as one and worked untiringly. Any room

for the slightest error in front of the VIP guests was unthinkable. In fact, despite the short time available for rehearsal and the small size of the designated arena (on grass, not tarmac!), the parade would turn out to be the finest display by GSPS personnel, exemplifying our status as the crème de la crème.

The parade started with the march-on of GSPS personnel, with ORs first, under the command of the parade RSM, WO1 Deokumar Gurung. WO1 Deo handed the assembled parade over to the OC, Major David Ronaldson, who took command of the parade and ordered the officers to fall-in. There then followed a speech from Colonel BG, Colonel David Hayes CBE, highlighting the significance of BG Clerks and the formation of the new Gurkha SPS Company. Under an increasingly glowering and threatening sky, the new GSPS cap badges were presented by the Colonel Commandant, General Sir David Richards GCB CBE DSO ADC Gen, the President of the Gurkha Brigade Association, General Sir Sam Cowan KCB CBE, and the Director Staff and Personnel Support (Army), Brigadier Nicky Moffat. Colonel BG Saheb took this opportunity to announce that the Colonel Commandant had appointed Brigadier Moffat a member of the Council of Gurkha Colonels, where she will take her place as the first Colonel GSPS.

By now the weather looked very ominous indeed and in no time it was very wet and windy. During the handing-out of the new badges, GSPS personnel had to battle just to stay upright throughout torrential rain and extremely strong wind gusts and our ‘soldier first’ spirit was clearly evident to the spectators. Not a single one of us moved because we knew deep inside we were making history and above all it was the dawn of the new GSPS Company. After the parade, a clearly emotional OC GSPS said in an interview with BFBS, “For the first time the Clerks of the BG have their own identity. Until today they were part of the RGR. Today recognizes the fact that they have their own trade, identity, cap badge and dress. So we now stand out from the rest of the Brigade . . . which we should do”.

The parade concluded with the very first GSPS group photograph, with CDS, President GBA, Colonel BG and OC GSPS Sahebs, and Colonel GSPS Memsahab, at the centre flanked by all ranks. Many believed that the torrential downpour during the parade, followed by the appearance of a vivid rainbow afterwards (which can be seen behind the Company in the photograph) were clear signs and portents at the point in time when the Clerks were ‘re-born’ as GSPS, and that the Company was, as such, truly blessed. Others had their own level of interpretation and speculation. As for me, I believe that we made history and that we are, officially, the newest (and unofficially the proudest!) unit in the whole British Army. I can now reflect and proudly say that I was there, playing my part in what was probably the wettest formation parade in living memory.

Gurkha Company (Mandalay) Infantry Battle School

Staff List

Maj Khusiman Gurung MVO	RGR	OC
Capt Manikumar Limbu	2 RGR	2IC
Capt Saroj Rai	2 RGR	PC 1 PI
Capt Jogendrasing Limbu	2 RGR	PC 2 PI
Capt Kushalkumar Gurung	1 RGR	PC 3 PI
WO2 Minprasad Pajja	1 RGR	CSM
CSgt Nunbahadur Thapa	1 RGR	CQMS
SSgt Dambarbahadur Sunuwar	QGE	Gurkha Welfare SNCO
Sgt Lokraj Jirel	GSPS	Chief Clerk

Background

The historical background of Gurkhas in Brecon is traced from when they first came to serve here in 1974. Later, on 12 December 1980, a Company with a total strength of 85 formed up to be known as the Gurkha Demonstration Company (GDC) under the old NCOs' Tactical Wing. Since those early days, Gurkhas have played an important role in the local community and have become an integral part of Brecon society.

On 21 November 1985, in recognition of their service to the community, the town council of Brecon made the GDC 'Honorary Citizens of Brecon'. To mark this occasion, the first ever Brecon Freedom Parade took place on 3 May 1986, and the tradition of holding a parade each year has continued ever since. 2011 saw the twenty-fifth parade of its kind.

From the beginning of the 1990s, all Infantry-related courses began to be concentrated and run from Brecon. As a result, additional soldiers joined the Company to meet the new commitments. When the home base of the Brigade moved from Hong Kong to the UK in 1997, a small number of Gurkha families began to join them. Following the announcement of the new Gurkha Terms and Conditions of Service, the number of families increased significantly - there are over 90 families now living in the local area. They too have integrated very well with the community.

GDC was re-titled as Gurkha Company (Mandalay) in September 2004.

The majority of company personnel come from the Royal Gurkha Rifles. However, all cap badges of the Brigade, except Queen's Gurkha Signals, are represented. Nestling beneath Pen-Y-Fan, the Company continues to support the Infantry Battle School. Many of our soldiers have grown to love the area and have developed such a bond with Brecon and its local community that on leaving the service they have decided to settle in Wales.

Company Routine

With the harsh winter snow in Brecon, it looked as though the year 2011 would be another challenging one for Gurkha Company (Mandalay). The year began with a list of endless tasks.

Traditionally, 1 Platoon has always supported the Section Battle Courses and they continue to do so. There are three courses per year which require platoon involvement from Level 1 Training (the basic foundation) to Level 3 Hybrid Training, based on Operation ENTIRETY. The course students have benefitted greatly from working closely with the operationally-experienced soldiers of 1 Platoon. The three Platoon Tactics Courses last year also once again profited from the support of

1 Platoon throughout. Soldiers of the Platoon have also enjoyed participating in many company military skills and sporting competitions, and 1 Platoon has been the overall Champion for the last three years.

2 Platoon's year began by supporting the Senior Division. They support Platoon Sergeants Battle Courses, of which there are three per year. The Platoon members have been very keen in trying to understand the theme of the courses, particularly the Battle Camps. The Battle Camp scenario sets the scene for Afghanistan and the platoon members know exactly what is expected of them. Working with Gurkhas, with our culture, language and operational experience, has being very beneficial for the students who get a taste of what they can expect on an operational Afghanistan tour. There is no doubt either that 2 Platoon has been a fierce contender for the title of Champion Platoon; platoon members have been involved in supporting a number of charitable and public relations events.

The primary mission for 3 Platoon is to support the Platoon Commanders Division. This involves supporting three Platoon Commanders Battle Courses per year as well as courses involved with specialist support weapons. Their involvement extends to supporting Battle Camps overseas where they assist with various course requirements. The Platoon contribution to the Division has been immense and members know exactly what is expected of them. 3 Platoon has also been involved in a number of sporting, public relations and charitable events throughout the year.

The Gurkha chefs have done an excellent job supporting the pay-as-you-dine kitchen, organizing curries for our various functions, and for the Gurkha Welfare Trust. Piper Rfn

Omprakash Gaha, meanwhile, has made his mark as Gurkha Company Piper, playing RGR tunes from the streets of Brecon to all corners of Wales.

Being in the Welsh Community

The biennial Gurkha Durbar is always a wonderful occasion to support ABF The Soldiers' Charity and the Gurkha Welfare Trust. It is held in the magnificent grounds of Dering Lines, Infantry Battle School, Brecon. Pen-Y-Fan mountain creates a perfect back-drop for this splendid event.

On Saturday 3 September 2011, the Gurkha Durbar began with the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel A H Ward's opening speech. This was a unique opportunity for the locals and tourists in Brecon to engage with the soldiers of Wales. It was marvellous to see the support and contribution from the local council and various other agencies in Powys. Everyone had worked hard to ensure that all the necessary preparations were in place for the 2011 Durbar to be successful. The event was led by Maj Khusiman Gurung MVO RGR, OC GCM, and members of the Company Training Support Division in Dering Lines.

Looking ahead

The Army as a whole is going through an immense change at the moment, but, nevertheless, Gurkha Company (Mandalay) will continue to provide support to the Infantry Battle School as effectively as possible and is now looking forward to the coming year.



GC(M) Families during the Gurkha Durbar 2011

Gurkha Company Infantry Training Centre Catterick

The Brigade of Gurkha Recruit Training Centre was formed in Sungei Patani, Malaya on 15 August 1951 from Regimental Training Wings. Renamed Training Depot Brigade of Gurkhas in 1952. Reformed at Sek Kong Camp, Hong Kong as the Training Centre Brigade of Gurkhas on 11 June 1971, and renamed Training Depot Brigade of Gurkhas on 1 June 1976, when Sek Kong South Camp became Malaya Lines. The Gurkha Training

Wing was raised in Honk Kong in 1994, as an increment to the training depot, and moved to Queen Elizabeth Barracks, Church Crookham on 5 January 1995. The Gurkha Training Wing was renamed Gurkha Company on 15 December 1999 and moved to the Infantry Training Centre Catterick. Gurkha Company is part of 2nd Infantry Training Battalion in Helles Barracks.

Staff List

Major H P S Stanford-Tuck RGR	OC Gurkha Company (until 23 Sep 11)
Major R T Anderson RGR	OC Gurkha Company (wef 24 Sep 11)
Captain Rambahadur Malla RGR	2IC Gurkha Company
Captain Nanibabu Magar RGR	Training Officer
Captain Jitbahadur Chungbang RGR	1 Platoon Commander
Captain Ashokkumar Gurung QGE	2 Platoon Commander
Captain Gajendrakumar Angdembe RGR	3 Platoon Commander (until 7 Jun 11)
Captain Dhalindrabahadur KC RGR	3 Platoon Commander (wef Jun 11)
Captain Dhirbahadur Khokaja Pun QGS	4 Platoon Commander
Captain Shureshkumar Thapa RGR	5 Platoon Commander
Captain Ganeshbahadur Gurung QOGLR	6 Platoon Commander

Awards for Recruit Intake 2011

Champion Section:

3 Section, 4 Platoon, commanded by 21170574 Cpl Timothy Limbu QOGLR

- 30141886 Rifleman Binod Bhujel 2 RGR
- 30141903 Rifleman Saran Lama QOGLR
- 30141922 Rifleman Bibek Rai IRGR
- 30141939 Rifleman Purna Kumar Limbu QGE
- 30141958 Rifleman Harka Raj Rai 1 RGR
- 30142335 Rifleman Prakash Pun QGS
- 30142354 Rifleman Balram Rana 1 RGR
- 30142371 Rifleman Bijay Gurung 1 RGR
- 30142390 Rifleman Sajendra Gurung 1 RGR
- 30142407 Rifleman Saroj Gurung 2 RGR

Overall Champion Recruit

- 30142333 Rifleman Homendra Budha 1 RGR

Champion Recruit for 1 RGR

- 30142333 Rifleman Homendra Budha

Champion Recruit for 2 RGR

- 30141872 Rifleman Rajesh Chemjong

Champion Recruit for QGE

- 30141875 Rifleman Sandeshchandra Rai

Champion Recruit for QGS

- 30141871 Rifleman Reuben Limbu

Champion Recruit for QOGLR

- 30141946 Rifleman Samir Rai

Champion Recruit for GSPS

- 30142353 Rifleman Aditya Gurung

Best Shot of Recruit Intake 2011

- 30142388 Rifleman Youkesh Gurung QOGLR

Rifleman with the most improved English

- 30142357 Rifleman Gokarna Thapa IRGR

Commandant's Trophy

- 21170652 Cpl Jayandra Garbuja QGE

Champion Platoon

No 5 Platoon. Trg Team:

Capt Shureshkumar Thapa RGR	5 Platoon Commander
Sgt Santosh Gurung QGS	5 Platoon Sergeant
Cpl Anil Rai 2RGR	Section Commander
Cpl Jayandra Garbuja QGE	Section Commander
Cpl Prasanta Limbu 2 RGR	Section Commander
Cpl Taranath Pulami 1 RGR	Section Commander
Cpl Prakash Gurung 1 RGR	Section Commander

Fastest PFA Time

7 mins 38 secs (30141872 Rifleman Rajesh Chemjong 2RGR)

Fastest ACFT Time (1.5 miles with 20 kgs)

10 mins 23 secs (30141872 Rifleman Rajesh Chemjong 2RGR)

Background

As part of 2 ITB, ITC Catterick, Gurkha Company has a permanent staff of 80 ranks from across the Brigade of Gurkhas. The Company is currently training 176 recruits (known as Trainee Riflemen) annually, organized into six platoons.

It is here that Gurkha soldiers are trained to be part of the modern British Army whilst retaining their proud heritage that is summed up in the Gurkha mottos - "Kafar hunnu bhanda marnu ramro", "It is better to die than live a coward" and "Hami jasto kohi chhaina", "there is nobody like us". An underlying theme that runs through Gurkha Company training is DAI (Discipline Aggression Initiative).

Newsletter

By Major RT Anderson, OC Gurkha Company

Gurkha Company embraces so much of what the Brigade of Gurkhas regards as important. Kaida and ethos run deep into all that is conducted here. It is here that the future Gurkha soldiers for our Brigade are moulded (a key word in the Gurkha Company role) and made.

All 176 Trainee Riflemen from Recruit Intake 2011 successfully completed the Combat Infantryman's Course (Gurkha) (CIC (G)). At a time when resources and finances are heavily scrutinized a consistent zero percent wastage rate which produces such quality is something to be proud of as a Brigade. Gurkha Company is rightly considered a centre of excellence but it can only remain so if Brigade units invest in it, be that personnel, time, or resources. Sending the best instructors whilst ensuring that it is a recognized and rewarded career path, particularly for the NCOs, is fundamental to continued success.

Gurkha Company is a key element of the pipeline that a Nepalese boy progresses through on his transition into the Brigade of Gurkhas. What he learns and absorbs is fundamental to the future direction that our Brigade will take. A Passing Out Parade is commonly regarded as the proudest moment for recruits and their instructors based in the Infantry Training Centre. The Gurkha Passing Out Parade is truly special, a golden ticket!

On 23 September 2011 we were honoured to have the Adjutant General, Lieutenant General M N F Mans CBE, as the Reviewing Officer for the Passing Out Parade. Other distinguished guests included Colonel of The Royal Gurkha Rifles, Brigadier J C Lawrence MBE, the outgoing Commandant

Gurkha Company Mission

To deliver trained Gurkha soldiers in order to meet the operational requirements of the Brigade of Gurkhas.

Gurkha Company Role

To mould a Nepalese youth into a Gurkha soldier, trained to the requirements of the British Army, who retains his Nepalese identity and will live up to the values and standards of the Brigade of Gurkhas.

School of Infantry, Brigadier J I S Stevenson MBE (Late RS), the newly arrived Colonel Brigade of Gurkhas, Colonel I A Rigden OBE, and the outgoing Commanding Officer 2nd Infantry Training Battalion, Lieutenant Colonel A B Jackson PARA. Recruit Intake 2011, supported by the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas, put on an impressive parade. We thank the Adjutant General for supporting Recruit Intake 2011; he saw them into the British Army on their Attestation Parade in Pokhara and subsequently their Passing Out Parade - all part of the transition.

A final thank you must go to Lieutenant Colonel A B Jackson PARA. He departed his appointment as the Commanding Officer in order to take up an appointment in Command and Staff Trainer (North), just a few hundred metres down the road. He has been a loyal and robust supporter for all that Gurkha Company has needed over the years he was in command. We wish him, Kate and their family all the best for the future. The new Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel J N B Birch RGR, is a familiar face and Battalion HQ is already into a healthy programme of basketball and messing.

All Brigade Officers are encouraged to visit and witness the training and transition that occur in this unique establishment. I thank the units' Commanding Officers, Gurkha Majors and RSMs for their visits to Catterick throughout 2011 - your time is appreciated especially amongst the rollercoaster of operations and exercises. Comments and feedback regarding the last intake have been appreciated. Please do pick up the phone and provide me with your views as they are to some extent the ultimate validation - Catterick Military (94731) 3742.



The Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas

Three Engagements on Three Continents in Three Months

Virginia International Tattoo, 24 April - 2 May 2011

By Musn Mani Kumar Rai

The Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas began its epic International Tour back in April 2011 performing at the Virginia International Tattoo in downtown Norfolk in the United States of America. At 0345 hrs on Sunday the 24 April, we all gathered in the band practice room with a tremendous amount of excitement and anticipation. We quickly loaded our luggage in the coach and headed off to London Heathrow; the Band freight had gone a week earlier. Before departing for America we grasped what would prove to be the final opportunity for some time to enjoy a full English breakfast (the American version was never quite the same!).

For a few members of the Band including our new Director of Music Saheb, Major Vernon Yates, and the ADOM Saheb, Capt Sewanta Purja Pun, this was the first opportunity to perform in America. But of those experiencing America for the first time none were more excited than me - not least, as I had been invited to sing a verse of 'Amazing Grace' in Nepali as part of the Grand Finale. My singing would later earn me the reputation of having the 'voice of an angel'.

It took a further long and tiring six and a half hours to make our first steps on American soil having first flown into Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport, before catching a connecting flight to Norfolk. It was already 2300 hrs (US time) by the time we reached the hotel and everybody enjoyed a much needed night's sleep. The next day we headed straight to the Scope Arena for the massed band rehearsal, arriving with our usual enthusiasm and, as always, with smiles on our faces. However, excitement quickly turned to frustration when we were informed our freight had not arrived. Rehearsals that day amounted to little more than listening to the other performers, albeit a pleasant enough experience. By lunch time on day two and just as we were about to resort to singing our parts for the Marching Display rehearsal, the instruments arrived and there was much rejoicing!



Musn Mani - the voice of an angel, with three other angels

Presented by the Virginia Arts Festival, the Tattoo was celebrating its 15th season in the Scope Arena, a stadium more used to hosting Ice Hockey and Basketball. There were over 800 performers including the German Army Mountain Band, Tonga Defence Services Royal Corps of Musicians, bands from all three American services, the Massed Pipes and Drums of the Canadian Forces, the Scotch College Pipe Band from Australia, a Ballet Company from New York, the Virginia Symphonic Orchestra Chorus, the Virginia Children's Chorus, the US Navy Ceremonial Honour Guard Drill Team and many more; all contributing to an unforgettable experience. The diversity of acts created an exciting show including individual performances and a massed band opening and a most moving and patriotic finale including the music of Mahler.



Virginia International Tattoo

Arguably 29 April was the most important day of our tour because not only was this the opening night, but back home the Nation was celebrating the Royal Wedding. Despite the distance we were still able to see on the television some of this wonderful spectacle, which the American people embraced with equal enthusiasm. That evening the Scope Arena came alive to a capacity audience. The atmosphere was absolutely amazing. The roar of the crowd, the call of the pipes, the pulse-pounding beat of the drums, the heart-swelling display of precision drill teams and marching bands were just incredible. As always our band gave of its absolute best, enjoying favourable comments about both the speed at which we march and the musicality with which we performed (the locals could not believe the 'piano' dynamics we could achieve as a Marching Band).

Although we had a very tight schedule throughout the whole week, we managed to visit many beautiful places. On the Atlantic Ocean we saw the world's largest Naval Base where we were able to capture our memories on film. Probably one of the most beautiful beaches in the Southern States of America is Virginia Beach and it is definitely a place worth spending a few moments - which was probably the reason some band members nearly missed the transport home. A ferry trip from the South Point Park across the river to Portsmouth was also unforgettable - an historical place with its own beauty and importance. Of all visits, however, apparently the most loved place by the band during our time in America was the 'Grand Chinese Buffet' and the opportunity to eat as much food as you could manage.

The Tattoo was not just a musical event but provided a much broader experience and education with its many different elements defining a truly great occasion. Additional experiences included a live interview on the local television channel 'FOX 43' for the DOM, ADOM and SSgt Indra to promote the event. Then there was the 'Cast Student Meet',

an educational programme for local school children which gave them the chance to meet the band members from many different countries to share their thoughts and knowledge before taking pictures and signing autographs. The Student Matinee performances offered this amazing spectacle to all the local school children and the 'NATO Festival' and the March through Norfolk, with some 75 bands & groups, was just one other important part of a varied and interesting programme.

The Band of the Brigade of Gurkha felt immensely proud and honoured to be invited to America representing the UK on the international stage. In all respects this proved a very successful tour and all band members were very grateful for all the work undertaken, not just musically but also administratively in making the opportunity possible. I would also like to extend our gratitude to the many members of the Virginia International Tattoo for their friendship and for making our stay such a wonderful experience. It was a great privilege and pleasure to participate in such an outstanding event and we hope one day to be able to return. Jai Gurkha Band!

Brunei Darussalam International Tattoo - 24 May - 4 June 2011

By Musn Bhagiman Lingden

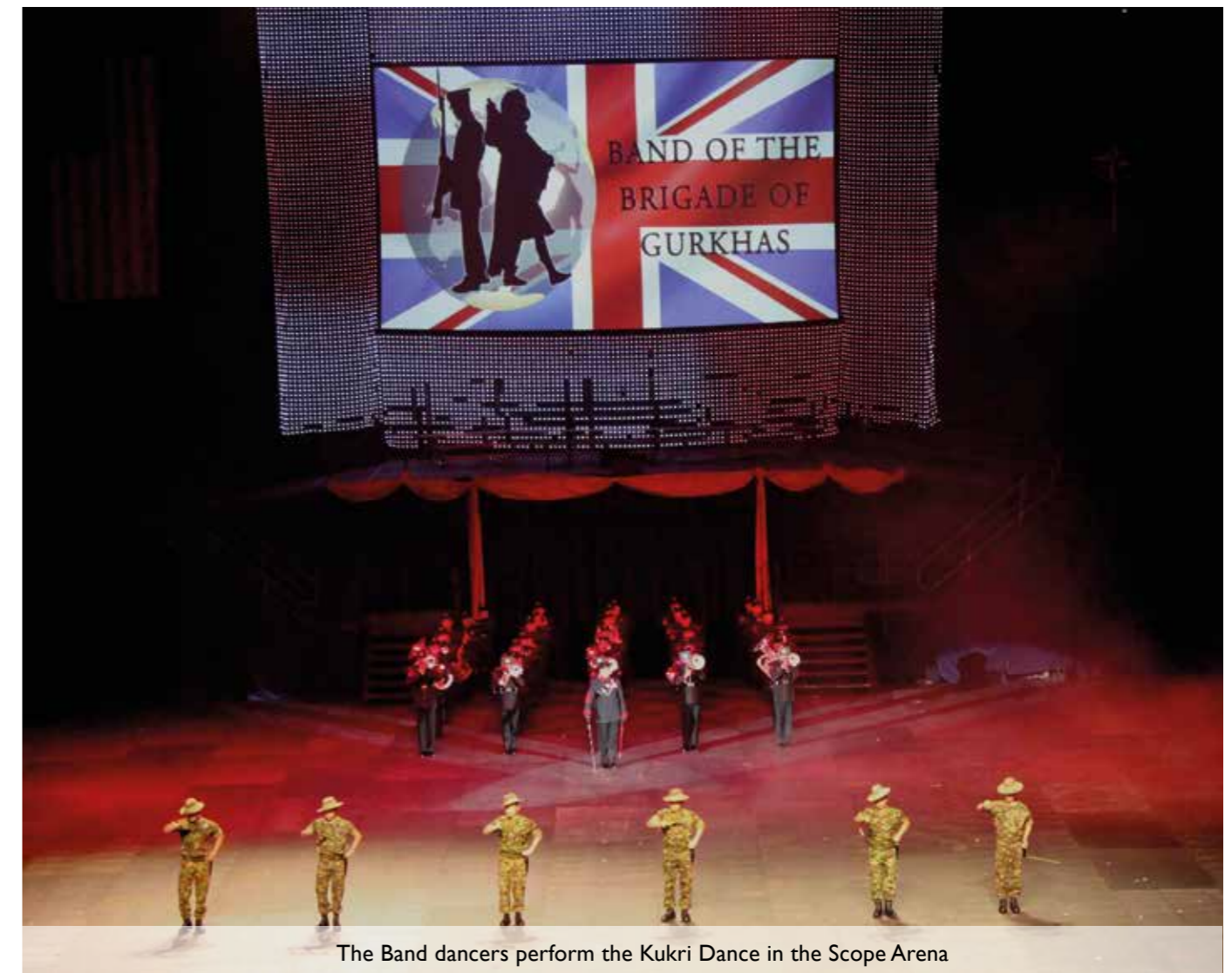
Barely two weeks after unpacking uniforms and instruments following our successful participation in the Virginia International Tattoo, the Band was once again on the move to distant shores. The second leg of our tour took us to Brunei to participate in the Brunei Darussalam International Tattoo 2011. The Tattoo was organized to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Royal Brunei Armed Forces and took place at the Hassanal Bolkiah Sports Complex. Considered to be the grandest International Military Tattoo to be staged in the country, it comprised

performers from 12 countries including the United Kingdom, United States of America, Australia, China, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, Philippines, Thailand, Oman and Pakistan - some 900 performers in all. The Tattoo had an equally broad variety of acts from Military Bands through Acrobats and a Motorcycle Display Team to traditional Dancers.

The Band departed Shorncliffe on the morning of 24 May on the now familiar journey to Heathrow Airport but on this occasion (thankfully!) the freight travelled with us and arrived without incident. Our marathon journey included a 17 hour flight, with only a short break in Dubai for duty free shopping, before arriving at Brunei International Airport. With the temperature hitting 30 degrees, in every sense we were given a very warm welcome which included being presented a traditional Bung Telu (a plastic flower with a hard-boiled egg attached to it in a net). Official photographs taken and interviews with DOM Saheb completed, we were ushered to our accommodation, the Orchid Garden Hotel which with its four star rating, offered many excellent facilities including a pool, sauna, gymnasium and shops not to mention an outstanding selection of food to rival the 'Grand Chinese Buffet' (and we could eat as much as we wanted!).

The first rehearsal began at 0800hrs covering the opening and closing sequences as well as providing the opportunity for individual displays - thankfully the stadium was air conditioned because even in the morning the tropical heat was oppressive. At 1400hrs all participants were taken by coach to the Royal Berkshire Hall for a formal Reception which also proved to be a four star occasion. It brought together the many diverse races, cultures and languages and marked the beginning of many new friendships. The Commander of the Royal Brunei Armed Forces, Major General Hj Abidin, Chairman of the Tattoo, gave a formal welcome and expressed his gratitude for the attendance of all participants. The party continued with a variety of traditional food, drink and entertainment including beautiful dancers and a local band adding much to a most memorable occasion.

The following day rehearsals resumed, bringing together the many different elements of the show - cultural acts, acrobats, motorcycles, dancers, etc - highlighting many logistical and musical challenges for the organizing team. Somewhat surprisingly given the limited progress achieved, a full dress rehearsal was held that evening in the presence of the Deputy Minister of Defence and other dignitaries as well as friends and family of the organizers. Although it went fairly well there was



The Band dancers perform the Kukri Dance in the Scope Arena

still much to achieve - not least how they were going to fit all the participants into the arena, as few bands were willing to reduce their numbers.

A new day and a new adventure. All participants were invited to perform in one of four different districts, described as 'road shows' to promote the Tattoo. We went to Tamu Tudong Saji in the Belait District along with bands from Australia, Brunei and Malaysia. Hundreds of local people turned out and for our 35 minute performance we played both British and Nepalese music as well as featuring our Traditional Dancers who were particularly well received.

Having travelled nearly half way around the world, we did not want to miss the opportunity to perform for the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles stationed in Brunei. So, following the road show we headed to Seria where they are based. The Regiment was serving in Afghanistan during our visit but the Band was still able to provide an entertaining and memorable evening. All the families, the rear party and the many civilians working for the Battalion, numbering over five hundred, enjoyed a performance of the Sounding of Retreat which featured the ever popular Khukuri dance.

Back at the stadium the last day of rehearsals provided an opportunity to polish up individual displays as well as the opening and finale sequence before the much anticipated opening night. Attended by His Majesty The Sultan of Brunei, His Royal Highness The Crown Prince and many members of the Royal Family, dignitaries and distinguished guests, the venue was full to capacity. A fanfare flourish marked the opening of the show which continued with a fusion of Massed Band music, Pipes & Drums, Choir and Cultural Dancers as well as a Martial Arts Group. The opening sequence followed with individual floor shows, a multi coloured musical extravaganza - each

Military Band performing their distinct music and marching display along with traditional dances, singing and comedy acts. A breathtaking performance by Chinese Acrobatics and the Motorbike Display Team, the Army Red Warriors from Malaysia, also added much to the occasion. The Gurkha Band stood out for its fast, slick marching display, variety of music and of course our traditional Khukuri Dance. The evening came to a spectacular conclusion with all participants returning for a finale of music and dance which once again featured the 'Voice of an Angel', Musn Mani performing in Michael Jackson's 'We are the World'.

This was a very successful and equally memorable occasion providing a once in a lifetime opportunity to witness and experience the many diverse cultures, music, dance, art and unique performances from around the world. The Gurkha Band would like to extend sincere thanks to the Royal Brunei Armed Forces for inviting us to the Tattoo and for the wonderful hospitality enjoyed throughout our stay. It was a great honour and privilege to be an ambassador for the United Kingdom on the world stage on an occasion that will live long in our memories.

The Queen's Birthday at the British Embassy Paris, 14 - 16 June 2011

By Musn Binay Limbu

Bonjour! The final leg of our epic tour was a relatively short hop across the English Channel to France and its capital city Paris. Despite this trip only lasting a couple of days, it proved to be another fantastic occasion full of excitement for the Gurkha Band, providing many treasured memories.



The Band enjoys a day at the world's largest naval base at Norfolk

On 14 June early in the morning the Band set off by coach, not at all disappointed not to be boarding an aeroplane again! After nearly eight and half hours on the road and having survived the Paris traffic, we were warmly welcomed by our hosts at a rather cosy hotel (and certainly some way off the four stars we had previously enjoyed). That evening we had delicious traditional French food and red wine after which the majority of the Band headed to the famous Eiffel Tower, a ten minute walk from the hotel. This would be the only chance to do touristy things and savour the amazing views from the tower from which we took many pictures to remind us of yet another special place.

The next morning after croissant and coffee, the Band took the short journey to the British Embassy, a most imposing and impressive building. On arrival we set up and rehearsed the incidental music for the garden party, followed immediately by rehearsals of the formal element of the celebrations and performances of the French and the British National Anthems. The Ambassador himself took a keen interest in this aspect of the event and seemed very pleased with our performance.

Finally we concluded with our own Marching Band Display which would be the grand finale of the Queen's Birthday Reception. After a demanding morning and with many Gurkha stomachs rumbling, we headed off for our favourite pastime, eating. On this occasion members of the Embassy staff had organized a delicious curry in a local Indian restaurant which was much appreciated by all (apart from our coach driver Robert who does not like curry - an irony not lost on someone who regularly eats with the Band).

The garden party started in the late afternoon and was attended by over 2,000 guests. DOM Saheb had selected a broad variety of British and Nepalese music including several soloists. The guests seemed to be very much enjoying the occasion with many making favourable comments to the Band (between pieces of course!). The incidental music over, we made our way to the bottom end of a particularly long garden grabbing our head dress en route. The march back up to the Embassy building was rather quicker given the light tempo at which we march - it was obvious by the look of amazement on many people's faces as we whizzed by, they had not previously seen the Brigade Band. Speeches concluded, the Band performed the French and the British National Anthems. (A few weeks after returning DOM Saheb received a letter from the Ambassador in which he mentioned that some of his French guests had remarked "they had never heard the Marseillaise played so well", a compliment indeed!) The evening concluded with our own display and the opportunity to show off both our unique drill and flavour of music. Once again the Band was given a most enthusiastic reception by a very appreciative audience.

Although a relatively short tour, the Band enjoyed another wonderful experience which provided many great moments in our lives. In addition to his comments about the performance of the French National Anthem, the Ambassador in his letter described the Band's performance as "a significant contribution to the resounding success of the event". The entire Brigade Band were very grateful for both the opportunity to perform on such an important occasion and for the hospitality we enjoyed throughout our stay. Jai Gurkha Band!



The Band march through Norfolk Virginia

The Royal Australian Regiment

I RAR - June 2010 to June 2011

Commanding Officer: Lt Col A Hocking
RSM: WO1 Darren Murch
Home Base: Townsville

With the dust from I RAR's deployment to Afghanistan in 2009/2010 settling and after taking some needed rest, the latter half of 2010 allowed sections and platoons to get back to work on foundation war fighting skills, ahead of providing support to HQ 3 Brigade through Ex CATA and Ex HAMEL. 2010 finished with I RAR winning the 3 Brigade Commander's Trophy and Obstacle Course Competition.

After returning to work in 2011, I RAR was pleased to be advised of several members of the MRTF-2 Battlegroup receiving recognition in the Australia Day Awards for their service during Op SLIPPER in Afghanistan. They included the following RAR members:

- Pte M Bird - Commendation for Gallantry
- Col P Connolly - Distinguished Service Cross
- Maj B Russell - Distinguished Service Medal
- Maj D Trotter - Distinguished Service Medal
- Lt J Westhorpe - Commendation for Distinguished Service
- Cpl J Raward - Commendation for Distinguished Service

In early February, the unit training programme was put on hold as the Battalion started fighting a battle on the home front - against Cyclone Yasi. After the winds had calmed, I RAR wasted no time in planning its support to Operation 'Yasi Assist'. Two companies, made up from soldiers of Bravo, Charlie, Support and Administration Companies, deployed to assist with the clean up and rebuilding of homes and businesses. Many of the soldiers involved had to leave their own families and damaged homes to help others. The majority of soldiers said they enjoyed being able to help fellow Australians in need and were heartened by the level of appreciation shown by affected local communities.

2011 has been a time for I RAR to develop our capability in preparation for our next role, leading the Ready Battlegroup (RBG). A key part of I RAR's preparations has been jungle training, providing company-sized groups for four Rifle Company Butterworth (RCB) rotations from August 2010 until August 2011. The harsh jungle terrain throughout Malaysia and Singapore proved to be a great training environment and

pushed soldiers to their physical and mental limits. The reward was tougher, stronger, and more adaptable soldiers, sections and platoons with a strong grasp of 'the basics'. This was much needed after several years focusing on 'the war' as opposed to 'a war'. In addition to the training value, RCB rotations provided many opportunities for soldiers to visit historic battlefields throughout South-East Asia. During Alpha Company's rotation as RCB 93 a number of soldiers attended an Anzac Day dawn service at Hell Fire Pass. All who attended spoke highly of the occasion and were extremely proud to be able to pay tribute to our fallen.

In April, Battalion Headquarters and attachments from supporting units took part in an Amphibious Operations Planning Course in Cairns, facilitated by staff of the Amphibious Task Group (ATG), Royal Australian Navy. The course developed the staff's planning skills needed to deploy the ready battlegroup (RBG) aboard, and from one of the Navy's amphibious ships. The training package then incorporated a joint planning activity at Lavarack Barracks, culminating with a two week planning and simulation activity at HMAS Watson and aboard HMAS Manoora in Sydney.

Meanwhile, C Company was given the opportunity to undertake a CTC Jungle Training Rotation at Tully. The company initially inserted into Cowley Beach by SA-70 Blackhawk with a Platoon inserting by Landing Craft Medium (LCM) 8's. This activity provided a great learning opportunity for all the new members of the Company who had not previously worked on either airmobile or amphibious operations. The Platoons operated in close terrain with the water level varying from ankle to chest depth, making patrolling and general living a challenge.

I RAR commemorated the Battle of Coral during the week 9 - 13 May 2011 amidst a very busy training programme and whilst supporting units deployed on operations. The Coral Day Parade was witnessed by over 500 spectators and we were honoured to have Battle of Coral veterans present medals to some of our soldiers on parade. The parade also marked the farewell of the unit mascot, Sgt Septimus Quartus and the welcome of his young son Pte Septimus Quintus. Immediately following the parade, I RAR conducted a very popular Open Night to showcase our history and current capabilities to our families and the general public. Another highlight of Coral week was a closely fought 'street cricket' match on the parade square involving the Officers and Senior NCOs versus the Other Ranks, with the ORs winning the game in the second last over. The game was reminiscent of the 'Bodyline Series' with numerous bouncers and some good natured sledging between both teams. Coral Week concluded with a cocktail night at the Townsville RSL where members of the Battalion

and their partners got to dress up and celebrate.

Ex Quintus Paratus II, the first unit level exercise, occurred in June and saw I RAR and its attachments come together as a Battlegroup for the first time this year. The exercise commenced with a call-out followed by the conduct of full battle procedure and resulted in the BG deploying well within its required notice to move. The exercise focused on developing collective skills up to BG level and included CT and BG level attacks, both blank and live, by day and night, supported by aviation, armour, engineers and MPs. At the end of the exercise the I RAR Catering Platoon provided a scrumptious BBQ which was enjoyed along with a couple of ice-cold beers.

I RAR is now looking towards Ex TALISMAN SABRE 2011 and a 3 Brigade Certification Exercise prior to assuming our status as the RBG.

2 RAR assumes the Mentoring Task Force role

Commanding Officer: Lt Col C Smith CSC
RSM: WO1 John Pickett
Home Base: Townsville

2 RAR assumed the role of the Mentoring Task Force from 5 RAR during a small ceremony at Multi-National Base Tarin Kot on 25 June 2011. The Task Force's task is to mentor the 4th Brigade of the 205th Corps, Afghan National Army (4/205 ANA Brigade). The broader context for this task is to make sure that Afghanistan never again becomes a safe haven from which terrorist organizations can launch attacks against Australian citizens and the citizens of allied nations. The mechanism to achieve this objective is to make sure that the Taliban never comes to power in Kabul. A greater part of the method of preventing the Taliban from gaining power is to create an Afghan National Security Force capable of resisting the Taliban (or even defeating it). Mentoring the 4/205th ANA Brigade in Uruzgan Province is, therefore, an important contribution to success in this war.

The only true objective measure of the Mentoring Task Force's success is the ability of 4/205 Brigade to affect the insurgency within Uruzgan Province. Despite recent rhetoric in military journals that would suggest that winning contemporary wars is less a function of killing and capturing the enemy than it is about doling out Western largesse, success for the Mentoring Task Force is the extent to which it is able to assist 4/205 ANA Brigade to kill and capture insurgents. The necessary improvements in the functions of Afghan government and the provision of infrastructure and other needs for the Afghan people are tasks for other agencies of contributing governments. The hardest part of the mentoring task is doing it in a way that will ensure the ANA Brigade is capable of continuing to defeat or neutralise the insurgency within Uruzgan Province long after Australian troops have gone.

Achieving this aim implies that the Task Force must not only sort out the tactics and battle drills of the ANA companies (Tolays) and battalions (Kandaks), but that the Task Force ensures the brigade's logistics processes and systems work; that the brigade has a functioning intelligence cycle; that it can resupply its disparate sub-units; and that it can provide appropriate medical support among many other functions.

The Task Forces before us did some tremendous work to get 4/205 ANA Brigade to the standard it is now and to reduce the insurgency down to its current level. Afghan Army units and other Afghan Security Forces, such as Police, now reach into most of the populated parts of the Province to some extent. Many of these areas are very remote. The Afghan, Australian, American and Dutch forces fought hard and sacrificed much to achieve this level of government reach over the last four to five years. Nonetheless, the situation is far from perfect, and while we would be confident in saying that the insurgents could never come to power in Uruzgan Province under current circumstances, we would not make such a confident assertion if the Australian and American troops were withdrawn from Uruzgan Province at this particular time. We are confident that the conditions for such a withdrawal are not far off, but not just yet. There is still work to do. The signs are good. This Task Force, based on 2 RAR, came with a very clear idea of the attributes it needed to pass on to the ANA soldiers and commanders to get them to the next level of operational ability. The priority was to take them beyond a very rudimentary Forward Operating Base mentality, and impart to them a more sophisticated method of operating that would see platoon-sized groups of Afghan soldiers operating away from the base for multiple days and nights in known insurgent areas. Our aim is to get the ANA troops to do much more at night when the insurgents are very active. We also hope to get the ANA commanders beyond rudimentary patrolling and to try out some more advanced tactics, including more sophisticated ambushing. We have had some early success. Despite a lot of advice that suggested the ANA would not want to work at night, our officers and non-commissioned officers have managed to convince most ANA officers of the advantages of night work. A recent successful hasty ambush that resulted in three enemy KIA and one WIA has gone a long way to convincing the ANA commanders of its merits. Consequently, night patrols and extended multiple day activities have become routine after just a few weeks. In one particular valley it is clear that insurgents fear moving at night now because they cannot be sure that ANA soldiers mentored by small teams of Australian infantry, forward observation officers and engineers, will not be abroad.

The above success notwithstanding, the Taliban is a frustrating enemy to fight. His tactics have evolved as the war has evolved. Rather than seek decisive engagement, he chooses to set booby traps (IEDs in the contemporary vernacular) and lay mines. He initiates contact at a distance and flees as soon as the Afghan and Australian troops begin to close with him. He wears the dress common to all locals and discards his weapons and ammunition during the fire fight, making him indistinguishable from the remainder of the population. Our

men are working hard to develop tactics that might fix him more easily, but this is no trivial problem.

The techniques for dealing with improvised explosive devices, the high quality of training in dealing with them, and the tremendous protection offered by the Bushmaster Protected Mobility Vehicle (a contemporary term for an armoured car) are keeping the soldiers safe from mines and booby traps. Australian and Afghan soldiers discover far more improvised explosive devices than they are struck by. Many of the soldiers have been operating with the Afghan National Army against the enemy for over seven weeks at the time of writing. The mission specific training undertaken during the previous six months has proven to be appropriate and highly representative of what the Task Force has experienced since arriving in Afghanistan. In fact, the quality of training was such that there was very little learning to be done in the initial period of operations. Given that the fighting season began almost in the same week as the transfer of authority, the soldiers have dealt with heightened enemy activity in their stride. In fact, the men and women of the Task Force are very happy to be here in the middle of the fighting season. There is still a palpable sense of excitement and a strong desire to get the Afghan units among the enemy and to see them succeed. One area that the Task Force has focused on is the preservation and exploitation of evidence leading to the capture and imprisonment of insurgents. The process of evidence collection and identification of insurgents is supported by a biometrics database. Soldiers collect biometric data (fingerprints, iris scans, photos and other information) on as many individuals as they can, using a simple electronic device. When soldiers discover caches of weapons, teams collect fingerprints (and other evidence) from the items and compare the evidence with data on the database in much the same way as the police might do. Recent operations revealed two suspect insurgents, one of whom is now incarcerated. The sum of all this work is to get the Afghan Security Forces to control more of the population and important lines of communication than the enemy. The areas of government control are steadily expanding, while the areas of enemy control are slowly contracting. It is fair to say that the Afghan forces are pushing the insurgents into more remote parts of the Province. Nonetheless, most of the Province is contested. The insurgents still wield some influence in the more benign parts of the Province. The balance in the contested zones is generally turning in favour of the government forces, allowing for the penetration of normal government functions into these areas and the application of incentives by development agencies.

Searching for caches and IEDs, seeking contact with the enemy, conducting biometric enrolments, and searching personnel and vehicles requires the mentored ANA patrols to spend a lot of time in dangerous places. Like most Australian experience in war since 1945, soldiering is characterized by extensive patrolling in close country, alert to booby traps and mines, carrying very heavy loads, laying for long hours in wait for the enemy, and interspersed with rare and fleeting contact with him.

This generation of young soldiers goes about this task in the same way as all others; with professionalism, compassion and a

healthy degree of scepticism. The soldiers believe strongly in the cause for which they fight, and put their lives in danger every hour in order to achieve the goal set by their Government.

[RAR Editor's Note: Sadly 2 RAR lost Private Matthew Lambert on 23 August 2011 shortly after his CO had written this article. Our thoughts are with his wife, family and fellow soldiers.]

3 RAR October 2010 to June 2011

Commanding Officer: Lt Col T Scott
RSM: WO1 Trevor Logan
Home Base: Holsworthy

'Old Faithful' has put 'Duty First' in the period since the last Bulletin, continuing the unbroken tradition of unremitting hard work in the service of Australia. Highlights have included the longest period as the Ready Battalion Group (RBG) in the Army's history (30 months by the time we hand over to 'The Big Blue One'), the danger-close realism of the Battalion's live fire exercises and the winning of the Duke of Gloucester Cup for the second year in a row. A readiness culture and training hard for 'a' war does have some dividends.

Over the last eighteen months 3 RAR has fully remediated the conventional airborne force, including the successful employment of C-17 for dropping both paratroopers and heavy drop equipment. Although a decision was made for the parachute role to cease within 3 RAR, the time that this is to take effect is yet to be announced. The Battalion remains enormously proud of its service over the last quarter of a century as the ADF's static-line parachute entry force and our rising to the challenge of the unique demands of the airborne role. Paradoxically this home-grown capability is currently at its highest level of readiness for many years: in December 2010 the unit had 500 qualified paratroopers and has conducted three tactical insertions of the Airborne Combat Team (ACT) in the space of five months. The unit most recently conducted another tactical parachute insertion with over 200 paratroopers conducting a parachute assault on to DZ Cormorant in High Range Training Area, Townsville, as part of the Battalion's annual live fire exercise.

The Battalion affiliation with 'A' Field Battery, RAA sadly came to a close in December 2010 with the renamed 'A' Battery, 1 Regiment formed in Brisbane and 109 Battery, 4 Regiment established in Townsville. We wish those who have been part of the most recent chapter of the Battalion and Battery's long history together - the 'Airborne Gunners' - good soldiering.

The major exercise of 2010, Exercise HAMEL conducted in September-October 2010, saw the Battalion live up to her nickname with a parachute assault, airmobile assault, mounted

advance to contact and a series of false alarms seen off with aplomb. The lowlights included eating 'H' vegan ration packs for several weeks (allegedly to ensure the rifle companies were reminded of the exercise name), a distinct lack of enemy and what seemed like a millennium in the salubrious 2 RAR transit lines. For the final live-fire attack the Battalion fought through the most 'Maryang-San'-like objective Hardrock could find in Impact Sector North, as if it were a football field. In fact the objective itself was football field size, just at a gradient slope favoured by BASE jumpers.

Following a battalion-level shake-out exercise (Exercise LONG KHANH) out the back of Holsworthy in February 2011, the Battalion focused all efforts on commemorating the 60th Anniversary of the Battle of Kapyong. Our last Kapyong Day in Sydney proved to be a massive event with large crowds of the Battalion family overflowing around the parade ground to witness a RAPSL insertion, building clearance demonstration and well-turned out ceremonial parade. This year, the affixing of the Kapyong Streamer included Cpl Ben Roberts-Smith, VC (a former 3 RAR JNCO) and also present at the parade were current serving members of 2nd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry and 16th Field Regiment, RNZA. The week of commemorations ended with many of the Battalion marching with the 3 RAR Association down George Street on ANZAC Day 2011, followed by reunions aplenty at The Fortune O' War. The number of former members of the Battalion who attended the series of Kapyong activities such as the parade and various functions at the Officers' Mess, Sergeants' Mess and the Madden Club was heartening!

'Old Faithful' has commenced preparations for our relocation to Townsville over the period December 2011-January 2012. While many will be sad to depart the bright lights of Sydney, the two messes and the Madden Club, we are looking forward to being reunited with our sister battalions and settling into the newly built Kapyong Lines, Lavarack Barracks. The Battalion thanks our families for their unstinting support throughout our time 'online' as the RBG, RCT and ACT. Particular mention goes to the families of the fifteen officers and men of 3rd Battalion currently on loan to the 2 RAR-led, Mentoring Task Force 3 and HQ Combined Team Uruzgan in Afghanistan.

'Old Faithful' remains, as always, combat ready and combat capable.

5 RAR (Mech)

Commanding Officer: Lt Col D Huxley
RSM: WO1 D de Kock
Contributor: Lt Col A Forbes
Home Base: Palmerston NT

450 5 RAR (Mech) personnel have returned to Australia following a very successful deployment to Afghanistan with

MTF-2. The achievements of MTF-2 are well-documented elsewhere but we would like to congratulate Darren Huxley and the officers and soldiers of MTF-2 on a job well done. Sadly, MTF-2 had three soldiers KIA during its deployment. These soldiers, and the sacrifice they made for their nation, will be remembered by the Army community.

Soldiers who have recently returned from operations are enjoying a period of well-earned leave with their families and friends. For the 300 5 RAR (Mech) personnel who did not deploy (or redeployed early) 2011 has proven to be a busy and rewarding year. Currently the Battalion has soldiers in Shoalwater Bay conducting Exercise TALISMAN SABRE, soldiers detached to our Brother Battalion - 7 RAR (Mech) - for an upcoming Rifle Company Butterworth tour of Malaysia and soldiers attending courses to maintain the Battalion's Mechanized 'skill sets' at the School of Armour in Puckapunyal.

The Battalion will focus on individual training when MTF-2's leave period concludes. The Battalion will conduct a wide range of specialist and career courses including Basic Recon, Specialist Combat Communicators, Subject 2 for Corporal, Sniper Basic, Mechanized Driver and Mechanized Crew Commander. These courses will occur during the period 1 October to 1 December this year and will be conducted both in Darwin and at Cultana Field Training Area in South Australia.

Before the courses period commences 5 RAR (Mech) personnel will participate in a range of MTF-2 Welcome Home activities. These include a Memorial Service on 2 September at 1 DER and the Welcome Home Parade through the streets of Darwin on 3 September. The Battalion will also take this opportunity to present the Warr-Khan Trophy to the Battalion's best Junior Leader in 2011. An open invitation to these activities will shortly be sent to the President of the Association and we are hoping to see as many "Old Tigers" as possible at the event.

5 RAR (Mech) has given clear direction to re-mechanize after an extremely busy period of operational deployments. The Battalion has received 30 M113AS4s and we will receive a large majority of our A vehicles by the end of 2011. The delivery of these vehicles with their enhanced protection, firepower, mobility and communications marks the start of a new chapter in the Battalion's history.

The Tiger Battalion looks forward to re-integrating our recently deployed soldiers, re-building our mechanized skills and knowledge and contributing to future operational deployments in defence of Australia's national interests.

6 RAR

Commanding Officer:	Lt Col M Jennings
RSM:	WO1 B Brown
Home Base:	Enoggera

6 RAR spent most of 2010 in Afghanistan where nearly 500 members of the Battalion formed the core of the 6 RAR Battlegroup (Mentoring Task Force 1). The Battlegroup, predominantly from 7 Brigade but with over 40 contributing ADF units, concentrated in Brisbane in September 2009 and embarked upon a demanding Mission Specific Training Regime culminating in a Mission Rehearsal Exercise in Townsville in December. The unit commenced its deployment in mid January 2010 and conducted a six week Relief-In-Place operation with the 1 RAR Battlegroup which was completed on 14 February. By that time, MTF 1 had adopted the following disposition in its mission to mentor and partner with the 4th Brigade, 205th (HERO) Corps, Afghan National Army in Uruzgan Province:

- MTF HQ, Logistic Support Company, CT D, the Trade Training School, Engineer Sqn HQ and the Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams (OMLT) for the 4th (Combat Support) Kandak, 5th (Combat Service Support) Kandak and Bde HQ were based in Tarin Kot.
- Mentoring Team A occupied Patrol Bases Atiq and Wali in the Mirabad Valley to mentor elements of the 4th Kandak.
- Mentoring Team C occupied Patrol Bases Mirwais, Mashal, Qudus and Buman in the Chora and Baluchi areas to mentor the 2nd Kandak.

MTF 1 quickly adapted to life in an Afghan winter and learnt many new skills associated with patrolling in sub-zero conditions. While the emphasis of patrolling with our ANA counterparts was dismantled, the combined arms emphasis with Engineers and RAA Joint Fire Teams meant that many of our section commanders had attachments for patrols that exceeded the size of their section. The focus of the patrolling programme was twofold: firstly to take the ANA to the local population and improve their sense of security, and secondly to dominate the ground in the vicinity of the combined Afghan/Australian Patrol Bases to provide better force protection. This emphasis utilized the advantage of the ANA understanding the local population (to an extent) and the Australian planning and patrolling skills, together with our access to enabling assets such as offensive support and aviation to provide a more effective combined approach for security operations and development of the ANA. This formula would be predominant throughout the operation with some operations and patrols taking a more deliberate focus towards targeting caches within our AO containing IED components.

Over the course of the MTF 1 tour, the prevailing and pervasive threat remained the IED, although there remained a significant small arms fire threat. MTF patrols and patrol bases

were involved in nearly 600 small arms fire incidents, which were often the enemy engaging combined patrols at long range as a 'come on' or enticement to move into their engagement areas. These incidents resulted in nearly 100 contacts where the soldiers on MTF engaged the enemy, some being less than a minute, but several lasting two - three hours. MTF 1 was engaged by IEDs on nearly 60 occasions, but over 120 IEDs were detected by our Engineers and rendered safe by EOD, a testament to the superior training of the Australian Sappers. This effort was, however, not without cost with five Engineers being wounded when an MT-C mounted movement struck an IED near the Nyazi crossing in March.

MTF 1 conducted a number of deliberate, combined operations with the Mentoring Team C teams working with 2nd Kandak and Combat Team D in the central and southern Baluchi operations in the spring; with the focus being on the clearance of these areas to facilitate development projects there. These operations had a major impact on the areas adjacent to Patrol Base Qudus where the population responded favourably to the combined MTF and ANA efforts.

MTF 1 suffered its first fatal battle casualties the day after the Battlegroup had commemorated the 44th Birthday of 6 RAR. On 7 June, Sappers Jacob Moerland and Darren Smith, together with Explosive Detection Dog Herbie, were killed in action by an IED explosion while returning to the Patrol Base in the Mirabad Valley. On 2 July, Mentoring Team A fought a major engagement with the enemy in the Sorkh Lez area, which resulted in four MTF soldiers being wounded. On 8 July, Pte Nathan Bewes was fatally wounded by a remotely detonated IED while his patrol was returning to PB Marshal.

In late July and early August, the structure of MTF changed dramatically as staff were taken from the HQ to form HQ Combined Team-Uruzgan, a combined US and Australian HQ to replace the Dutch HQ Task Force-Uruzgan as they withdrew their military commitment from Afghanistan. In addition, D Company re-rolled from a Combat Team to a Mentoring Team to assume the mentorship and partnering with the 1st Kandak in the Deh Rawood area. These changes resulted in MTF 1 having over 500 members of the Battlegroup living in patrol bases forward from Tarin Kot and occupying an additional four patrol bases with their ANA counterparts, bringing the number of external locations from six to ten. The building of a new PB in the Musazi area of the Mirabad Valley in mid August was heavily contested by the enemy who launched several attacks as construction commenced. These attacks were repulsed by a dogged combined arms defence and aggressive patrolling.

On 20 August, a combined Mentoring Team C/2nd Kandak operation to clear indirect fire point of origin locations NW of PB Qudus resulted in Pte G Kirby and Pte T Dale being killed in action by an IED in an overwatch position. On the same day, the build-site for PB Musazai was again heavily attacked, resulting in a prolonged engagement that lasted over three hours. The firepower of the attached Cavalry LAV and AH 64 together proved decisive and enabled a Mentoring Team A section patrol to return safely to the PB. On 24 August, a combined Mentoring Team D/1st Kandak patrol from PB Anar

Joy into the Tangi Valley resulted in a prolonged engagement in which LCpl Jared Mackinney was killed in action by small arms fire. There were several more significant engagements, primarily in the East Dorafshan area during the run-off election which saw the soldiers from Mentoring Team C heavily committed together with their Afghan counterparts. In the midst of this busy period, CT-B was formed through the amalgamation of the Cos Tac Party, a LAV patrol and a ROCL PI tour being extended to form an OGA security platoon to provide force protection to the growing AUSAID and SFAT presence. 6 RAR's tour of Op SLIPPER as MTF 1 concluded with a very successful Relief-In-Place with the 5 RAR Battlegroup, MTF 2. During this RIP, the long-awaited Rotary Wing support to insert and extract soldiers from both Task Forces was instrumental in reducing the potential for casualties through excessive road movement.

Upon return to Brisbane, the Battalion re-formed with our rear element and participated in an emotional welcome home parade marching behind riderless horses symbolising our fallen warriors. Leave commenced in early December with a decent break until 1 February 2011. Support Company and SIO-S courses were completed early in the New Year before commencing a compressed training cycle before participation in Ex TALISMAN SABRE 11 in mid July. The Battalion has undertaken Platoon level live fire and Company blank activities as part of Ex LONG TAN in May, before Combat Team live fire activities in June as part of Ex DIAMOND DOLLAR 11. This exercise was a Brigade Level Combined Arms Activity in which 6 RAR integrated with Artillery, Engineer, Cavalry, Tank and Aviation assets, including the Tiger Armed Reconnaissance Helicopter (ARH).

In June 2011, the 6 RAR section for the Duke of Gloucester Cup placed second to 3 RAR in the overall competition by a narrow margin, with the team winning the McDonald Cup for all night activities. This outstanding result came on the heels of the Battalion winning the Brigade cross country and obstacle course competitions and placing second in the shooting competition. The Queen's Birthday 2011 Honours List honoured the following members of the 6 RAR Battlegroup in addition to seeing MTF 1 being awarded the Meritorious Unit Citation for its service in Afghanistan in 2010:

- WO2 K Dolan - Medal of Gallantry
- LCpl B Clark - Medal of Gallantry
- Maj J Groat - Distinguished Service Medal
- Capt F Harrison - Distinguished Service Medal
- Cpl R Goodsell - Distinguished Service Medal
- Maj J Roderick - Commendation for Distinguished Service
- Cpl G Francis - Commendation for Distinguished Service
- Maj G Palmer - Conspicuous Service Medal

6 RAR honoured the service and sacrifice of the Battalion and its attachments over the course of its proud history at a ceremonial parade to commemorate the 45th Anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan on 18 August 2011. This parade saw D Company 1966 presented the unit Citation for Gallantry and the presentation of the awards announced in the Queen's Birthday list, before the honour roll of the Battalion from all operational tours concluded the parade.

7 RAR - News from the Southern Battalion

Commanding Officer:	Lt Col M Garraway
RSM:	WO1 R Verrall
Home Base:	Edinburgh SA

7 RAR conducted their long awaited relocation to Adelaide over the Christmas - New Year period of 2010/11. The relocation included soldiers from the newly re-raised 102 (Coral) Battery of the 8th/12th Regiment and logisticians from the Logistics Support Element of the 1st Combat Services Support Battalion, and an element of Headquarters 1st Brigade. The relocation saw approximately 580 soldiers relocate from Darwin to Adelaide in what was essentially a large scale 'posting'.

The new barracks and facilities are world class. The Battalion group has inherited brigade-level facilities, most of which are on-line now, or will be in the very near future. After four years of making-do in shared facilities in Robertson Barracks and Berrimah, the Battalion is enjoying its own turf. Our ranges, Murray Bridge and Cultana, are well appointed and far enough away to avoid the distractions of barracks life.

Our arrival in Adelaide was greeted warmly by the locals. There was no shortage of assistance from State Government departments and community organizations in both an administrative sense and socially. Arriving in Adelaide during Festival season meant that there was plenty to do and see, with events ranging from the Fringe Festival to the Clipsal 500.

The live-in accommodation for the soldiers at Edinburgh has been subjected to the nationwide delays for the Single LEAP. The outcome for the men is an AUSCO Hut mining camp-style construction. It is Spartan by anyone's standards. On the positive side, the live-in soldiers pay the minimum contribution for quarters, or have the choice of moving out on partial rental assistance which, in Adelaide, allows our soldiers to live in good suburbs. We expect the live-in accommodation to be constructed by the end of 2012. It certainly isn't the outcome we were after. However, it is softened by the fact that the accommodation for the live-in officers is worse!

Importantly the Battalion's ability to train consistently has improved as a result of the relocation. No longer bound by the restrictions of the NT Wet Season, each Company has steadily achieved levels of collective training which we would

normally have been forced to accelerate upon the on-set of the NT Dry Season. This allows a busy, but far more consistent and predictable training routine.

2011 has seen the growth of the Battalion's unit establishment with the key change being the authorization to grow Support Company. Each of the specialist platoons have been created this year from a standing start. Our thanks go to the School of Infantry for assisting us to kick start that growth - in particular, for allowing our men to complete the full suite of DFSW qualifications, including running a basic DFSW course at Singleton for our platoon. Each specialist platoon is now manned to approx 60% with the requisite number of basic and Offr/NCO qualifications. Specialist equipment remains a challenge, but we expect matters to change as the Battalion works its way through the Force Generation Cycle. The attitude of the men towards creating the specialist platoons has been excellent. The soldiers selected for these platoons embraced the opportunity to develop their skills and are well on their way to generating their respective platoon capabilities; they know what it is that they can bring to the table, and the chance to be part of a significant change in the Battalion's life has been grasped by each man with enthusiasm.

The move to Adelaide and the expanded unit establishment gave many young soldiers the opportunity to progress to the next rank. Approximately 65 soldiers were promoted into new appointments. These young JNCO's have been challenged, but as with every other challenge we have, it is no different and not any more difficult to the challenges that our RAR forefathers faced during previous periods of expansion; it simply reinforces the need to look back at our history and draw strength from those who have served before us.

Currently the Battalion is preparing for a Battlegroup commitment on Exercise TALISMAN SABRE as OPFOR against the readying 7th Brigade. This will be followed by a parade in Adelaide for the presentation of our new Colours, and consecutive deployments on Rifle Company Butterworth before entering the readying phase of Army's Force Generation Cycle in 2012 and preparing for operations.

8/9 RAR - 2011 thus far...

Commanding Officer: Lt Col K Fegan
RSM: WO1 I D'Arcy
Home Base: Enoggera

Following on from the devastating floods in Southern Queensland on 10 January, 8/9 RAR was recalled to duty as part of Op FLOOD ASSIST and deployed at short notice to assist the Queensland Police and SES in the search and clearance of Gratham in the Lockyer Valley. The enormous task of searching the township, river systems and outlying farming areas involved members of the unit covering approximately 450km² of terrain. Overall, it was a physically and mentally demanding job. In addition to the detailed search of the area, the soldiers actively

aided the local community in clearing debris from houses and infrastructure throughout the township. Due to the sterling efforts of all soldiers on Op FLOOD ASSIST, 8/9 RAR received a letter of commendation from the Mayor of Brisbane.

Following Op FLOOD ASSIST, the unit returned to regular duties in early February and began the training year with a suite of specialist and promotion courses throughout February-March at the Wide Bay Training Area. After some well-deserved leave in April, the Battalion proudly marched through the City of Brisbane on ANZAC Day 2011 under the eyes of the Governor-General of Australia, Ms Quentin Bryce AC. After the completion of the parade both current and former members of 8/9 RAR concentrated at the Ram's Retreat to celebrate the unit's history and past associations over a beer and game of two-up.

The month of May saw the Battalion back at Wide Bay Training Area to conduct Ex MINH DAW, which consisted of an escalating series of live fire range practices including Tactical Close Assault Drill, Section Attack by day and night, Platoon Attack by day and PMV counter-ambush activities. Once completed, 8/9 RAR married up with its supporting elements from 2 CER and 1 Regiment and transitioned into Ex DIAMOND STRIKE; a Combat Team live fire attack. Each Combat Team conducted a deliberate attack on an enemy platoon position; involving an explosive breach of a barbed wire obstacle, a 300m assault under simulated artillery support, and a full company reorganisation including Aero Medical Evacuation of the battle casualties by Blackhawk helicopter.

It has already been a very busy start to the year, and there's more field training to come over June/July in the form of Ex DIAMOND DOLLAR and Ex TALISMAN SABRE at Shoalwater Bay Training Area. This will then be followed by the mission specific preparations for upcoming operational deployments. After witnessing the strong performance of both soldiers and officers in training this year, we are confident that 8/9 RAR continues to develop as a hard fighting unit and will be ready to meet any challenge presented to us by the Australian Government.

School of Infantry

Commanding Officer: Lt Col A Lowe
RSM: WO1 D Murch
Home base: Singleton

The main effort for the School of Infantry (SOI) is training Initial Employment Trainees (IET) in Rifleman Wing (RW). There is nothing more important in what we do than to train infantrymen to go to RAR Battalions who are training for war. The School also remains responsible for a multitude of infantry career, specialist and range courses delivered through Tactics Wing (TW).

The throughput of trainees at the School reached a zenith of over 1,100 trainees in 2009/10 as the RAR surged

to regenerate two new Battalions. This year the School's IET throughput will slow to just fewer than 600. We assess that the status quo throughput for the RAR will steady at 750, therefore it is imperative that RW sustains its instructor numbers in anticipation of the inevitable rise in throughput.

Our JNCO calibre within the School is impressive. We are continually encouraged by the commitment the RAR Battalions make in posting outstanding JNCOs to train our newest infantrymen, while the benefits to the individual are also significant. The majority of JNCOs posted to the School will return to the RAR on promotion, qualified as a Military Self Defence and Close Quarter Battle Shooting Instructor, a Small Arms Coach and accredited with Cert IV Training competencies.

There is an amount of discussion in Defence and the community about the prospect of women in the infantry and associated physical employment standards within Army's combat arms. The School presently trains infantrymen as

competent members of the rifle section for the RAR. Regardless of Government's decision, the SOI will continue to maintain the standard of infantrymen marching out of RW. This standard is not based upon the Army's minimum physical requirements, but rather the infantry-specific physical, intellectual and technical demands of being a soldier in the RAR. This standard is typified by the IET march-out exercise, Ex HARD CORPS, and the RAR's Duke of Gloucester Cup Competition.

On 1 September 2011, the School and the Infantry Museum celebrated their Centenary; both were formed in 1911 at Randwick Barracks, NSW by Major F B Heritage who was the first Commanding Officer of the School of Musketry. The School hosted a dinner for all past Commandants, Commanding Officers and Regimental Sergeants Major of the School and Infantry Centre. The Centenary week culminated with a charity ball for Legacy on Saturday 3 September. It is through our Centenary that we intend to reinforce the maintenance of our Corps traditions and continue to enhance the reputation of the Regiment.

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

Introduction

This last year (2011) has been one of significant tragedy and personal impact for the soldiers and officers of 2nd/1st Battalion Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment.

Two significant earthquakes and thousands of aftershocks hit the Battalion's home city of Christchurch. One of these earthquakes caused significant loss of life and major damage to buildings and kept the Battalion very busy with civil aid and security tasks.

The Battalion also lost another comrade in Afghanistan, although this time as a result of an accident when an armoured vehicle overturned. Private Clif Mila was the gunner in the turret of a M1151 armoured Humvee when in poor weather and road conditions the vehicle rolled.

Pte Mila was a dedicated and professional soldier whose brother had also served with the unit. The SNCO and other soldiers injured in the incident were evacuated and have since made full recoveries.

Operation Christchurch Quake

Op Christchurch Quake was the immediate response by the New Zealand Defence Force to the magnitude 6.3 quake

that toppled buildings and killed 180+ people within the Canterbury area of the South Island.

Fortunately, on the day of the earthquake several Army units plus navy ships and aircraft were about to deploy on a large joint exercise in the South Island and were concentrating in the Christchurch area. This enabled a swift response from the Battalion and it immediately moved to assist the Police and Fire service with the rescue effort. The unit's biggest and longest lasting task was to assist Police in cordoning off the entire central business district of Christchurch both to protect property and protect civilians from the risk of further building collapse.

Initially armoured vehicles were used inside the newly named 'Red Zone' due to the danger from falling glass and masonry. Once the evacuation was complete checkpoints were established to control movement of emergency services and roving patrols kept a look out for possible looters.

With many roads impassable due to damage and liquefaction soldiers from Support Company in their Pinzgauer 6x6 vehicles assisted Police in conducting security patrols in some of the worst hit suburbs. These patrols also acted as an important intelligence gathering tool identifying areas in need

of humanitarian assistance. With water, sewerage and electricity cut-off to tens of thousands of homes, patrolling the empty city streets at night by NVG had many soldiers reminded of foreign war zones rather than their once fair city. Any potential looters were soon dissuaded when the local print media reported soldiers were using thermal imagers to detect looters and then ambushing them using NVG. As well as patrols, soldiers assisted a massive logistic effort to distribute initially food, drinking water and later chemical toilets to the thousands of families in the worst hit eastern suburbs.

Planned as a higher level counter-insurgency operation, the exercise saw an enemy network embedded into local rural communities in several small towns for the battlegroup to target and root out. Company groups rotated through combined arms live firing activities to test their ability to co-ordinate fire and manoeuvre in complex (built up areas) terrain.



Soldiers hand out food and water in suburbs where thousands were without water, power, food or sanitation.



The Army and USAR discuss the ongoing rescue from collapsed buildings in the central business district of Christchurch.

Unit training was postponed then cancelled as the full extent of the damage from the earthquake became apparent. Soon three months had passed and rifle companies had rotated on and off the cordon on a 24 hour 7 days a week shift system. Finally some respite came as the Navy and Air Force were handed the cordon duty to allow the unit some well deserved time off. It also allowed the Battalion HQ time to plan how we could continue to train and continue to support the recovery phase.

Training

Exercise SOUTHERN AVENGER (May 2011) saw companies rotate from cordon duty one at a time and through a series of live field firing battle handling exercises with mortars and armoured vehicle support. All companies experienced some challenging weather conditions which in one case turned a company mounted attack into a 5km dismounted advance to contact after all of the armoured vehicles became bogged. The soldiers were grateful to get time away from the cordon and get back into some live field firing.

Exercise SOUTHERN REAPER (November 2011) was the unit's largest training activity for some time. Due to the disruption caused at the start of the year many units had training resources that needed to be used and therefore responded to the call to join 2/1 RNZIR on this exercise.

Operational Deployments

Task Group Crib 16, Delta Company (Afghanistan) returned to New Zealand in April, handing over to a task group from our brother battalion, the 1st Battalion. We now have a welcome 12 month break before Bravo Company will deploy in April 2012.

Task Group Gyro 12 (Timor-Leste) returned in May having had a quiet deployment with very few incidents of violence during their six month tour.

Task Group Rata 14 (Solomon Islands) returned in August having soaked up plenty of sunshine during their four month rotation.

Conclusion

2011 has been a trying year especially for some of the unit who lost friends, relatives and for some their homes during the earthquake. The New Zealand Army has also been undergoing an unprecedented level of change this year as restructuring occurs and new equipment comes on line. 2012 is shaping up to be busy with further deployments scheduled as 2nd /1st Battalion again becomes the 'online' unit. We also look forward to hosting Major Tom Pike and C Company, 2 RGR in April for 'Ex PACIFIC KUKRI' and continuing to strengthen the bond between ourselves and the Brigade of Gurkhas.



Pte Mila being bade farewell by his family, comrades and members of the Samoan community.



The Gurkha Museum - 2011

Curator's Report

This year the Gurkha Museum has had to adjust to the harsh economic downturn in trading, but we were grateful for an increase in visitor numbers to the Museum (an increase of 771 over the same period last year for the first six months), but less trading through the Shop (down 12% per month). Notwithstanding shop trading difficulties, the Trading Company has achieved a remarkable and positive level of trade with the Gallery and Lectures 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. I must add my thanks to the 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 sadly will be saying farewell to Corporal Sher Gharti who returns to 1 RGR and Rifleman Balbahadur Tamang, both of whom were earmarked for redundancy in the latest round of MOD job losses. Rifleman Chetbahadur Rana will also depart in November 2011 on completion of 22 years service. We wish them all good luck with their second careers. We say farewell to two volunteers, namely, Mrs Dorothy Clay after over ten years of dedicated service and Eleanor Unstead for over five years in the Shop.

The Macdonald Gallery has provided the venue for our many major functions; the summer temporary exhibition and a number of highly successful lectures. The summer temporary exhibition staged from 6 August - 4 September 2011 was titled 'The Scottish Connection - Tartans, Bagpipes, Kukris and Courage'. The exhibition was opened by General Sir Sam Cowan KCB, CBE, President of the Gurkha Brigade Association, and attracted a wide range of public interest and attendance for a temporary exhibition. The commercial use of the Gallery has ensured a healthy return of income for 2011 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 Military Museums. The winter series of lectures (staged each year between October - March) appeals to a growing audience from within a 25 mile radius of Winchester. The list of lectures can be seen on the website www.thegurkhamuseum.co.uk. The Signage Project which has been running for over four years will be completed by the end of October 2011 and enhance all WMM's Museum Access. This year WMM co-ordinated a successful Armed Forces Week, Winchester,

including a Tri-Service flag-raising ceremony, attended by the Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire, activities at all the museums, an extremely informative lecture by General Lord Dannatt on '40 years of Soldiering' and an Open Day and Band Concert.

The Brigade of Gurkhas Visitor Centre, Shorncliffe continues to attract visitors from Kent and local schools to view their exhibits. The Visitor Centre staged an exhibition on 'Faith, Food and Fashion in Nepal' from November 2010 - March 2011. A new temporary exhibition was then staged in the Spring 2011, titled 'IRGR Tour in Afghanistan 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 the Museum to purchase a General Service Medal 1918-1962 with 'Malaya' Clasp (George VI Rex) with assistance from the 6th Gurkhas Regimental Trust in respect of the Late Lance Corporal Deobahadur Ale 2/6GR who died as a result of his wounds received in Malaya on 17 August 1954. It is unusual for a GSM to be acquired posthumously. In addition, the Museum has purchased an inter-active touch screen, incorporating a display of British Gallantry Awards and commemorating those awarded to British officers and Gurkha ranks. In addition, the touch screen will display the paintings, silver, badges and accoutrements in the McDonald Gallery. The Gallantry Awards Project is a new initiative where we worked with the designers to produce a cutting edge inter-active programme to explain and show British gallantry awards to the public. The Project was launched at the Army Museum Ogilvy Trust conference in London on 25 October 2011.

Looking ahead, I would like to remind our readers of some dates for your 2012 diary: The Gurkha Brigade Lecture and Curry Lunch on Friday 13 April 2012, titled 'The State of Nepal' by General Sir Sam Cowan; A Spring Art Exhibition titled 'Nepal Awakening' by Gordon Davidson, a renowned artist will be staged from 21 - 27 April 2012; The Friends Lecture and Curry Lunch on 'The Gurkhas - Special Force' by Professor Chris Bellamy on Friday 8 June 2012; The Summer Exhibition for 2012 will be titled 'Brunei - A Look Back; A Look Forward - A Fifty Year Association' and will run from 4 August - 2 September 2012, The Annual Theme Lecture and Curry Lunch by Colonel Gerald Strickland titled 'Gurkhas - Eleven Years in Afghanistan - For What?' will be staged on 12 October 2012; followed by The Friends AGM and Tea on Saturday 13 October 2012.

Booking details are given on the following page. Seating capacity for lectures is limited, so early booking is recommended.

The current major project being undertaken at the Museum for 2011/12 will be the updating of the display of the Contemporary Brigade of Gurkhas on the first floor. In addition, a Brigade Roll of Honour is being assembled and incorporated into the new Touch Screen display. The Museum's intention is to remember those that have given their lives on operations and in service, beginning with recent operations and service and working backwards in time as far as our records show.

We look forward to meeting 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 summer exhibition during 2012. We encourage readers to support the Museum by becoming a Friend of the Gurkha Museum. For further details see <http://www.thegurkhamuseum.co.uk/Friends/18>

A summary of dates for your diary is as follows:

a. The Gurkha Brigade Lecture and Curry Lunch

Friday 13 April 2012 titled 'The State of Nepal' by General Sir Sam Cowan KCB, CBE (President of the Gurkha Brigade Association). A review of external pressures and internal stresses. Meet at 10.30am for coffee. Lecture in the Library at 11.00am followed by drinks 12.15pm. A buffet curry at 1.00pm. Friends Concessionary rate £25.00 per head. Normal ticket £30.00

b. Spring Art Exhibition

'Nepal Awakening' by Gordon Davidson, a renowned Scottish artist will be staged from 21 - 27 April 2012.

The Damdil Piquet

By Colonel Richard Cawthorne, Chairman Gurkha Museum Trust

The action of Sergeant Dipprasad Pun in Afghanistan in 2010 for which he was awarded the Conspicuous Gallantry Cross, the first ever won by a Gurkha soldier, received wide national media coverage and is reported elsewhere in this journal. Some 70 years ago, a similar action took place on the North West Frontier of India (now Pakistan) when a small outlying piquet of the 2nd Battalion 5th Royal Gurkha Rifles (Frontier Force) (2/5th RGR) fought a sustained battle against rebel tribesmen during the hours of darkness, in total isolation from their Battalion stationed nearby at Damdil. This is their story.

2/5th RGR had deployed to Northern Waziristan with the 1st Abbottabad Infantry Brigade in early 1937. Officially the country was at peace and the troops were not allowed to take any action against tribesmen unless and until they themselves were attacked. The main task of the Brigade was to protect a section of the road in the vicinity of Damdil for the passage of daily convoys to and from the main military base at Razmak.

c. The Friends Lecture and Curry Lunch

Friday 8 June 2012 'The Gurkhas - Special Force' by Professor Chris Bellamy, (Historian, Journalist, Former Professor of Military Science and Doctrine and Director of the Security Study Institute, Cranfield University, Now Director of Greenwich Maritime Institute). The lecture is based on Professor Bellamy's recent book of that title. Meet at 10.30am for coffee. Lecture in the Library at 11.00am followed by drinks at 12.15pm. A curry buffet at 1.00pm. Friends Concessionary rate £25.00 per head. Normal ticket £30.00 per head.

d. Summer Exhibition

4 August - 2 September 2012 titled 'Brunei - A Look Back; A Look Forward - A Fifty Year Association'. The exhibition will cover the deployment of Gurkhas to quell the Brunei Revolt in 1962 and examine the role played by the Brigade of Gurkhas in Brunei during the Confrontation with Indonesia from 1963 - 1966 and up to the present day.

e. The Theme Lecture and Curry Lunch

12 October 2012. 'Gurkhas - Eleven Years in Afghanistan - For What?' by Lieutenant Colonel Gerald Strickland DSO MBE (who commanded a Gurkha battalion on Op Herrick and is now an instructor at Shrivenham). Meet at 10.30am for coffee. Lecture in Library at 11.00am followed by drinks at 12.15pm. A curry buffet at 1.00pm. Friends concessionary ticket £25.00. Normal ticket £30.00.

f. 13 October 2012

2.30pm Friends of the Gurkha Museum AGM and tea.

This involved troops leaving the camp at Damdil at or before dawn and spending some nine to ten hours occupying defensive positions over-looking the road under a hot sun. The days were, initially, uneventful whilst at night there was occasional sniping from tribesmen. However, that was all to change with the epic stand of No 11 Piquet at Damdil.

No 11 Piquet was situated within 400 yards of the perimeter of Damdil Camp and was occupied only at night. As there was a severe shortage of barbed wire and the whole of the available supply had been used to wire-in the more distant piquets, No 11 Piquet was unwired. On the night of 20/21 March 1937, it was manned by a naik (corporal), six riflemen and a signaller. In the early hours of the morning some shots were heard from the vicinity of the piquet. The Commanding Officer and his Adjutant both turned out to see what was happening. Telephone communication could not be established so it was assumed that the line was cut. In addition to the telephone, the piquet had a signalling lamp and a Verey pistol

and was within shouting distance of the camp. No signals or shouts were seen or heard, and as occasional shots from the piquet showed it was manned, it was assumed that nothing serious had happened. It was not until the Battalion's dawn patrol reached the piquet that the dramatic events of the night unfolded.

At about 3.30 a.m. fire had been opened on the piquet from close range and one of the two sentries had been killed instantaneously. Immediately after the burst of fire a tribesman leapt the wall into the piquet, killed the signaller and was himself promptly dispatched. The piquet was then immediately rushed by a gang of between 30 and 40 men, a number of whom also jumped the wall. A desperate hand-to-hand struggle ensued with bayonets, kukris, daggers and stones being used in a confined space in which it was difficult to distinguish friend from foe. Finally the Gurkhas prevailed and the tribesmen were driven from the piquet leaving three of their dead inside the wall. Of the piquet, two were dead and the other six were all wounded, two so badly that they could play no further part in its defence. The piquet commander, although badly wounded by a knife thrust that had penetrated his lung, rallied the other three who were still standing and they held the walls.

Keeping up spasmodic fire from changing positions, they deluded the enemy into thinking that the piquet was still strongly manned. For over two hours this was kept up until shortly before 6 a.m. when the tribesmen finally withdrew. During this time the piquet commander had collapsed, and a rifleman, with a bullet wound in the leg and two knife wounds to the body, took charge until relief arrived at dawn.

It was later established that one other tribesman had been killed and a number wounded. They left behind four of their rifles, a quantity of ammunition and three knives - one of which was subsequently mounted and hung in the Officers' Mess. All six wounded survivors recovered and all were decorated. The piquet commander and the rifleman who had relieved him received the Indian Order of Merit and the other four were each awarded an Indian Distinguished Service Medal. The history of the Regiment records many deeds of outstanding bravery, but that of the Damdil Piquet has never been surpassed.

The action of No 11 Damdil Piquet is portrayed in a life-sized diorama at the Gurkha Museum, and the knife which was originally presented to the Officers' Mess of 5 RGR by the Piquet's Company Commander is now on display there.



The Gurkha Welfare Trust

Director's Report

(A brief given by the Trust's Director, Colonel W F Shuttlewood, to the Gurkha Brigade Association AGM on 10 November 2011 at the Army & Navy Club, London)

The Trust's Statement of Accounts for 2010/11 will report quite a pleasing result for the year ending 30 June 2011. Income for the year was £11.9 million and expenditure £10.7 million. Income increased as a consequence of legacy income and a small number of exceptional gifts. Whilst these donations are hugely welcomed, every legacy gift represents the loss of a Trust supporter and 'windfall income', by its very nature, cannot be relied upon in the future.

Trustees therefore view the future with caution. The downturn in income will continue for the foreseeable future, presenting an inclement fund-raising environment for both voluntary and statutory funds. Continued uncertainty over the rate of exchange between £ Sterling and the Nepalese Rupee is also a concern to Trustees. Every one Rupee fall in the rate of exchange adds £100,000 to the Trust's annual expenditure in Nepal.

Against this backdrop, Trustees have undertaken a Strategy Review. The Review sets a cautious course for the next five years and seeks to ensure Trust expenditure remains manageable.

As part of the Strategy Review, Trustees agreed a vision: 'Gurkhas living out their lives with dignity'.

Trustees have also identified the Trust's priorities for our welfare activities:

- Priority 1 - The provision of a Welfare Pension.
- Priority 2 - Welfare Grants.
- Priority 3 - The provision of Residential Homes.
- Priority 4 - Medical Support.
- Priority 5 - The provision of water and sanitation projects in support of Gurkha communities.
- Priority 6 - The provision of education (facilities and grants).

There is no significant change in the activities of the Trust, but members will note the prioritization of other activities above the 'Provision of Education'. Trustees have decided to wind down the Student Grants scheme. In doing so, Trustees wish to thank members for their significant, lengthy contribution to this programme.

In UK, the joint GWT/HQBG Gurkha Welfare Centre has been fully engaged in fulfilling its four key tasks:

- a. To act as a focus for all retired Gurkhas in the UK who seek welfare support - and to provide a ready and immediate source of authoritative Government and/or Trust subject matter expert advice and counsel.
- b. To ensure individuals arriving in UK under the new settlement arrangements are able to claim their statutory entitlements.
- c. To complement and support the Service charities in the delivery of welfare support and, when necessary, to assist in the coordination of their work.
- d. To provide the capacity to reach out nationally to Gurkha communities and to those agencies and organizations supporting Gurkhas in need.

Since the announcement to changes in immigration entitlements for Gurkhas in 2009, the Centre has to date dealt with over 1,420 applications for welfare and other support. There is no data on the numbers who have decided to settle in UK but reports from Kathmandu intimate that over 3,000 ex-servicemen have applied for visas, along with 4,000 dependants, under the settlement arrangements. The Centre reports that Service charities have been able to absorb the additional workload. The Trust continues to provide a substantial annual grant to the ABF in recognition of their support (£100,000 in FY 2011/12). The Trust however remains concerned about adequate provision of statutory resources, specifically in garrison towns such as Aldershot and Farnborough.

The Trust is in good heart. But there are clearly some difficult times ahead. The Trust remains grateful for the way in which all Regimental Associations have supported us corporately in the past, and of course the generosity of individual members is very much appreciated. We hope that it is a tradition which will be maintained in the future. In that context members may find the following comments helpful:

a. The Trust will continue to need the support of Regimental Associations to sustain its activities in Nepal. Any funds in support of general expenditure will be extremely welcome.

b. Notwithstanding the capital expenditure provided by a single donor, the Trust still has to meet the running costs of the residential home in Kaski, estimated at £120,000, from Trust general funds. Regimental Associations may wish to consider providing part of their annual donation to the Trust specifically in support of this aspect of Trust expenditure.

c. The Trust's Regional Branch network needs new recruits. Any support you can provide at a local level would be hugely appreciated.

On behalf of Trustees and the 9,000 welfare pensioners in the care of the Trust, I thank you for your continued support.

The Gurkha Brigade Association

GBA Calendar of Events - 2012

UNIT	DATE	LOCATION	EVENT	REMARKS
GBA	13 May	Romsey	GBA Visit to Hillier Gardens	
	9 Jun	RMAS	GBA Memorial Service and Reunion	
	28 Jun	RMAS	Nepal Cup Final ,All Ranks Reunion & Beating Retreat	
	3 Oct	Gurkha Museum	GBA Trustees Meeting	
	8 Nov	London	Field of Remembrance	
	8 Nov	London	Gurkha Statue Ceremony	
	8 Nov	Army & Navy Club	GBA Committee Annual General Meeting	
	8 Nov	Army & Navy Club	GBA Annual Dinner	
	11 Nov	Cenotaph	Remembrance Sunday	
The Sirmoor Club	26 May	Army & Navy Club Farnborough	Sirmoor Club AGM & Reunion Luncheon	
	15 Sep		Sirmoor Sathis Delhi Day Reunion	
6 GR	12 May	Codford St Mary's Farnborough	Officers and Ladies Curry Luncheon	
	2 Sep		Reunion and AGM	
7 GR	12 May	Farnborough	All Ranks Reunion	
	15 Sep	Gurkha Museum	Reunion Lunch	
10 GR	28 Apr	Farnborough	Annual Reunion	
RGR	28 Apr	Twickenham	Reunion	
QGE	2 Jun	Minley	Families Lunch	
	29 Sep	Maidstone	QGE Regimental Birthday & QGERA AGM	
QG Sigs	22 Sep	Bramcote	AGM Reunion	
QOGLR	18 May 23 Nov	St Omer Mess, St Omer Mess,	AGM Dinner	
Other Reunions	5 May	Gurkha Museum Stoke Poges	9 GR Informal Reunion	
	16 May		4 GR Memorial Service & Informal Reunion	
Brit/Nepal Society	22 Feb	London	Annual Nepali Supper	
	6 Dec	London	AGM	
HQBG	12 Mar 26-28 Jun	London RMAS	Memorial Gates Ceremony Brigade Conference	

[Note for 2013: 6 GRRAs have been in contact with various agencies to arrange a 'Gurkha Tamasha' from 25 Mar to 13 Apr 2013. See <http://www.2013gurkhatamasha.com>.]

UNIT	DATE	LOCATION	EVENT	REMARKS
Gurkha Museum	13 Apr		Gurkha Brigade Lecture & Curry Lunch <i>The State of Nepal</i> , Gen Sir Sam Cowan	
	21-27 Apr		Spring Art Exhibition - <i>Nepal Awakening</i>	
	8 Jun		Friends Lecture & Curry Lunch - <i>The Gurkhas - Special Force</i>	
	4 Aug - 2 Sep		Summer Exhibition - <i>Brunei - A 50 Year Association</i>	
	12 Oct		The Annual Theme Lecture and Curry Lunch - <i>Gurkhas - 11 Years in Afghanistan - For What?</i> , Lt Col G M Strickland	
	13 Oct		Friends AGM & Tea	
Nepali New Year/ Hindu Religious Festivals	24 Jul 12		Nag Panchami	
	2 Aug 12		Rhikhi Tarpan, Rakshya Bandham	
	9 Aug 12		Krishna Janmastami	
	15 Oct 12		Jamare Aunsi	
	21 Oct 12		Phulpati	
	22 Oct 12		Kalaratri	
	23 Oct 12		Mar	
	24 Oct 12		Tika	
	13 Nov 12		Laxmi Puja	
	14 Nov 12		Gobardhan Puja	
	15 Nov 12		Bhai Tika	
	14 Jan 13		Maghe Sankranti	
	13 Feb 13		Saraswati Puja	
	10 Mar 13		Shivaratri	
	26 Mar 13		Holi	
14 Apr 13		Nepal New Year's Day		
Buddhist Religious Festivals	6 May 12		Buddha Jayanti the combine day to Buddha's Birth, Enlightenment and Maha Parinirvana	
	4 Jun 12		Saga Dawa (Vaishakha Day)	
	3 Jul 12		Guru Padma Sambhava Day	
	23 Jul 12		Choekhor Duechen (Dharmachakra Day)	
	28 Jul 12		Buddha's First Sermon Day	
	6 Nov 12		Labhab Duechen (Anniversary day of decent of Lord Buddha from the Tusita heaven to human realm)	
	11 Feb 13		Losar (New Year)	

Brigade All Ranks Reunion 2011

The Nepal Cup Final, All Ranks Reunion and Beating Retreat took place at Sir John Moore Barracks, Shorncliffe, on the afternoon and evening of 1 July 2011, at the end of the Brigade Conference. 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles were the excellent hosts, and the Gurkha Welfare Centre (Aldershot) played a key part in the coordination of the Reunion. This was the fifth such reunion sponsored by the Gurkha Brigade Association and the Regimental Associations – the first four (in 2006, 2008, 2009 and 2010) were all in Aldershot, splendidly hosted by the Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment.

The Cup Final was played on the sportsfield of Sir John Moore Barracks and provided a fine spectacle for the large and enthusiastic crowd, with 1 RGR narrowly defeating The Queen's Gurkha Engineers 3-2. The 'Brigade Bhela' followed with drinks and then a delicious khana, in the cookhouse and on the lawn beside it. The day concluded with a moving and spectacular Beating Retreat by the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas and the Pipes and Drums of 1 RGR and QOGLR on the sportsfield, on a perfect summer's evening. The salute was taken by Colonel David Hayes, Colonel Brigade of Gurkhas – his last Beating Retreat before retirement.

The event was attended by some 660 serving and retired members of the Brigade and their families, the biggest attendance yet and up from 420 in 2010. A large number of pre-97 retired Gurkhas and wives were there. There were also a few invited guests from the government departments and service charities who have been providing devoted assistance during the current influx of retired Gurkhas and widows settling in the UK.

More than 100 elderly retired Gurkhas travelled free of charge from the Aldershot and Farnborough area to Sir John Moore Barracks, in two coaches hired by GWC (Aldershot) using the surplus from last year's Bhela subsidy. Small donations from three local Gurkha businesses paid for refreshments for them.

The Nepal Cup Final, All Ranks Reunion and Beating Retreat in 2012 will take place on 28 June at The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.



4/9th Gorkha Rifles win Gold Medal at Patrol 'Olympics'

By Bruce Roberts, latterly Chairman 9 GRRRA

The 4th Battalion 9th Gorkha Rifles which was raised in 1941, disbanded in 1947 after playing an outstanding part in the Chindit operations in World War 2 and was re-raised in 1961, celebrated its Golden Anniversary in 2011 and crowned its excellence in competition with over 100 teams, including 14 other teams from international armed forces, by winning a gold medal at the Cambrian Patrol.

The Cambrian Patrol is the premier patrolling event of the British Army. It is held in Wales and hosted by 160 (W) Brigade, in October each year. It is a very arduous event and concentrates on leadership, teamwork, physical fitness and achieving the mission. It is an exercise and not a competition per se, although with scores awarded under each heading and gold medals awarded to the best, the prestige value ensures great endeavour. Participants are drawn from across the British Army and Foreign and Commonwealth countries are encouraged to participate.

Each team consists of the Patrol Leader (an Officer, Warrant Officer or Senior NCO), a junior NCO as 2IC and six Rifleman. The military skills assessed are: dismounted close combat; obstacle crossing; first aid and casevac procedures; aircraft; vehicle and equipment recognition; minefield and IED clearance; patrol techniques; POW handling; helicopter drills; media handling; and radio communication - a very testing array of skills, quite apart from the extreme physical resilience required in arduous conditions. To be awarded Gold, a team must score 75% or more of the points available.

On return to India the 4th/9th Gorkha Rifles team were felicitated by the Southern Area Commander of the Indian Army, Lt Gen A K Singh, in the Rajasthan desert where the Battalion has its HQ. They were also presented to the Indian Army Commander.

[This article has been compiled from a news agency report in India of 7 November 2011, and with the help of Brian Pratt of HQ 160(W) Brigade and their website, and of Colonel Rakesh commanding 4/9th Gorkha Rifles.]

Teaching in Nepal - 2009

By Capt T R Morris, Hon Sec 6 GRRRA

For those who remember Pokhara in the 1970s, picture the Royal Nepalese Airlines flight descending as the cattle were herded off the grass airstrip. There were no proper terminal buildings, few motorized vehicles, the only tourists were mountaineering expeditions or gaggles of hippies. The outlying villagers coming to market occasionally stood and stared in disbelief; a reaction I was often tempted to reciprocate, as their weather-beaten faces, array of colourful clothes, or selection of strange vegetables, were something I had previously only seen in National Geographic magazines.

It was within this batabaran (environment) that I was trekking back to Pokhara in 1971 with LCpl Minbahadur Gurung (C Coy 6 GR) and a porter when we passed a village hut with two benches outside, on which were arranged the village school and in front was their Newari headmaster.

The chanting stopped and the entire school watched silently as we trekked by. "How young the headmaster looks", I remarked, to which Min replied "You could do that job" and so an idea was planted that took nearly 40 years to germinate.

Forgive the personal reminiscence, as I am sure that you have better ones of your own, but its purpose is to set the contrast between Nepal as many of us remember it then, and Nepal in 2009 (or 2066 in the Bikram calendar).

In October 2009 I returned to Nepal and started a term's teaching at a village school in Ghanpokhara, north east of

Pokhara on the western side of the Khudi river, whose waters flow into the Marsyangdi valley. The school was established with the help of Lt Col Gopal Gurung's parents and he continues to act as Chairman of the Management Committee and benefactor, although he no longer generally lives in the village. To reach the school, one must leave the Kathmandu-Pokhara highway at Dhumre and travel north to Besi Sahar where the metalled road runs out, then continue north to Khudi where the hydro electric project is and thereafter climb westwards to Ghanpokhara at about 2,120 metres (6,955 feet).

Search against Ghanpokhara on Google and you may see pictures of the village and be offered trips to it; and this is perhaps the most fundamental change that affects the village and its people. No longer is this village (or indeed are most villages in Nepal) cut off from the rest of the world, save for the occasional returning soldier or passing mountaineer. Nowadays tourists, research workers, volunteers, camera crews, various officials and journalists come into the village and similarly families send relatives not only into the British and Indian armies but on contract work to the Middle East.

Ghanpokhara is supposed to have 16 'homestay' houses run by Agma Samuha (like our Mothers Union) where tourists can sample village life and trekking tours link this village with Ghale Gaun as part of a popular trip.

Children growing up in Ghanpokhara do not necessarily expect to spend their whole lives in the village. Those who are

ambitious and able, look beyond the village or even Kathmandu or India, and see the rewards that their dajus and didis are enjoying overseas. Ghanpokhara may be remote but it is certainly not isolated and with radio, email and mobile phone, contact with the outside world should be instant and constant (except when load sharing cuts the power supply, the signal is too weak or another bandh (strike) occurs).

The old panchayat system for administering village life was replaced over ten years ago by the Gaun Bikas Samiti (Village Development Committee) or GBS. It is supposed to consist of local officials. In some ways this means that a mukhiya (headman) or a single wealthy landowner cannot dominate village life as tightly as he did in the past, but it also means that the authority of village elders is no longer absolute.

Matters affecting a larger area are dealt with by the Jilla Bikas Samiti (District Development Committee) or JBS and paribartan (change) can at least be discussed, even if its implementation is slow or hindered by lack of funds.

This reflected the bigger picture in Kathmandu in 2009 where you will recall that the draft constitution remained unresolved and the Maoist leader 'Prachandra' had withdrawn from the government and was threatening to resort to violence again, whilst the former Royal Nepalese Army was maintaining its uncompromising stance towards absorbing former Maoists into its ranks. Constructive debate had been replaced by emotive argument and personal animosity and the government was paralysed as a result. The people showed their frustrations by calling strikes which only added to the chaos and further frustrations.

However my focus was not on national politics but on our village life and whilst national politics made for a lively kurakani (conversation), we were basically a farming community and like all farmers our main concern was the weather. In my first month (October) it was dry, the rice was ripening, there was plenty of grass to cut for the buffaloes, oxen and goats, the chickens were laying and so life was pleasant. But no one sees farming as a profession. Each family grows only for their own consumption and not to sell. In the poor mountainous parts of Spain and Portugal, where life is not dissimilar, farmers have realized the value of plastic sheeting to force vegetable, fruit and even flower crops for sale. In Ghanpokhara I had only seen one or two gardens using small pieces of plastic for their own vegetables.

Not far from the village are the cliffs festooned with bees' nests and later in November the honey hunters dangled from frayed ropes with no protection to extract the honey, as witnessed on television some years ago. Even at a safe distance the angry bees buzzed round me furiously.

But like farmers everywhere, they are facing climate change. Temperatures are becoming more extreme which means a higher risk of landslides in the wet season and poorer crop yields in the dry season. A landslide (pyro) can be devastating. My predecessor in 2008 photographed a small boy working a butter churn inside his house. In 2009 only the rubble from that house remained. Some years ago the Annapurna Conservation

Area Project (ACAP) was set up to deal with these problems together with the problems created by tourism and one of their initiatives was to encourage farmers to grow more vegetables, but change is slow in the hills.

On the other hand, for me the availability of electricity was a big change. Below Ghanpokhara is Khudi where the hydroelectric station runs off the waters of the Khudi River, although I noticed that the pipes were cracked in several places and the water was furiously gushing everywhere! Added to this one or two houses (including mine) had installed solar panels so at night, as we sat on the doorstep, you could no longer hear the hiss of the mattitel lantern or smell the kerosene. There was even some hot water, but the womenfolk still preferred to cook rice on a traditional wood fire because it tasted better, rather than use a bijuli degchi (electric rice cooker) which would help conserve the forests and would seem quicker and easier. Perhaps best use should be made of the electricity now, as once the glaciers have melted the rate of water flow from the mountains will inevitably decline.

In the meantime however, people still seemed happy in the hills. Often I had heard that the younger generation were deserting the villages for Pokhara and Kathmandu, and I am sure that this is generally true, but in our school there were about 300 children and there were always several youngsters in the nearby shop. It was still cheaper to build a house in the village than in Pokhara.

My school was a government school and was not fee paying. It had the benefit of a new block provided by the Gurkha Welfare Trust in 2004, but some children still had a long walk to get there. In a 7 km radius the 1991 survey recorded approximately 12,500 people and within the village area approximately 3000 people in 600 households. However I am unclear as to where the centre of that radius lies and as to what constitutes the village area! Hopefully a more recent survey would show that there are more people there than the doommongers fear! But perhaps some of those are only passing through, as I had been warned each day to keep my room locked, even if I was only round the front of the house. How different from years ago!

The school curriculum throughout Nepal is based on the American grade system which was established in Kathmandu with the help of the United Nations. Children start Grade 1 at age 6 but this is open to interpretation as the old custom was to include the gestation period in calculating a child's age. How happy this must make the anti-abortion lobby!

The School Leaving Certificate is taken at the end of grade 10 and thereafter children go on to higher secondary education, but our school did not offer grades 11 and 12, so the children had to go elsewhere. There were exams every year and although facilities were limited by European standards, the children were mostly keen to learn and a joy to teach!

Although this was a mainly Gurung area, the Headmaster was a Brahman, as I believe is common in many village schools. I had not mastered the intricacies of the caste system and did not know that within the Gurung caste there are four main Tamu

clans and 12 lesser clans. Officially the caste system is over but we in England well understand still the subtle significance of class and its unwritten barriers and boundaries.

Unfortunately I had arrived too late to enjoy the Tihar and Deepawali festivals in the village but I did celebrate with friends in Kathmandu. At this time the city was full of fire crackers, lights and music. On the first day we respected the crow; the second day the dog; the third day the cow; the fourth day Laxmi (the Goddess of wealth and fortune) and Ganesh (the God of Health) and the fifth day was "bhairava" day when respect was given to our brothers and sisters.

Most of the Gurungs in my village were Buddhist or at least most of the houses had a multi coloured flag with Tibetan inscriptions flying near the gate. Although one villager admitted to me that he couldn't read the script - just as many Christians could not follow the Mass in Latin!

Onomastics and Teknonymy

By Lieutenant Colonel J P Cross OBE

Onomastics: the study of proper names, especially of their origins: **Teknonymy**, having a parent named after a child or a child named after a degraded person or object - 'So what?' as the sewing machine asked the nudist. I thought I'd spell out one or two nuggets I have picked up over the years to which a reader might like to add - or from which to subtract!

Taking Onomastics first, it may come as a surprise to learn that maybe more than 99.99% of all Nepalis never use or even know their correct name. This means that every Gurkhas soldier who has enlisted since 1815 has, likewise given a 'false' name to him who recorded it. This is because the true name, his 'rashi nam' or 'zodiac name', which could more meaningfully be rendered as 'soul name', once given at birth, is virtually never mentioned again so that evil influences cannot use it to enter the person when, or if, others call him or her by it. The southern Irish are also inclined to take this precaution.

That means that any other name used is 'flexible' and, virtually, a nickname, only permanent once that has been accepted after the pundit has told the Head of Family with what letter the name to be used should start, and then the infant's family. And even then it can be changed at the whim of its owner. Buddhists work similarly. My second 'surrogate' son's 'accepted' name was Hombahadur. When he completed his Proof of Citizenship document he entered his name as Haribahadur. "Why?" I asked him, "did you change it?" "Because I liked it better," was his answer. Such 'flexibility' has been the bane of countless Record Officers and the bewilderment of many impoverished widows when discrepancies over names occur - as they never-endingly do.

There is a plethora of other nicknames, some pejorative, 'snot nose', 'bandy legs', 'round eyes', 'midnight' for a dozy

By the time I left, the rice had been cut and winter was approaching and I need not describe for you the breathtaking beauty of the mountains or the squalor of the towns, but you will be saddened to note that litter was a problem even at that height as packets and plastics were discarded along the way. I would however love to describe the characters who made up this village and who could turn a simple bus journey into an epic adventure, a chaotic comedy and a near miss tragedy but this must be a subject for another day.

Before I finish, however, I must acknowledge the support I received from St James Place Foundation and BCCT, without whose help I would not have been able to make this trip.

[This article 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.]

individual and others descriptive, 'third son from the other side of the lake', 'tal pari saifla' and others merely polite, 'elder brother', 'cousin brother', 'grandfather', 'uncle', and their female equivalents, and others of like ilk. That means that many people do not know either their father's or their mother's name. Nor do many know when they were born. However, a clue can be got from the name the person goes under: the name of the day of the week becomes the first part of their name, for instance, a man born on Monday will be 'Som'-something, 'bahadur' or 'lal, or a Friday, 'Sukra'-something', 'raj' for instance.

Now to 'castes': I have a theory (and I am in a minority of about one here) that the traditional 'jats' were, originally, nicknames. Below the 'jats' that we all recognise, and which have often been changed for recruiting reasons, come 'thars', immutable 'sub-castes', 'clans' or 'tribes' (depending on which dictionary you use). The 'old' Indian Army had a hand book of all 'thar' and 'sub-thar' of all its soldiers, a fascinating document. The British Army, in its wisdom, has never felt the need for such a publication. Reasons for 'jat' nicknames are, I believe - and here I have to admit that my knowledge has yet to be all-embracing - basically descriptive. Let us take the names Gurung, Thapa and Rai. Gurungs, if you delve into Gurung history (and in Gurung language a Gurung is Tamu) were intimately associated with Bahuns, hill Brahmans, 'plains men' Brahmans being Jhas. Even one of their sub-castes, Lamichhané, derived from Lamo Kan, long ears, is found in both groups. 'Guruko aṅg', 'limb of the guru', is a near enough rendering. Thapa, found both with Chhetris and Magars, is part of the verb to 'set up', 'establish', namely 'prasTHAPANA' garnu. 'Rai' is an historic Hindu accolade for, I think, bravery. 'Limbu' I know not: 'Yakthumba' is their own tongue, its own script was lost but found, during King Mahendra's reign, by a Scotsman and Parasmani Pradhan, a Darjeeling linguist when

hunting in the British library. Both were honoured by the king. As an aside and nothing to do with names, the race of people with the closest DNA to the Limbus are the Tonkinese of North Vietnam. 'Chhetri', 'Ksatri', as well as 'Rana' - not a normal 'n' but one Romanised with a dot under the 'n' - have connotations with the battlefield.

In turn you have Sens from 'sena' an army, Mallas from 'malla' a wrestler and Tamang from, certainly the Cantonese 'ta' to fight and 'ma' a horse. When I was in Tamang country I witnessed the annual day: surrounded by men waving one arm, as though holding a sword or pike, a man in the middle, wearing a bandolier, had a model horse's head tied near his navel and the tail from the base of his spine. In English the 'ma' root is found in 'mare', a female horse, and a 'marshal', a horse-bound commander, be he Field Marshal or Earl Marshal, etc. Once the Communists had taken Laos over, all dancing was of the arm-punching, fist waving variety, so sadly different from the graceful, curvaceous loveliness of traditional Lao dancing.

'Khan' comes from when the animist Genghis (by one spelling) Khan was supreme. After conquering most of the then-known world, it was self-preserving flattery for both Muslims and Hindus to say they too were Khans, of the 'leader's' clan.

'Shrestha' and 'Pradhan', 'first' and 'foremost', are Newar 'tribes', related to 'Nepa', the Newari for 'Nepal'. 'Thakur' a leader, has its roots with 'thekadar', a contractor.

Whether Magar is 'ma gar(chhu)', 'I will do it', can stand scrutiny is still doubtful though some claim it as such.

Duras, the clan that started off as Turas, and was thus in the language, were famous during the time of the Anglo-Nepal War, or rather before. The famous Bhakti Thapa was a Dura and only changed his 'jat' and became an honorary Thapa so that snobbish seniors would work under him. In the Nepali 'Nepal's Military History', produced for King Birendra, Bhakti Thapa is the only commander whose family history is not given correctly. I know because I was asked to vet the 666-page book for the Chief of Army Staff. Incidentally Bhakti Thapa's weapons are still worshiped every Dashera, spring and autumn, and a pig is sacrificed on both occasions - Duras are the only people who sacrifice pigs at Dashera - and the prayer leaders still use the Dura language (although calling it by another name): there is only one Dura speaker left alive, an octogenarian widow.

Strangely, after the Gorkhali government was defeated in 1816, the name 'Tura' or 'Dura' seemed to vanish, although I have come across just a very few so names. Duras chiefly enlisted as Gurungs: old lineage records have them listed as 'Dura Gurung' and even 'Dura Thapa'. When I started writing my historical novels in the mid-1990s, the Indian Army did not enlist Duras because they were not on any Nepal government list of Nepali tribes, castes or clans: by the time my volume 4 was published, the Indian Army had begun to enlist them.

The 'Yadavs' found in the Terai are members of the Yadu family to which the god Krishna belonged.

Enough of jats, briefly on to place names. 'Kathmandu' meaning 'wooden temple' and 'Pokhara', 'lake' are well known. The study of Nepalese place names, of any country's come to that, is worthy of a Master's degree. Most large rivers in Nepal end in '-di', the Magar for 'water'. This gives me the feeling that that is another strong indication that the Magars came over the Himal prior to other epicanthic eye-lidded people. Two that always please me are in Laos (that name still shrouded in mystery) are the River Mekong - 'Me', mother, 'Kong' river - it, until recently the longest unbridged river in the world and the world's thirteenth longest, and 'Vientiane', not Vien ti ane but 'Vieng' 'a fortified town' and 'Chan' from 'chandra' moon, so 'fortified town [in a bend of a river] in the shape of a half-moon'. The French always made guttural, throat-clearing noises with 'ch' sounds so the 'chan' had to be spelt with a 'ti' (like the 'ti' in 'attention') and the English, not knowing why the word was spelt thus - and why should they? - had their own pronunciation which no Laotian recognized!

From 257 to 208 BC, the earliest date we have, 'Vietnam', as it is now known, was Au Lac when the Chinese moved into it and changed the name to Nam Viet: 'nam', 'south' and 'Viet' the Romanised ideogram for 'getting somewhere with difficulty'. After eight more changes in name, in 1792 or 1802, from Dai Viet as it was then known, a delegation went to Peking ('northern capital') to ask for the old name of Nam Viet to be restored. The emperor said that to keep the name given by the Chinese would only mean that they, the Chinese, would feel they had to return. To prevent that he would allow the name but to rendered backwards, 'Viet nam'.

Borneo and Brunei are different spellings of the same word and 'Gurkha' is an English word. 'Hukum', an order, in fact really meant 'royal command' and since Nepal's monarchy was dispensed with, the word too has become redundant: 'adesh' is now 'order'. 'Bahadur', brave, as a name has fallen out of fashion. The only place to have a remnant of it is the capital of Mongolia, 'Ulan', red, 'Bator', hero - now spelled as one word, Ulaanbaator.

So a short word on Teknonymy: all those who have served with Gurkhas will know that a wife will call her husband '[first born's] father', never by the name others know him by. The degraded person habit is now dying out but it explains why especially Gurungs would be known as 'Kami', blacksmith, 'Sunar', goldsmith, 'Sarki', cobbler, all now dalits, or even 'Kalu', for black as colour-consciousness is still a full factor of life. Strange, indeed, how fair-skinned people like to be photographed 'tanned' and darker skinned people with 'over-developed' photos so looking paler than for real.

As for degraded objects, I quote the Mara of Mizoram in Assam: if the eldest son dies, any son born thereafter is named something like 'cow dung', pig droppings' or 'dog droppings', but with the last word one of one syllable. All right, you can quote back at me some of the sessions of the Australian Labour Party in their parliament!

Here endeth the second lesson 'not before time,' I can hear in the background.

Obituaries

Obituary List

The Editor records with regret the deaths of the following members of the Brigade between 1 January 2010 and 31 January 2012.

1 GR	Capt J C Murray MC	6 February 2011	RGR	Maj J J Bowman Lt N Turkington Cpl Arjun Purja Pun LCpl Gajbahadur Gurung Rfn Amit Tamang Rfn Remand Kulung Rfn Sachin Limbu Rfn Suraj Gurung Rfn Vijay Rai	13 July 2010 13 July 2010 13 July 2010 27 January 2012 2 March 2011 12 August 2010 2 January 2012 2 October 2010 15 October 2011
2 GR	Sir John Owen Lt Col G P T Carpenter MBE Lt Col A M Langlands OBE Maj W H Blaikie Maj C P K Challen Maj E P Heaton Maj H T Mumme Maj E W A Power Capt (QGO) Aitabahadur Limbu Mr H Chapple Mr R T T Corbett Mrs C Wood	9 December 2010 12 December 2010 14 June 2010 27 May 2011 25 March 2011 14 November 2011 8 April 2011 1 January 2011 4 November 2010 6 August 2011 29 March 2011 4 March 2011	QGE	Lt Col T M H Blundell Lt Col P J C Druitt Lt Col J P Ganey MBE Lt Col I Kinnear Lt Col A M Mackenzie Lt Col R J Overd Lt Col D Quirke Lt Col A A Taylor Maj J B Freeland Maj K Hazard Maj T M H Mawhinney Capt (QGO) Dilkumar Limbu (Dalhang) Hon Lt Birkabahadur Thapa WO2 T Langridge Spr Ishwor Gurung Mrs M Wicombe	February 2011 18 March 2010 21 January 2010 September 2011 15 August 2011 1 April 2010 August 2011 December 2011 3 February 2010 24 September 2010 February 2011 August 2011 4 January 2010 7 January 2010 13 August 2010 11 April 2010
3 GR	Maj B G Kinloch MC Capt W G A Craig	21 June 2011 29 November 2011	QGS	Maj Gen P E M Bradley Col G L Davies OBE Col SW Brackenbury Col R T Hone Maj J A E Hasell Capt Pritamsing Gurung Capt (QGO) Sangdup Tamang Capt (QGO) Topbahadur Gurung WO2 Damarbahadur Gurung Sig Mekbahadur Gurung Sig Rukbahadur Gurung	2 June 2010 18 July 2011 17 March 2010 23 March 2010 13 December 2011 9 February 2011 15 October 2010 11 March 2010 6 June 2010 21 April 2010 13 June 2010
4 GR	Major P A H Lumley	4 August 2010	QOGLR	Lt Col D P Chappell Lt Col D F J Horner Lt Col D J Winkle Maj Krishnabahadur Tamang Maj R Owens BEM Maj M R Stevens Maj P K Thomas Maj J C Wallace-Dutton Mr R R Flynn BEM Mr P Treble Mrs M Baxter Mrs J Brown Mrs K Collar Mrs I McLean Mrs P McMaster Mrs E Thorpe Miss C E J Duke MBE	15 January 2010 23 June 2011 24 August 2010 6 August 2011 12 April 2010 21 March 2010 2 September 2011 20 February 2010 27 February 2010 26 January 2012 19 March 2011 April 2011 15 November 2011 1 December 2011 29 January 2011 20 November 2010 18 March 2011
5 RGR	Capt R H Ellis	November 2011	GSPS	WO1 Somprasad Gurung	9 July 2011
6 GR	Hon Lt (QGO) Tulbahadur Pun VC Maj J S Cheshire Maj W M P Gibb Maj P Griffin MBE Maj E A Hill Maj R W F Wilson	20 April 2011 27 November 2011 20 June 2011 29 January 2012 24 March 2010 12 April 2010	GBA	Maj Gen Sir Roy Redgrave KBE MC	3 July 2011
7 GR	Maj C J Batchelor Maj J B Oliphant Maj L F Morton Hon Maj Deokumar Rai MVO MBE Mrs M Dewing	24 May 2011 20 September 2010 5 March 2011 16 October 2010 10 May 2011			
8 GR	Hav Lachhiman Gurung VC Maj W R Bates MC Maj A M Dawson Maj P Wickham	12 December 2010 12 November 2010 20 June 2011 20 July 2011			
9 GR	Lt Col G D Anderson OBE Maj G H Challis CBE Capt J H Edlestone Capt H Parry	2 September 2011 2 October 2011 March 2010 7 August 2011			
10 GR	Lt Col H C S Gregory OBE	5 March 2011			

Operational Casualties

Major J J Bowman, Lieutenant N Turkington and Corporal Arjun Purja Pun

It is with great sadness that we record that Major James Joshua Bowman, Lieutenant Neal Turkington and Corporal Arjun Purja Pun from 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles were killed in Afghanistan on Tuesday 13 July 2010.

The three soldiers, serving as part of Combined Force Nahr-e Saraj (South), were killed in a suspected premeditated attack by a member of the Afghan National Army.

Secretary of State for Defence, Dr Liam Fox, said:

“The despicable and treacherous act which has taken the lives of these three brave men will not dent the resolve of the colleagues they leave behind. The efforts of 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles have directly improved the security situation in the Nahr-e Saraj district; their bold acts have improved the lives of the Afghan people and their mission to partner and train the Afghan National Army is vital to our success. I extend my deepest condolences to the families and loved ones of the servicemen killed in this atrocious attack, their sacrifice will not be forgotten.”

CO I RGR's Message from Afghanistan

Dear RGR Families and Friends

It is hard to make sense of what has happened here on Tuesday morning. Three of our number died when they were attacked in their base. At the time, Major Josh Bowman was sleeping in his tent, and Lieutenant Neal Turkington and Corporal Arjun Purja Pun were on duty in the operations room. Four other soldiers were injured in the incident. We do not know the full facts, and we probably never will, but it is almost certain that an Afghan Army soldier was involved. You are aware that we share bases with the Afghan Army. We have been building a relationship with them since we got here, and partnering them is a key part of our role.

I have spent the morning immediately after the event with our A Company soldiers and commanders from the Afghan Army. We are all shocked by what has happened, and the Afghans are deeply affected by the possibility that one of their own has been responsible for this.

We will go on. We know that a lasting solution can only be reached here when the Afghan forces can take over sole responsibility for security. We have a vital part to play in that. I have said to all our soldiers today that we must not judge the Afghan Army by the actions of one man. We now have to rebuild trust, and it will not be easy, but both sides are committed to making sure we do. The loss of our three brothers will not be in vain.

This will be a difficult time for you all, and my sincerest condolences go out to those who have lost their loved ones. We feel and share your pain, but we take strength from the knowledge that we are doing the right thing here, every day.

Lt Col G M Strickland MBE
CO I RGR

14 July 2010

Major James Joshua Bowman RIFLES attached I RGR



Major Josh Bowman was 34 years old and from Salisbury. He started his career in the British Army as a rifle platoon commander in B Company 1st Battalion The Light Infantry, having been commissioned from the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in 1999.

As a rifle platoon commander he deployed to Northern Ireland as part of the Rural Reinforcement Battalion. He operated from an isolated patrol base and for his outstanding performance throughout this tour he was awarded a General Officer Commanding Northern Ireland commendation. Following rifle platoon command he was posted as an instructor to the 3rd Battalion Infantry Training Centre in Catterick. He then returned to regimental duty in Paderborn, Germany, in the Armoured Infantry role as the Second in Command of D Company 1 Light Infantry. He deployed on Op TELIC 3 to Maysan Province, Iraq, before then taking command of the Mortar Platoon.

It was following his Mortar Platoon appointment that Major Bowman began to broaden his horizons with numerous overseas postings. From August 2005 he completed a year in the International Military Advisory Training Team (Freetown) Sierra Leone as the Operations Training Officer/ Battalion Operations Advisor. In September 2006 he returned to the UK as an SO3 instructor in the Junior Officers Tactics Division at the Land Warfare Centre in Warminster. On completion of this two year appointment he was selected for promotion to Major. Prior to attendance on the Intermediate Command and Staff Course (Land) he squeezed in a five month tour as the Assistant Chief Instructor at the Iraqi Military Academy Ar Rustamiyah (IMAR), as part of an eight man training team supporting 600 Officer Cadets and 300 Iraqi Staff.

Major Bowman began his company command with 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles in May 2009 immediately after ICSC (L), swapping the lecture halls of Shrivenham for the heat and humidity of Brunei. In August 2009 the Battalion conducted the Unit Move from Brunei to the UK and began the pre-deployment training for the Op HERRICK 12 deployment. His Gurkha soldiers developed a natural respect and affection for a leader who balanced the best traditions of a rifle regiment soldier with humanity and hospitality that found him at home in A (Delhi) Company.

Major Bowman had led his company through some of the toughest fighting experienced by the Battlegroup on Op HERRICK 12. He balanced the softer side of population-centric counter-insurgency with a genuine ability to motivate and lead his company onto the offensive when required. But above all, he was a gentle and thoroughly good man, who often spoke of his family and his girlfriend, Lucy.

Major Bowman's family said:

“He was the best possible son and brother who will be sadly missed by his family and many friends. He loved the Army and was very proud of the selfless work that he and his Company were doing.”

Lieutenant Colonel Gerald Strickland MBE, Commanding Officer 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles, Combined Force Nahr-e-Saraj South said:

“Our Battalion has lost a brave leader. Major Josh Bowman commanded A Company with a rare determination. The tragedy of his loss is beyond words. Since his arrival in Afghanistan, he led his Company deep into enemy controlled territory again and again. It is a bitter irony that after driving the insurgents back throughout his area, he was gunned down as he slept in the supposed security of his patrol base.”

Attached to the Royal Gurkha Rifles for two years, Josh is now forever one of our Regimental family. Here in Afghanistan, he lifted us all daily as he concluded his reports of his company's activity with a quick quip, be that a ping pong challenge to the Brigade Commander on their makeshift table, or his plans for yet another curry supper. I learnt very quickly out here that I could rely on him implicitly, and that he would unflinchingly head straight towards danger if that was what was required. He was truly courageous. We will desperately miss his light touch, his cheerful demeanour, and his love of his soldiers, even if it was tinged with constant puzzlement about the weird and wonderful ways of the Gurkhas. We grieve for his loss, and share a small part of the burden of pain felt by his loved ones. But while we do so, we will forge ahead and continue what he started, because that is what he would have wanted.”

Lieutenant Neal Turkington, I RGR



The time and effort that he had dedicated to his soldiers over the previous two years was paying dividends every day in the toughest of environments. Under his command 2 Platoon had been playing a key role in the complex counter-insurgency campaign that A (Delhi) Company were engaged in. He understood it and he ensured that each of his soldiers did too. In the early stages of this operational tour he had shown himself to be a decisive leader with a strong will. The men followed him and would do so again and again through the most testing of situations.

Outside of his military life Lt Turkington had dedicated much time to other people. He was a humanitarian at heart - except in the boxing ring - and this was shown through a charity that he and friends had established in South America.

Lt Turkington's family said:

"Our family is devastated with the news of Neal's death in Afghanistan on 13th July 2010. One of Neal's proudest moments was hearing that he had been selected for The Royal Gurkha Rifles. He felt honoured and privileged to serve with such distinguished, courageous and loyal men."

Neal was jovial, kind, considerate and loyal to his family and friends. Our family were inspired by his presence, and generosity. He was relentless and steadfast in his pursuit of those causes he believed in with his passion for making a difference whatever the circumstance."

We are all so proud of him - we couldn't have asked for a finer son, brother and friend."

Lieutenant Colonel Gerald Strickland, CO I RGR said:

"Lieutenant Neal Turkington was cruelly taken from us in his prime, gunned down as he took his turn on duty in the Company Operations Room. He was a courageous and determined platoon commander who was already known across the Battalion as a man who could be trusted. All his soldiers will echo that sentiment. He was a true friend to his fellow officers and a leader to whom his soldiers would willingly entrust their lives. These are not hollow words. He earned this respect through his integrity and raw ability."

He always had a twinkle in his eye and managed to bring lightness to the gravest of situations. I could not have asked for a better officer. Since arriving in Afghanistan, he had been involved in some of the fiercest fighting in our area, but he took it all in his stride, never daunted by what he faced, but always spreading a quiet confidence amongst his men. Having a leader who steers him on a calm and steady path when nerves are on edge and tension is in the air is all that a soldier will ask for, and Neal had the rare gift of being able to do just that. We mourn his loss, and we share in the unfathomable grief of his family."

Lieutenant Neal Turkington was born in Craigavon in Northern Ireland and would soon have celebrated his 27th birthday. After graduating from Imperial College London he attended the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst from 2007. He was commissioned into 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles in August 2008 and went on successfully to complete the Platoon Commanders' Battle Course in Brecon, South Wales.

His first appointment at regimental duty took him to Brunei where he quickly settled in at the helm of 2 Platoon within A (Delhi) Company. Lieutenant Turkington then continued his Gurkha education by attending the mandatory three months of language study in Pokhara, Western Nepal. A keen adventurer and traveller he found many similarities between the foothills of the Himalaya and the other parts of the world in which he had journeyed. At the end of the language training he conducted a memorable trek through Nepal in support of the Gurkha Welfare Trust and perfected the art of speaking Nepali with an Irish accent.

On returning to Brunei Lieutenant Turkington turned his attention back to a profession for which he showed a real zeal. The demanding jungle of Brunei was the perfect environment for this passionate infanteer. He had the highest expectations of himself and his platoon, to whom he dedicated himself wholeheartedly, and he relished the intellectual challenges of infantry command as much as the physical.

Ambitious for his platoon, he was constantly challenging accepted practices in order to improve himself and his team, a trait that bore real fruit in the initial three months in Afghanistan, where he was in his element as a junior commander and leader.

Corporal Arjun Purja Pun I RGR



was promoted to substantive Corporal in June 2003. He was an instructor and advisor in mine awareness and Chemical Biological Radiological and Nuclear Defence, a testament to his pioneering background. His selfless approach and professionalism is reflected in the way in which he arrived in Afghanistan to replace an injured comrade. Corporal Arjun was exactly the sort of individual that the Battalion wanted to see arrive to fill a gap. He was an outstanding member of The Royal Gurkha Rifles, a credit to Nepal and himself, who will never be forgotten. He leaves behind his wife and two children and will truly be missed by his family in Nepal and the UK.

Corporal Pun's wife Durga, said:

"Arjun Purja Pun was a tremendous husband. He was proud to be a soldier and died doing a job he loved. We are devastated by the loss of Arjun who was a loving husband and father. We are proud of the fact that Arjun was prepared to do his duty helping the people of Afghanistan."

Lieutenant Colonel Gerald Strickland, CO I RGR said:

"Corporal Arjun Purja Pun was a true Gurkha, Brought out to Afghanistan at short notice to replace an earlier casualty; he immediately immersed himself to the task in hand. Steadfast and loyal, he was true to his Regiment to the very end. We are a close knit community, and our Gurkhas are bonded through many years of service in a country far from their home. To all, Corporal Arjun was a guru-ji and a trusted elder brother. His loss is a cruel one. Torn from us in an unexpected night attack in the heart of his patrol base, we are stunned by the suddenness of his unexpected passing. I spoke to him shortly after he arrived in Afghanistan, and like all of us, he was apprehensive about what he might face. He also realized the enormity of the responsibility he was taking on, leading his section on operations in which his decisions carried far reaching consequences. But, he was not daunted, and he stepped into the breach, immediately earning the respect of his men."

Nothing can describe the pain that his wife, son and daughter are going through. We share a small part of that pain as we mourn his loss. Corporal Arjun, we will cherish your memory."

Major Simon Archer RGR, Officer Commanding Gurkha Company (Sittang), The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst said:

"Corporal Arjun Purja Pun had been in the Army for over 15 years, had a wealth of experience, was the model soldier and provided an excellent example for the Officer Cadets at Sandhurst. He was the consummate professional; intelligent, determined, and brave. He was also a very good leader who knew how to get the best out of his men, especially when the situation demanded it. More than this though, he will be remembered for his ever present smile."

Corporal Arjun lived and died doing the job he loved. He will be missed by everyone at Sittang Company but none more so than by his wife and family."

Corporal Arjun Purja Pun was 33 years old and was raised and recruited from Khibang village in the Magdi District of Nepal. He passed the gruelling Gurkha selection process and was enlisted into the British Army on 30 January 1995. His career was varied and successful and he was a hugely popular soldier wherever he served.

In 1998-99 he was a member of the Gurkha Reinforcement Company attached to B Company, 1st Battalion The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment. Most recently, he was posted to the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst where he supported the training of future Officers for the British Army and other national forces.

Corporal Arjun was in 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles based in Brunei at the time when they deployed on Op HERRICK 7 as the Reserve Battlegroup as part of Regional Command South based in Kandahar. He deployed on Op HERRICK 12 in early June 2010 as a battlefield casualty replacement. He brought with him a wealth of experience which quickly became highly valued by the chain of command. Soon after his arrival, his Company Commander, Major Bowman, commented on Corporal Arjun's excellent attitude and approach. This is exactly what was expected from him as a Junior Non Commissioned Officer who had received the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal in January 2010, his first possible chance for this award.

Corporal Arjun was a soldier who excelled and thrived on new challenges and the list of courses that he attended and completed was extensive. He completed the Section Commanders' Battle Course in Brecon in October 2002 and

Lance Corporal Gajbahadur Gurung - 2 RGR attached C Company 1 YORKS



It is with great sadness that we record that Lance Corporal Gajbahadur Gurung from 2nd Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles, serving with C Company, 1st Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's Own), was killed in Afghanistan on Friday 27 January 2012.

Serving as part of Combined Force Nahr-e Saraj (North), Lance Corporal Gajbahadur was a member of an ISAF foot patrol to disrupt insurgent activity in the Khar Nikah region of the Nahr-e Saraj district of Helmand province when he received a fatal gunshot wound.

Lance Corporal Gajbahadur Gurung was born in Majthana, Nepal, on 16 October 1985, and was brought up and educated in Pokhara. Before being selected for the Brigade of Gurkhas, he was a full-time student, studying Maths and English.

He joined the Brigade of Gurkhas on 18 December 2004 at British Gurkhas Pokhara. He completed recruit training in Gurkha Company, 3rd Battalion, at the Infantry Training Centre Catterick in October 2005. He then joined 2nd Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles and served both in Brunei and the UK.

Known as 'Gaj' to his friends in the Army, Lance Corporal Gajbahadur Gurung served three times in Afghanistan during his military career. He first deployed there in 2006 on Operation HERRICK 4 as part of D Company (Gurkha Reinforcement Company) with 7th Parachute Regiment Royal Horse Artillery. He deployed again in October 2008 on Operation HERRICK 9 with 2 RGR.

On 14 July 2009, he was posted to C Company (GRC 2), 1st Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment, in Münster, Germany. Over the summer of 2010 he deployed to the British Army Training Unit Suffield in Canada and spent time on exercise with both the 1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards and 1st Battalion The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment Battlegroups. Upon his return to Germany he became immersed in preparations for Operation HERRICK 15, during which he completed the basic Pashto language course.

On deploying to Afghanistan, C Company was renamed D (Delhi) Company. After completing his in-theatre training, he moved to Forward Operating Base Khar Nikah where his company, under command of Combined Force Nahr-e-Saraj (North), were to be based for the duration of Operation HERRICK 15.

His company were tasked with holding the contested and critically influential area north east of Helmand's second city, Gereshk. On the afternoon of Friday 27 January 2012, Lance Corporal Gajbahadur's patrol came under small arms fire. During the short exchange of fire that ensued, he was fatally wounded.

He leaves behind his wife Manisha, father Gumbahadur, mother Lekh Maya, his brother Buddha and sister Junu.

Lieutenant Colonel Dan Bradbury, Commanding Officer, 1st Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment, said:

"Lance Corporal Gajbahadur Gurung was serving in the northern part of Nahr-e-Saraj district - one of the toughest areas in Helmand and one of the very few areas remaining where control is contested daily with the insurgents - when he was killed. He touched so many lives for the better; his peers in Delhi Company and all of us in the chain of command knew him as an intelligent, charismatic and inquisitive natural leader of men.

Never one to let an opportunity go, he was constantly striving to know more, learn more, and his ability to get on so well with the local people made him the natural choice to train the Afghan Local Police. He died as he lived, at the heart of the action, taking the fight to the enemy and resolute in the face of danger. He was a true Gurkha in body and spirit in everything he did.

We will miss him immensely and our thoughts are with his wife Manisha in Münster and his parents Gumbahadur and Lekh and brother and sister Buddha and Junu in Nepal. We pray he will rest in peace."

Major Spiro Marcandonatos, Officer Commanding D (Delhi) Company, 1st Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment, said:

"I have known Lance Corporal Gajbahadur for nearly three years. An extraordinary individual, he made an impression from the very first time I met him. Bright and well-educated, he was most definitely a 'people person' who abided by all the right values; a true Gurkha at heart, with a Western twist.

Much respected across all ranks, he offered much in every way and was a born leader of men. He consistently maintained that he wanted to be at the forefront of a Rifle Platoon and 9 Platoon were the beneficiaries of this wish. His dedication has been second-to-none and his immediate aspiration after this tour was to attend the Section Commander's Battle Course in Brecon to lead a section of soldiers.

Such is the mark of the individual to me that, as his Officer Commanding, I consider that I have lost a brother and a friend. As a rising star in the Brigade of Gurkhas we will be the worse for his passing and he will be sorely missed by one and all. Our thoughts are with his wife Manisha, his family and friends."

Captain Hemkumar Tamang, Second-in-Command, D (Delhi) Company, said:

"Lance Corporal Gajbahadur was a very well-known and talented man in the company. Very good at all sports, he especially loved playing football and basketball. He was always cheerful, charming and approachable to his mates and commanders. He was an outstanding character.

He was one of my best soldiers and proved this since his arrival in Germany. His diligent and hard work was second-to-none; he was always eager to help his mates and support his commanders. His smile and humble character remain in my heart. He was an excellent friend and a brother to all those around him. Now we miss him..."

Captain Euan Waters, Platoon Commander, 9 Platoon, D (Delhi) Company, said:

"I met Lance Corporal Gajbahadur in 2009 when I joined the Company as his Platoon Commander. I immediately singled him out as someone who was going places. Although a Rifleman at the time, he stepped up on numerous occasions as a section commander and, as with everything, he did it with ease and an assured confidence.

Lance Corporal Gajbahadur was one of the most gifted soldiers I have ever seen. He took a huge pride in his job. I was so proud of him when he promoted to Lance Corporal and we joked that I would bump into him in years to come in the Officers' Mess, once he had commissioned. In my heart I knew he would get there.

I am so proud to have been able to serve with Lance Corporal Gajbahadur, privileged to have known him and to count him as a friend. His thirst for life and energy was contagious. He touched all those that met him. I am a better soldier and person for having known him. A true Gurkha and one of the bravest men I have ever met..."

Warrant Officer Class Two Sanjipkumar Rai, Company Sergeant Major, D (Delhi) Company, said:

"I have known Lance Corporal Gajbahadur, known as Gaj, for the last four years. I first met him while we were training for Operation HERRICK 9; he was a young Rifleman and I was a Colour Sergeant. Even in those early stages of his Army career he proved himself to be the best amongst his peers.

I know you are not with us; instead you are embedded in our hearts and minds. We may not be able to see you again and feel your warmth, but the priceless work and sacrifices that you have made will always be remembered. For me you are the true hero of HERRICK 15..."

Secretary of State for Defence, Philip Hammond, said:

"I was very saddened to learn of the death of Lance Corporal Gajbahadur Gurung, a young soldier who achieved so much during his few years as a member of the British Army.

He served three tours of Afghanistan, fighting to safeguard Britain's national security and to give Afghanistan a peaceful future. My thoughts and deepest sympathies are with his family, friends and colleagues."

Rifleman Remand Kulung - I RGR - att G (Tobruk) Company I MERCIAN



It is with great sadness that we record that Rifleman Remand Kulung, from G (Tobruk) Company, 1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Cheshire), attached to the Danish Battle Group, died of his injuries in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham on Thursday 12 August 2010 of wounds sustained in Afghanistan.

In the early hours of Tuesday 10 August 2010, a Chinook helicopter was conducting a resupply at Patrol Base Bahadur. Part of the helicopter came into contact with a sangar near to an accommodation area where Rifleman Remand was resting. The sangar collapsed and Rfn Remand sustained serious injuries. He was evacuated to Bastion Role 3 hospital before subsequently being moved to the United Kingdom for further treatment. At 1258 hrs on 12 August, Rfn Remand Kulung died of his injuries in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, with his family present.

Rfn Remand Kulung was 27 years old and from Basaha, Barshedanda, Nepal. He enlisted in the Brigade of Gurkhas in December 2004 and joined 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles in November 2005 at Folkestone, Kent.

During his career, Rfn Remand served twice in Afghanistan; in 2008 and 2010. He moved with G (Tobruk) Company (a Gurkha reinforcement company) to 1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Cheshire) [I MERCIAN] in January 2009. Whilst with the Battalion, he served on exercise in Kenya and on operations in Afghanistan.

G (Tobruk) Company had been attached to the Danish Battle Group in the Upper Gereshk Valley in Helmand Province since April 2010. The Company had been providing security to

the local population from a series of small patrol bases in order to promote Afghan governance and economic development. Rfn Remand's platoon had been operating from Patrol Base Bahadur, North West of Forward Operating Base Khar Nikah.

Rfn Remand's wife, Sophy, paid this tribute to her husband, she said:

"My husband, Rifleman Remand Kulung, was a kind, brave and very honest soldier. He was always sincere and devoted towards his responsibilities as a soldier, which Gurkha soldiers are renowned for.

He sacrificed his great life while he was doing his duty. Though it was a great loss that cannot be replaced, his passing has left me the reason to be proud of being a wife of a brave soldier like him. He'll be missed by me and my family forever."

Lieutenant Colonel Andy Hadfield, Commanding Officer I MERCIAN, said:

"Rifleman Remand Kulung was a member of the Royal Gurkha Rifles serving with the 1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Cheshire) on operations in Afghanistan. He was a courageous, fit and highly capable soldier, committed to his profession and to his comrades. He had already served in Bosnia and had spent six long months in Afghanistan on Operation HERRICK 7 with his own regiment. On his return from that tour he volunteered to serve with the Mercian Regiment, knowing that they were due to come to Afghanistan in 2010, his second tour in Helmand Province. He had passed the highly demanding junior leadership course and was awaiting promotion - it undoubtedly would have come. A passionate supporter of Manchester United, and a man possessing of a natural and sharp sense of humour, Remand Kulung settled into life with the men of the North West of England superbly. He had a lively nature, and lifted the morale of those around him, whether Nepali or British. I will remember him as a Battalion character, one with strength and courage of every kind. He was the epitome of the Gurkha soldier: brave, determined and dedicated to his fellow soldiers. His loss is keenly felt by all in the 1st Battalion, to whom he selflessly gave his all. Our thoughts are with his wife, Sophy, and his family and friends."

Lieutenant Colonel Gerald Strickland MBE, Commanding Officer I RGR, said:

"Rifleman Remand Kulung exemplified everything that is good in a Gurkha. He was a selfless man. Everything he did was for others. I have been struck by the fact that every one of his close friends has told me how he was always there for them with gentle support and a real commitment to help. When others were

tired, he was the one who stayed up; when others were struggling, he was the one who stayed with them. He was never angry, and always there with a joke or a light word.

He was passionate about soldiering and was always keen to learn new skills, but he also had a passion for life, and he would take the opportunity to travel to learn more about the world. He shared his wonderful human spirit with all whom he met, but above all he was devoted to his wife and family, whose grief will be unbearable at this time. Rest in Peace Rifleman Remand, we are immensely proud that you were a Gurkha."

Major Nick Aucott, Officer Commanding G (Tobruk) Company, I MERCIAN, said:

"It is always difficult to come to terms with the death of a soldier and this is especially the case with a soldier like Rifleman Remand. Remand was a kind, tough, honest soldier. He typified the stoic infantryman that has earned the Gurkhas such a renowned reputation. But more than the death of a fine soldier, the officers and men of G (Tobruk) Company have lost a wonderful friend.

Rifleman Remand had soldiered with us in the difficult conditions of the Upper Gereshk Valley for four months, never

uttering a word of complaint, but instead, offering advice or a kind word, teasing and joking with his platoon and fighting bravely against a skilful enemy. This is how he will be remembered; as a man that simply got on with his job, a man widely admired and respected for his professionalism and character.

At the time of his death, Rifleman Remand was based in a small patrol base from where he enabled the local population to build better lives for themselves. His passing will affect us deeply, but our resolve will be hardened to ensure that we honour his efforts alongside us. We have lost a wonderful friend and colleague but our loss is as nothing compared with that of his wife, Sophy, and my thoughts and prayers are with her"

Defence Secretary Dr Liam Fox said:

"As many of his comrades have made clear, Rifleman Remand Kulung was a courageous and highly capable soldier who was committed to his profession and to them. Many speak of his kind words and the gentle support he offered to his fellow soldiers. There is no doubt he would have gone on to be a successful leader within the Battalion, and his loss is a matter of immense sadness for us all. My thoughts and deepest sympathies are with the family and friends he leaves behind."

Rifleman Sachin Limbu I RGR



It is with great sadness that we record the death of Rifleman Sachin Limbu, from 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles, at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham on Monday 2 January 2012. He died from wounds sustained while serving in Afghanistan in June 2010.

Rifleman Sachin Limbu deployed on Operation HERRICK 12 with B (Sari Bari) Company, 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles as a machine gunner.

He was involved in a number of operations to stabilize the area of Walizi Village, many of which involved intense, protracted and close-quarter combat in an area known to present a high risk from improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

On 24 June 2010 his multiple deployed on a patrol to Walizi as part of an operation to enable local people to have freedom of movement and to deter insurgent activity in the area. As his multiple reached its objective, an area characterized by frequent insurgent attacks, Rifleman Sachin moved into a fire position to provide protection to his comrades and was caught in an explosion from a hidden IED. He was evacuated to Selly Oak via Camp Bastion.

Rifleman Sachin Limbu, aged 23, was born on 3 October 1988 and came from Rajghat, Morang in Nepal. His father was a Gurkha Senior Non-Commissioned Officer and Rifleman Sachin was brought up in the life and community of 7th Duke of Edinburgh's Own Gurkha Rifles and later the 2nd Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles in Hong Kong and Brunei.

He passed the rigorous selection for the Brigade of Gurkhas in 2007 and after the Combat Infantryman's Course

in Catterick, joined I RGR in Brunei where he conducted extensive jungle warfare training before moving with the battalion to the UK and undertaking training for deployment to Afghanistan.

Mr Dillisher Limbu, Rifleman Sachin's father said:

"My wife and I are immensely proud of our only beloved son who has sacrificed his life for the good of others. Sachin was our only son and we both extend our sincere thanks to all the staff at The New Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the Brigade of Gurkhas who have supported us all so closely."

Lieutenant Colonel D J Robinson, Commanding Officer of 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles said:

"Rifleman Sachin Limbu died in hospital with his parents at his bedside. Seventeen months earlier he had been terribly injured whilst on patrol in Helmand province."

Since that time he had shown remarkable tenacity to overcome these injuries and had been an absolute credit to his regiment and his country; he made us all extremely proud to call him a brother in arms."

Rifleman Sachin's sacrifice has prevented him from fulfilling a rewarding career but his inspiring determination not to succumb to his injuries for so long was in the true spirit of those Gurkhas who have gone before him. He was highly cherished and loved by his fellow Gurkhas and left his mark on all those that had the honour to meet him. As the only son of a retired Gurkha this will have been devastating for his family; our thoughts and prayers are with them."

Lieutenant Colonel G M Strickland, Commanding Officer I RGR during Operation HERRICK 12, said:

"Rifleman Sachin Limbu has touched many of our lives. On operations in Afghanistan he represented everything that is good about our Gurkha soldiers. He was diligent, supportive to his friends and committed to what he was doing. He had a firm place in his Company and was counted as one of a select few. Since his injury a year and a half ago, he was nothing short of inspirational."

I watched this young man deal with unimaginable pain and suffering, but all the time he maintained his strength and dignity. One of the proudest moments of my life was when he was presented his Afghan campaign service medal on his ward in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital last year, surrounded by his family, friends, and the wonderful staff there who cared for him so well."

Sachin had put on uniform for the first time since his injury. He was proud, and his smiling face touched us all. In hospital, he fought

against incredible odds for a very long time with more courage than I have ever seen in another human being, helped at every step by his wonderful, loving parents. He was truly a special man."

Major Dhyanasprasad Rai, Gurkha Major I RGR, said:

"Rifleman Sachin Limbu was courageous and highly capable soldier who was dedicated to his profession. He has always been sincere and devoted towards his responsibilities as a soldier, in the best tradition of the Gurkha soldier."

He was active in all that he did, thoughtful for those around him and incredibly loyal. His service within the 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles will never be forgotten. He will be sadly missed. My thoughts and deepest sympathies are with his family and friends."

Major Khusiman Gurung, Gurkha Major I RGR during Operation HERRICK 12, said:

"Riflemen Sachin Limbu was a true Gurkha soldier. He was loyal, determined, and enthusiastic and was always up for a challenge with a grin on his face. His cheerful attitude and determination made him an inspiring member amongst his fellow soldiers, who both admired and respected him."

He will be sorely missed by all who knew him but his sacrifice will not be forgotten. Rest in Peace, Sachin. Our thoughts and prayers are with his parents and close friends."

Major C N A Crowe, Officer Commanding B Company I RGR during Operation HERRICK 12, said:

"Rifleman Sachin Limbu was, in many ways, a model Gurkha Rifleman; deeply committed, proud, fit, and highly skilled at his profession, ever cheerful and always willing to muck in to help his friends. Before he was wounded in Afghanistan, he had seen frequent contact with the enemy and had proven himself a courageous fighter."

However, his true strength of character and bravery came to the fore after he suffered grievous injuries in an IED strike. Despite horrific and extensive wounds which left him bed-ridden and in constant severe pain he maintained a fierce will, not just to survive, but to break the boundaries of expectation and recover."

Over a year and a half his sheer force of character and gritty determination led to a level of recovery which defied medical reason, all the while maintaining hope and a quiet, modest sense of humour."

Rifleman Sachin's death is a desperate tragedy, especially after such a long and drawn out battle to survive which we all believed he was winning. He is sorely missed. He leaves behind him a legacy of exemplary bravery and courage which will remain an enduring inspiration to all of us."

In particular our thoughts and sympathies are with his parents and his cousin Chandra, who have been at his bedside for so long, giving him the love and support he needed to push on. Bravest of the brave, never had a country more faithful friends than you'."

Secretary of State for Defence Philip Hammond said:

"I was deeply saddened to learn of the death of Rifleman Sachin Limbu. His colleagues speak of him as a committed, supportive friend, and as a tenacious, professional soldier. My thoughts are with the family of Rifleman Sachin Limbu and his friends in 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles."

Rifleman Suraj Gurung | RGR



It is with great sadness that we record that Rifleman Suraj Gurung from 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles was killed in action in Afghanistan on Saturday 2 October 2010.

Rifleman Suraj, serving as part of Combined Force Nahr-e-Saraj (South), was killed during a follow-up foot patrol after an attack on his patrol base. He was caught in an explosion as a suicide bomber detonated himself. He died at the front of his platoon, leading the way as he had done for the previous six months.

Rifleman Suraj was 22 years old and born and raised in the hill town of Gorkha in Nepal. He passed the notoriously gruelling process for Gurkha selection into the British Army in December 2007.

In early January 2008 he made the journey from the tranquil foothills of the Nepalese Himalaya to Catterick in North Yorkshire as a trainee Rifleman ready to begin the arduous months of Gurkha infantry training.

In October 2008 he completed this training and travelled to Brunei to join 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles. As a result of his good command of English and his obvious intelligence he was immediately selected to be the Platoon Radio Operator. This position is normally reserved for a senior Rifleman and as such it was testament to the high regard in which he was held so early on in his career.

Rifleman Suraj returned to the United Kingdom in August 2009 and was selected as the lead man in his patrol, known as the Vallon man, for the upcoming tour in Afghanistan. His ability had again been singled out.

He deployed on Op HERRICK 12 in April 2010 and even from the start of the tour he was always confident and calm under pressure. As a soldier he excelled in Afghanistan. As the point man of every patrol he led his multiple unflinchingly across some of the most daunting and uncertain terrain, day after day, time after time.

For six months he had been finding IEDs and selecting safe routes, keeping those following behind safe. Only recently married he leaves behind his wife and family in Nepal.

His family said:

"Our family is devastated with the news of Suraj's death in Afghanistan on 2 October. He was a very caring son and loving husband. He followed his forefathers' footsteps as both his grandfather and father served with the British in India; and his father-in-law served in the British Army. He loved the army and was very proud to be a Gurkha: he died doing a job he loved. His family members are very proud of him."

Secretary of State for Defence, Dr Liam Fox said:

"I was extremely saddened to hear about the death of Rifleman Suraj Gurung. He was a brave and highly respected soldier who showed a lot of promise and led by example. My thoughts and sympathies are with his family, friends and former colleagues."

Lieutenant Colonel G M Strickland MBE, Commanding Officer, 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles, Combined Force Nahr-e-Saraj South said:

"Rifleman Suraj Gurung was the Vallon man for my Tactical Headquarters Team. Throughout this tour, he led the way through areas of high Improvised Explosive Device risk with fortitude and courage. Never once did he complain or shy away from his duty, despite the fact that his team had suffered a partial detonation of one device and found several others during their time in Afghanistan."

This was his first operational tour. It is telling that when we trawled the battalion for photographs of Suraj, the ones that came forward showed him with his arms around groups of grinning local children. He had a good heart, and was here to help the Afghan people. He was a very fine Gurkha soldier; tough but compassionate, and always there for others. To all around him he was a source of strength. His ready smile is now gone from us, but his memory remains. We mourn his passing, and share in the grief of his family who have lost a very special man. I am intensely proud to have served with him."

Major David Jones, Officer Commanding C (Mogaung) Company, 1 RGR said:

"Rifleman Suraj was everything that the man who killed him was not. He was brave, courageous, considerate, compassionate and kind. He truly believed in the job that he was doing and took immense pride in the fact that he was helping people less fortunate than himself every single day."

A cracking soldier, respected by all, he had unflinchingly led his multiple down some of the most daunting alleyways and across some of the most haunting ground, every single day for the last six months. He was one of the very best of his generation and almost certainly destined for promotion."

I personally will remember him for his trademark booming voice cheerfully singing out 'morning sahib' as he passed my office on his way to breakfast each day. Tomorrow there will be no such greeting. Rifleman Suraj was the life and soul of his multiple."

There was nothing that he would not do for anyone. A gentle character, yet incredibly brave, he will be sorely and sadly missed by every single man in the Company. He had an exceptionally bright future, but we should treasure his past, because he made a difference, he contributed, and the world is a better place for him having been in it."

Major Khusiman Gurung MVO, Gurkha Major, 1 RGR said:

"A dark cloud has been cast over us all by the tragic loss of Rifleman Suraj Gurung. His life was taken in a cowardly act whilst he was carrying out an important role for the security and development of Afghanistan. In my view Rifleman Suraj was a true Gurkha soldier with a promising future."

He was utterly loyal and dedicated to his profession; it was a job he loved. He was known for being courageous, selfless and ambitious and he will be remembered as such. He will always remain in our hearts and memories. Our thoughts and prayers go to his wife, Permila, and family."

Captain Rupert Anderson, Adjutant, 1 RGR said:

"In 2007 I was working as part of the Gurkha recruiting and selection team in Pokhara, Nepal. I remember Rifleman Suraj Gurung sitting in front of me, awaiting interview, as a potential recruit hoping to make the grade and be one of the 230 selected to join the British Army."

I cannot remember all of the 17,349 potential recruits that year but Rifleman Suraj Gurung stood out from the moment he appeared. When I returned to regimental duty in the 1st Battalion it was no surprise to discover that he had gone on to become an outstanding Gurkha soldier forging his own path by leading from the front."

His dedication to his wife, family and friends was evident from his nocturnal internet usage here in Afghanistan. My walk back to the accommodation from the office late each night will not be the same without his enthusiastic 'goodnight sahib' booming out from the internet room here in the patrol base."

Rifleman Suraj grew up in the very place from which our Regimental history began almost 200 years ago. He now enters that history and we shall remember him as a Gurkha who truly upheld the traditions of courage, pride and loyalty."

Rifleman Vijay Rai



Rifleman Vijay deployed to Afghanistan on his first operational tour of duty attached to Combined Force Nahr-e-Saraj (South) as part of the 1st Battalion The Rifles Battle Group on 22 April 2011.

On 14 October, A (Amboor) Company deployed alongside members of the Afghan Uniformed Police (AUP) and Riflemen from 1st Battalion The Rifles into a temporary checkpoint named TCP Rome in an area known to have a strong insurgent presence.

On 15 October Rifleman Vijay took over a sentry position on the roof of TCP Rome, and about an hour later the checkpoint was attacked with small arms fire. Rifleman Vijay was hit in the opening burst. He was given medical care on the ground and evacuated to Bastion hospital by helicopter but sadly he later died of his wounds.

Rifleman Vijay Rai's family said:

"Our family is shocked with the news of Vijay's death in Afghanistan on 15 October 2011. He was the youngest son. He followed his father's and brother's footsteps as his father and elder brother served as Indian Gurkhas and his middle brother is serving with Indian Gurkhas as a Sergeant. He rang his family a day before he was taken away from us. He was very proud to be a Gurkha, and died doing his chosen job. His father and family members are very proud of him."

Lieutenant Colonel Fraser Rea, Commanding Officer, 2nd Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles, said:

"2 RGR has lost a fine Gurkha soldier. Rifleman Vijay was tough, loyal, uncomplaining and utterly professional. He had a ready smile, a big heart and loved his sport and music. He was deeply committed to his fellow soldiers in Amboor Company and to the local Afghans whose lives he strove to improve during the tour."

He came from a military background and was immensely proud to have been selected for service in the British Army. He was a talented young man with vast amounts of promise. Although only two years into his own military career, he had established himself as a leader amongst his own peer group and on the sports pitch, where he excelled.

His death, coming so close to the end of the tour and with the majority of 2 RGR now back in Brunei, has rocked the Battalion. Our pain, however, is nothing compared to that of his family. He was the youngest of five siblings and leaves behind loving parents, two brothers and two sisters. Our thoughts and prayers are with them."

Lieutenant Colonel James de Labillière, Commanding Officer, 1st Battalion The Rifles, said:

"I met Rifleman Vijay Rai just ten days before his passing, at Amboor Company's modest and enlightening Dashain, the main Hindi celebration of the year. He sang a Nepali song in a way that quite simply played with the emotions of the gathered crowd, inciting both reflection and elation in equal measure. He was evidently a gifted and popular Gurkha Rifleman, one of a tight team of 18 'numberi' or training intake, together in Afghanistan on their first operational deployment."

Rifleman Vijay and his Company were taking part in a joint operation with the Afghan Uniformed Police and elements of 1 RIFLES. Their base was a temporary checkpoint, established in the heart of a village called Char-Baghona in Nahr-e-Saraj District. Rifleman Vijay was on sentry duty when he was fatally struck by insurgent gunfire."

His passing comes as a great loss to his highly professional Company and to the Combined Force as a whole. His name joins the list of those who have passed before him, and will never be forgotten. As we reflect on our loss, our thoughts and prayers go particularly to his family."

Major Yambahadur Rana, Gurkha Major, 2 RGR, said:

"2nd Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles has lost a fine soldier and I am stunned by his unexpected passing. Rifleman Vijay Rai had been with the Battalion for two years which was certainly long enough to make a lasting impression upon it and A (Amboor) Company."

He was an immensely proud Rifleman from a strong military background, following his father and two elder brothers' footsteps who all served with the Indian Army. He epitomised the very best qualities expected of a Gurkha soldier. He will be sorely missed by all within the Battalion and his memory will endure in our hearts."

Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family and friends; may Goddess Durga give strength to them."

Major Nick Thom, Officer Commanding A (Amboor) Company, 2 RGR, said:

"Rifleman Vijay turned up in A (Amboor) Company back in October 2009, not long after I took over command. I remember him arriving as part of a very close-knit group of recruits, eager and enthusiastic but initially not being one to steal the limelight. So it was actually on the basketball court that I first recall him standing out as a real character..."

Indeed, although he had not been with us long, I sense it will be for his personality and contribution to the Company out of uniform that he will be remembered most fondly. He was a true team player, keen to please and with a real ability to bring out the best in others and make them laugh..."

An enthusiastic and hard-working soldier, he recognised that he had much to learn and always applied himself wholeheartedly to improving himself. This was his first operational tour, and five and a half months in, the manner in which he had matured and developed was evident. His sociable nature meant that he was most in his element when engaging with the local Afghans and children, but his work in this part of Nahr-e-Saraj (South) was not without significant risk and, driven by his desire to look out for his comrades, he had, on a number of occasions, demonstrated true grit and courage."

The fact that his loss has hit the Company so hard is real testament to the affection with which he was regarded, and the contribution he had made in the tragically short time he was with us. He gave his all to look out for others and in the end he paid the ultimate sacrifice doing just that..... a truly selfless and brave Gurkha soldier. Whilst our loss is deeply felt our thoughts must go to his family, of which he was immensely proud"

Lieutenant Benjamin Ball, 2 Platoon Commander, A (Amboor) Company, 2 RGR, said:

"Rifleman Vijay... was proud to call himself a Gurkha. He joined his platoon in Brunei where his love of sports and social activity saw him fit in quickly to a platoon that grew very fond of him ..."

Prior to and throughout the deployment to Afghanistan the pace of life was extremely busy with substantial demands being placed upon everyone. During this period his light-hearted spirit and enthusiasm was a source of morale for all those around him, comrades for whom he genuinely cared."

His generosity was always plain to see, highlighted by a particularly memorable evening on his birthday. Determined to enjoy the occasion despite being stuck in a remote checkpoint he bought a goat for the multiple, with which an amazing curry was prepared and the day was marked in style."

His own morale was rarely dampened and he could often be heard singing to himself or indeed as entertainment at parties. On a professional note he always strove to understand the situation and what was required of him. He conducted himself in a professional manner and performed well in a number of very demanding situations while deployed on his first tour of Afghanistan. Overall he looked for the positive in any situation and the good in people, his team spirit was second to none and he will be sorely missed by all."

Defence Secretary Philip Hammond said:

"Rifleman Vijay Rai was clearly a dedicated, professional and well loved soldier who tragically lost his life while protecting his comrades. My thoughts go out to the family, friends and colleagues of this proud Gurkha."

Sapper Ishwor Gurung, 69 Gurkha Field Squadron QGE



It is with great sadness that we record that Sapper Ishwor Gurung from 69 Gurkha Field Squadron, The Queen's Gurkha Engineers, attached with 21 Engineer Regiment, was killed in Afghanistan on Friday 13 August 2010.

On 13 August, whilst constructing a new sangar to increase the protection and security of the soldiers at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Shahzad in south west Helmand Province, Sapper Ishwor Gurung's Troop came under insurgent attack and he was caught in enemy fire. Despite the best efforts of his Troop to save his life, Sapper Ishwor was killed in action.

Sapper Ishwor Gurung was born in Pokhara, Nepal, on 15 October 1988. Having passed selection for the Brigade of Gurkhas in Pokhara on 14 December 2007, he went on to complete initial infantry training in Catterick, North Yorkshire, and combat engineer training at the Royal School of Military Engineering at Minley. He was subsequently posted to 69 Gurkha Field Squadron QGE, part of 36 Engineer Regiment in Maidstone, Kent, and trained as a bricklayer and concreter.

Sapper Ishwor spent the last year preparing for this, his first operational tour. This included a large scale construction exercise in Devon and mission specific training in Ripon, North Yorkshire. He excelled throughout these activities, proving not only his burgeoning professional knowledge but his keen desire to deploy on operations in Afghanistan.

He was an outstanding sportsman and had represented 36 Engineer Regiment in Divisional cross country competitions and boxed for his squadron. Sapper Ishwor had been working with his Troop in support of 2nd Battalion The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment (2 LANCS) Battlegroup, Combined Force Nad 'Ali (North), improving the defences at FOB Shahzad, when he was killed during the insurgent attack on the base.

His family made the following statement:

"Our family is devastated with the news of Ishwor's death in Afghanistan on 13 August 2010. Ishwor was 14 years old when his father died and he fully supported the family as a young man. He was a very caring and a very bright boy. He followed his father's footsteps; his father was a soldier in the Indian Army.

He loved the Army and was very proud to be a Gurkha. I am proud that my son served in the British Army and that he died doing a job that he loved."

Lieutenant Colonel Bobby Walton-Knight Royal Engineers, Commanding Officer 21 Engineer Regiment Group, said:

"Sapper Ishwor Gurung was an exceptionally good soldier. He was enormously proud to be a Queen's Gurkha Engineer; he loved his squadron and, like every Gurkha Engineer, he loved soldiering. Sapper Ishwor had bags of energy and his motivation never faltered. Even after the longest of days, on the most demanding tasks in the toughest of conditions, he would have a huge smile on his face and be ready for more. His enthusiasm was infectious and his friends loved him for it. He was modest to a fault, polite and, even when covered in dust and mud, still managed to be immaculately turned out. He was exceptionally fit, almost unbeatable at cross country and unstoppable in the boxing ring. Although he was still young, his potential had already been spotted and it would not have been long before he made it as a non-commissioned officer.

Sapper Ishwor died putting his own life in danger to provide protection for others. He was doing a job he loved and was surrounded by friends. It was an honour to have him with the Regiment; his death is an enormous loss to us all and in particular to The Queen's Gurkha Engineers. Our thoughts and prayers are with his mother Sunkumari, brother Ramprasad and sister Richa in Nepal, his wider family and his many friends."

Lieutenant Colonel Simon Hulme MBE RE, Commanding Officer 36 Engineer Regiment, and Commandant The Queen's Gurkha Engineers said:

"The loss of Sapper Ishwor Gurung has dealt a heavy blow to all ranks of The Queen's Gurkha Engineers. He was immensely talented as a soldier, a sportsman and an individual. Sapper Ishwor set the example for his comrades to follow. Sapper Ishwor had a bright future ahead of him, his dedication and his ability to focus and apply his efforts in even the most difficult circumstances marked him out above his peers. His bright and enigmatic smile brought cheer to even the most difficult of situations.

He was active in all that he did, thoughtful for those around him and incredibly loyal. His service within The Queen's Gurkha Engineers, although short, will never be forgotten; he has left his mark on all that he did and on all those that he met. He will be sadly missed. Our thoughts are with his mother and family"

Major Ian Moore RE, Officer Commanding 69 Gurkha Field Squadron, said:

"Sapper Ishwor Gurung was an outstanding young soldier. Having breezed through the rigorous Gurkha selection process, he elected to join The Queen's Gurkha Engineers and trained as a Combat Engineer and Bricklayer. He passed every course with distinction and soon established himself as an exceptionally bright and dependable young man.

On joining 69 Gurkha Field Squadron in Maidstone, his strong team ethics and desire to learn soon brought praise and plaudit from his commanders and gurus. In particular his willingness to take on any task or challenge was notable and outstripped his relative inexperience. Although this was his first operational tour, he thrived in the austere conditions and revelled in the long hard days. With the energy, drive and enthusiasm he imparted, you would have thought he was a veteran of many tours.

Sapper Ishwor had an exceptionally amiable character, a beaming smile and was always ready to share a joke. His selflessness and loyalty to his numberies and The Queen's Gurkha Engineers was unquestionable and he was always the first to offer assistance to those around him. He was the archetypal Gurkha; always well turned out, unbelievably polite and modest to the core. That said, he was never afraid to ask questions and he readily engaged me when he felt the need. My last meeting with him was a typical example

of this, as we sat late into the evening talking about his plans for post tour leave in Nepal and what the Squadron would do on its return to the UK.

Sapper Ishwor got involved in everything, whether it was an arduous engineering task or dressing up to celebrate a Nepalese festival. He was exceptionally fit, an outstanding cross country runner and despite his small size, one of the most courageous and tenacious boxers I ever have seen. He was a pleasure to have under my command and was without doubt the sort of soldier every commander wishes for. He had a very bright future ahead of him and would have undoubtedly made an excellent non-commissioned officer. His sudden departure has left a hole in our close knit team and we will all miss him greatly. We will redouble our efforts, finish our task and leave a legacy to honour his name.

Whilst his family are far away in Nepal, they are close in our thoughts. Ramro sutnu hos Ishwor bhai. Hami na birsane chaun. (Sleep well young brother we won't forget you.)"

Defence Secretary Dr Liam Fox said:

"Sapper Ishwor Gurung was an outstanding young soldier. He was held in high regard by his fellow soldiers as courageous, loyal and honourable in his work, which was vital to our operations in Afghanistan. His death is a sad loss to The Queen's Gurkha Engineers, and my thoughts are with his family, friends and colleagues."

[The tributes to Operational Casualties are drawn from the Defence Intranet.]

Other Obituaries

Honorary Lieutenant (QGO) Tulbahadur Pun, VC

Lieutenant Tulbahadur Pun, who died on 20 April 2011, aged 88, won the Victoria Cross while serving with the Second Chindit Expedition in Burma in 1944.

Early in March that year the Second Chindit Expedition, a force of six brigades comprising some 9,000 men together with stores, was air-landed in Burma. The main objectives of the Expedition were twofold: first, to support the advance on Myitkyina by the American-led Chinese troops and to establish a strong position astride the Japanese lines of communication; and secondly, to impede the build-up of Japanese forces for an invasion of India by harassing them in the Mogaung area.

The Chindits were supplied by establishing a number of fortified bases with airstrips south of Myitkyina. These strongholds provoked a strong reaction from the Japanese, and some of them subsequently proved indefensible and had to be abandoned.

On May 27 the 77th Indian Brigade was ordered to capture the Japanese supply centre of Mogaung. After almost a month of savage fighting which had greatly depleted the brigade's numbers, the 3rd Battalion 6th Gurkha Rifles was ordered to attack the railway bridge at Mogaung on June 23. As soon as the attack had been launched, the Japanese opened concentrated and sustained crossfire at close range from a position known as "The Red House" and from a strong bunker position 200 yards to the left of it.

Captain Allmand, in command of "B" company, went forward alone and charged a machine-gun nest, but he was mortally wounded. So intense was the fire that both the leading platoons of "B" Company, one of which was Rifleman Pun's, were pinned to the ground. Pun's section — apart from himself, the section commander and one rifleman — was wiped out.

The section commander led his two remaining riflemen in a charge on The Red House, but he was at once severely wounded. Pun and his comrade continued the charge — but the latter, too, fell badly wounded. Pun then seized the Bren gun and, firing from the hip as he ran, continued the charge on the heavily bunkered position. He charged alone in the face of a shattering concentration of automatic fire directed straight at him.

With the dawn coming up behind him, Pun made a perfect target for the Japanese. He had to cross 30 yards of open ground, ankle deep in mud, through shell holes and over fallen trees. Against all the odds, he reached The Red House and closed with the occupants.

Pun killed three of the enemy, put five more to flight, and captured two machine guns and much ammunition. He then gave accurate supporting fire from the bunker to the remnants of his platoon, enabling them to reach their objective. Among the lives saved by Pun's action was that of Major James Lumley, father of the actress Joanna Lumley, who has become one of the Gurkha Welfare Trust's staunchest supporters.

The citation for Pun's Victoria Cross declared: "Rifleman Pun's courage and superb gallantry in the face of odds which meant almost certain death were most inspiring to all ranks and were beyond praise." Pun was invested with the Victoria Cross by the Viceroy, Field Marshal Viscount Wavell, at a special parade held at the Red Fort in Delhi on March 3 1945.

Tulbahadur Pun was born on March 23 1923 at Banduk village in the Myagdit district of west Nepal. He enlisted in the Gurkha Brigade in west Nepal and, after completing his basic training, joined the 3rd Battalion 6th Gurkha Rifles for the Chindit Expedition.

After Independence in 1947, he transferred to the British Army and joined the 2nd/6th Gurkha Rifles, seeing action in Malaya and Hong Kong. He rose to be regimental sergeant major of his battalion and retired from the Army in May 1959 in the rank of honorary lieutenant.

Pun returned to Banduk village, where he farmed. Always concerned about the education of children, he opened two primary schools in the area. In 1986 his farm was washed away by floods, but he was able to resume his life on the land after a "benefit" football match in Kathmandu raised the necessary funds.

Pun came to England in 2007 and settled initially at Hounslow, west London, before, last year, moving the short distance to Chiswick. He attended many reunions of the VC and GC Association, supported many Gurkha charities and in 2009 was made a Freeman of the borough of Hounslow.

Pun, who presented his VC to his old regiment, died at Banduk, where he had gone to be present at the opening next month of a new secondary school.

He was twice married, and is survived by his second wife, Punisara, and by his two sons and eight daughters.

[This obituary first appeared in the Daily Telegraph and is reproduced by kind permission of the Editor of the Obituary Column.]

Havildar Lachhiman Gurung, VC

Havildar Lachhiman Gurung, who died on 12 December 2010, aged 92, won the Victoria Cross while serving with the Gurkha Rifles in Burma in 1945; in recent years he had been a prominent figure in the campaign led by the actress Joanna Lumley to allow former Gurkhas to settle in Britain.

At the end of April 1945, the 89th Indian Brigade of 7th Division was ordered to cross the Irrawaddy and destroy the enemy north of the Prome-Taungup road. By May 9 the Japanese, after a series of desperate attacks, had broken off contact and were withdrawing towards the Taungdaw Valley. "B" and "C" companies of the 4th/8th Gurkha Rifles were positioned to block their route at the village of Taungdaw, on the west bank of the river.

When the Japanese arrived, the two Gurkha companies were surrounded and their lines of communication cut. On the night of 12 May, Rifleman Gurung was manning the forward post of his platoon almost 100 yards ahead of the main company.

At 1.20am, more than 200 Japanese attacked the company position. The brunt of the assault fell on Gurung's section and, in particular, on his post, which dominated a jungle track leading up to his platoon's position. Had the enemy been able to overrun it and occupy Gurung's trench, they would have secured control over the whole of the field before them.

One grenade fell on the lip of Gurung's trench. He quickly grabbed it and hurled it back at the enemy. Almost immediately another grenade came over. This one fell directly inside the trench. Again Gurung snatched it up and threw it back.

A third grenade landed just in front of the trench. Gurung attempted to throw it back, but it exploded in his hand, blowing off his fingers, shattering his right arm and severely wounding him in the face, body and right leg. His two comrades were also badly wounded and lay helpless in the bottom of the trench.

The enemy, screaming and yelling, now formed up shoulder to shoulder and attempted to rush the position by sheer weight of numbers. Gurung, regardless of his wounds, loaded and fired his rifle with his left hand and kept up a steady rate of fire.

The attacks came in wave after wave, but the Japanese were beaten back with heavy losses. For four hours Gurung remained alone at his post, calmly waiting for each new onslaught, firing into his attackers at point blank range, determined not to yield an inch of ground. His comrades could hear him shouting:

"Come and fight a Gurkha!"

The following morning, of the 87 enemy dead found in the company's immediate locality, 31 lay in front of Gurung's section. The Japanese made repeated attempts to break through, but the 4th/8th held out until 15 May, when they were relieved.

Gurung later said:

"I had to fight because there was no other way. I felt I was going to die anyway, so I might as well die standing on my feet. All I knew was that I had to go on and hold them back. I am glad that helped the other soldiers in my platoon, but they would have all done the same thing."

Gurung was invested with the Victoria Cross by Field Marshal Lord Wavell at a parade at the Red Fort in Delhi on 19 December 1945. The citation declared:

"This Rifleman, by his magnificent example, so inspired his comrades to resist the enemy to the last that, although surrounded and cut off for three days and two nights, they held and smashed every attack. His outstanding gallantry and extreme devotion to duty, in the face of almost overwhelming odds, were the main factors in the defeat of the enemy."

Partiman Gurung, Lachhiman's father, then aged about 74, was carried for 11 days from his village in Nepal to witness his son being decorated.

Lachhiman Gurung was born on 30 December 1917 at Dakhani village in the Tanhu district of Nepal. He enlisted in December 1940 and after completing basic training was recruited into the 8th Gurkha Rifles. Of small build (he stood just 4ft 11 in tall), he was under the minimum height and would not have been accepted in peacetime.

After the action in which he won the Victoria Cross, Gurung was evacuated to hospital, but lost his right hand and the use of his right eye. He continued to serve with the 8th Gurkha Rifles but transferred to the Indian Army after Independence in 1947. He retired in the rank of Havildar (the equivalent of sergeant) in the same year.

Gurung married soon afterwards and had two sons and a daughter. Later, after the death of his wife, he had two sons from a second marriage.

He farmed a two-acre plot and owned several buffalo, oxen, goats and cows. In 1995 the VC and GC Association provided the Gurkha Welfare Trust with £2,000 donated by the Armourers and Brasiers' Livery Company, and these funds were used to build a new house for Gurung and his family near the Gurkha Welfare Centre at Chitwan.

In August 1995 Gurung was received at 10 Downing Street by the Prime Minister, John Major, who presented him with a cheque for £100,500 for the Gurkha Welfare Trust.

In 2008 Gurung became closely involved in the campaign to allow Gurkhas to settle in Britain. The British government had refused entry to the 2,000 Gurkhas who had retired before July 1997, the date when their base was moved to the UK from Hong Kong.

Five claimants - including a Falklands veteran, Lance-Corporal Gyanendra Rai; a Gulf War veteran, Birendra Man; and a Gurkha widow - launched a legal challenge, supported by Lachhiman Gurung and a fellow winner of the VC, Honorary Lieutenant Tulbahadur Pun, then aged 87. Both men had been told that they would not be allowed to settle here because they had failed to "demonstrate strong ties" to the UK.

In the High Court in September 2008, however, Mr Justice Blake said that the policy should be reviewed, referring to the "Military Covenant undertaken by every British soldier by which, in return for their pledge to make the ultimate sacrifice, they are promised value and respect". He added: "Rewarding distinguished service by the grant of residence in the country for which the service was performed would be a vindication of this covenant." As the judge rose after his ruling, Gurkhas and their supporters shouted their battle cry "Ayo gorkhali".

In May 2009 the government announced that all Gurkha veterans who retired before 1997 with at least four years' service would be allowed to settle in Britain. Even as this victory was secured, however, Gurung was appealing to the Queen and the Prime Minister for his 20-year-old granddaughter, Amrita,

who had been facing deportation, to be allowed to stay in Britain to care for him.

"I have paid a great price for Britain," Gurung said, "but I do not complain as I love this country as much as I love my family. However, in my last days I ask Her Majesty the Queen to help by allowing my granddaughter to be with me and at my side." The Home Office relented, and granted her permission to stay.

In 2008 Gurung had settled at Hounslow, to which he was formally welcomed at a ceremony led by the mayor and the council; he was later made a Freeman of the Borough. He attended many functions of the Nepalese communities in Hounslow and elsewhere, and was honorary vice-president of the Chiswick branch of the Royal British Legion. He had recently moved into the Chiswick War Memorial Homes.

Lachhiman Gurung attended this year's Remembrance Sunday ceremony at the Cenotaph, and was also present at last month's VC and GC Association reunion in the presence of the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh.

One of Gurung's sons subsequently became an officer in the 8th Gurkha Rifles. His second wife, Manmaya, survives him with his five children.

[This obituary first appeared in the Daily Telegraph and is reproduced by kind permission of the Editor of the Obituary Column.]

Major General Sir Roy Redgrave KBE MC

Maj Gen Sir Roy Redgrave, who has died aged 85, was awarded an MC in the last week of the Second World War in Europe, and afterwards commanded the Household Cavalry.

On May 1 1945, Redgrave was leading a troop of the 1st Household Cavalry Regiment (1 HCR) west of the village of Düdenbüttel, near Bremen, when his armoured car was hit by bazookas and set ablaze. He was standing beside the car and then came under accurate fire from a machine gun. Redgrave climbed on to the turret, which was burning fiercely, and pulled out his wireless operator, who was wounded and helpless. As he got the man down on to the engine cover, he himself was wounded and fell to the ground.

He got up, lifted the operator, whose legs were shattered, and placed him in the comparative safety of a ditch. He grabbed two hand grenades and a Sten gun and returned to the car to help the driver. The side door of armoured car had been blown off and the driver was dead.

The wireless operator was too heavy to lift more than a few yards; so Redgrave, making use of what sparse cover there was, crawled, wriggled, rolled and, in places, ran through fields and hedges until he reached the village.

He came back with six troopers. They engaged the enemy, drove them off and brought the wounded operator back to HQ. It was past 2am when Redgrave finally reached a field hospital, where his own injuries could be attended to. He was awarded an immediate MC.

Roy Michael Frederick Redgrave was born on September 16 1925 in the Athénée Palace Hotel, the smartest hotel in Bucharest. His mother, Micheline Capsa, the daughter of a Romanian general, had just managed to check in there minutes before her confinement. The actor Sir Michael Redgrave was his father's half-brother.

As a small boy, Roy liked to think himself related to the proprietors of the most famous patisserie in Romania, who bore the same name as his mother's family. His mother was not amused. "Your grandfather was the illegitimate son of a very important man," she informed him. "We are not related to a family of pastry cooks."

Roy was brought up at Doftana, to the north of the capital, where his father carried out drilling for Romanian oil companies. When war broke out, he was at school in England; the family was not reunited for six years.

After Sherborne, aged 17 he enlisted as a trooper in the Royal Horse Guards (the Blues). He was subsequently commissioned into 1 HCR, based at Aldershot. In his memoirs, he recounts a visit to a variety show in the town where the high spot of the evening was a striptease by a buxom blonde. At the climax of her act, the lady removed the last of her clothing behind a screen which consisted of a flock of white doves perched on a stand. But a soldier in the front row, frustrated at being denied a glimpse of her in complete undress, drew a pistol and fired off a blank cartridge. The exposed performer stood for a moment open-mouthed in shock before rushing off the stage. The doves, meanwhile, fluttered around the theatre depositing evidence of their displeasure on the heads of members of the audience.

Redgrave accompanied 1 HCR to Holland in time for the forced crossing of the Rhine. A few days after the action in which he won his MC, the campaign in north-west Europe was over and he was discharged from hospital.

After the war he remained in Germany with the Blues and, as a GSO3, was involved in intelligence gathering. During this period he played rugby for the Rhine Army and was in its athletics team. He commanded a squadron in Cyprus during the Eoka campaign in 1959, and was mentioned in despatches.

From 1960 to 1962 Redgrave served as military assistant to the Deputy Supreme Commander Europe at Shape and then commanded the Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment in London.

He learned to ride and became known as "Colonel Daffodil" after his wife acquired a Pekinese of the same name which accompanied him on his rounds of the barracks.

From 1965 to 1967 Redgrave commanded the Blues in BAOR and, after a move to HQ 2nd Armoured Division, was promoted to brigadier as Commander Royal Armoured Corps (RAC), 3rd Division, where he served from 1970 to 1972. His HQ was at Tidworth and he lived in a manor house that was supposed to be haunted by a headless drummer boy. In 1973 he became Commandant of the RAC Centre at Bovington and Lulworth.

Two years later, Redgrave moved to Berlin. On a visit to Spandau Prison, Rudolf Hess told him that he was the 14th British commandant to have done so but the first to have spoken to him in German.

Redgrave's final appointment was that of Commander British Forces Hong Kong and Major General Brigade of Gurkhas. The interception of illegal immigrants into the New Territories proved an onerous task. In his first year, they numbered an estimated 200,000, of which about half were apprehended and returned to China. He was knighted at the end of his tour and retired from the Army in 1980.

He became Director General of the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust and was subsequently appointed Honorary

Colonel of the 31st Signal Regiment Volunteers. He was Grand Master of the Order of Knights Templar for seven years.

He travelled widely. His journeys included trips to China, Tibet and the Arctic Ocean. In 2000 he published *Balkan Blue* (2000), a collection of family and military memories, and followed this with *The Adventures of Colonel Daffodil* (2006).

Roy Redgrave died on 3 July 2011. He married, in 1953, Valerie Wellesley. She predeceased him and he is survived by their two sons.

[This obituary first appeared in the Daily Telegraph and is reproduced by kind permission of the Editor of the Obituary Column.]

Lt Col G D Anderson OBE

David Anderson, who served with the 4/9th Gurkha Rifles in the Chindit operations, died on 2 September 2011 aged 93.

He was born on 4 August 1918 in Seaton, Devon, the youngest of four brothers. His father was a clergyman, a keen sportsman and served as an army chaplain (ACG) in World War I. David was educated at St Peter's School in Seaford and then at Marlborough College before moving on to Pembroke College, Cambridge, where his studies were interrupted by war. He too was a keen sportsman at school - although his 'fame' rests on dropping a catch from Sir Len Hutton when fielding at first slip. The family record of army service and his father's love of sport had a huge influence on his life.

At Cambridge, he joined the King's Own Scottish Borderers' Supplementary Reserve which took him to France at the beginning of World War 2, before being evacuated from Dunkirk. In due course, he was offered the opportunity of joining a Gurkha regiment, in which a number of his family had served, notably General G N Channer, his maternal grandfather, who was awarded the VC in 1875 at Perak, Malaya as a Captain with the 1st Gurkha Rifles.

David Anderson joined the 4/9th Gurkha Rifles which was raised in 1940 and was engaged on the Frontier until, in 1943, the Battalion learnt its future as part of Wingate's Special Force. It then undertook jungle training in preparation for Chindit operations as 'Morrisforce'. In March 1944, David Anderson, then a Major in 49 Column, with other officers and 100 Gurkhas, was flown by gliders to create a rough airstrip at 'Chowringee' in Burma which was completed in the record time of 24 hours.

Then followed months of trekking on foot through hostile jungle and mountainous country, blowing up bridges, ambushing enemy supply lines, where hunger, dysentery and malaria were as much a hazard as the Japanese.

Supplied by air, they saw some of the heaviest fighting and had great successes; David Anderson was mentioned in despatches. Evacuation was delayed until well into the monsoon season to a point when the remaining survivors could no longer be considered a fighting force. On 15/16 July, less than 100 were flown out and a week later the party, under command of David Anderson, entrained on a slow journey to India. They were welcomed everywhere and reached the Regimental Centre at Dehra Dun on 29 July. After medical treatment and a period on special rations, they were sent on leave.

Fl Lt Pat O'Brien DFC RAF, an Australian, who was attached to the column to arrange airdrops and co-ordinate air support and the evacuation of casualties, was a great friend of David Anderson and in his published account of the Burma campaign wrote,

"David Anderson had the remarkable ability, when morale was at its very lowest, of raising our spirits by recounting stories

of girls in their pretty frocks at the Green Man in Granchester near Cambridge".

This ability to raise morale would never desert him and his remarkable constitution enabled him to survive and come through in good condition.

The Battalion was then revived with new recruits and for a time kept the special force role. However, the Special Force was disbanded and the Battalion, where David Anderson was a Company Commander, took up a ceremonial role, firstly in Lahore, when for a time he acted as Lieutenant Colonel in command but reverted to 2IC when Lt Col Bruce Kinloch MC (David Anderson's cousin) returned. The Battalion undertook the same ceremonial role in Delhi, where David commanded the Gurkha contingent in the Victory Parade in 1945. The Battalion was also present when the Viceroy presented VCs, including the posthumous VC to the mother of Sherbahadur Thapa VC of 1/9th Gurkha Rifles. The Commander in Chief, Field Marshal Auchinleck, also visited the Battalion for Dashain. Then they became involved in dealing with the disturbances at the time of Partition, after which David Anderson left the Army and returned to Britain, said to be sickened by the bloodshed and misery of these events.

He returned to Cambridge to complete his degree in Classics and took up a teaching post in South Africa, but, due to the illness of his wife, had to return to Britain. He was invited to take up a position at Oundle School where he stayed for 30 years, for many years as Housemaster of Berrystead. He found profound satisfaction in teaching. He also took a great interest in developing a Combined Cadet Force, where he held the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. His contacts at a senior level in the Armed Forces were of immense value in this interest. He expanded the variety of specialist sections that cadets could experience; a mounted troop, a police section, a civil defence section, signals. He also organized numerous overseas visits. His military tattoos were assisted by an amazing variety of regiments, which all helped to make some splendid and outstanding occasions. He was awarded an OBE in 1957 for his work with the Cadet Corps.

Another task of great success was the fund-raising role he was asked to take on in 1957 with a target of £250,000 which he easily reached by 1960. Asked again in 1970, with a target of £850,000, by 1980 he had raised £1 million - it is said purely by force of personality.

In a tribute at his memorial service, it was observed that David was, in some ways, Mr Standfast of Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress; "all the trumpets sounded for him when he passed over to the other side". He was absolutely straightforward, good humoured, invariably polite, considerate and modest. A gentleman of the old school is how he has been described by so many. Those who served under him in the Corps all account it a privilege to have done so, and all who were with him at Oundle hold his memory in great affection and esteem.

In 1946, David Anderson married Elizabeth Beedham, the daughter of a prominent race horse trainer whom he met in Calcutta on brief visits between training and active service.

They were happily married for fifty years and had one son, a grandson and a granddaughter who survive him. Bruce Roberts, latterly Chairman 9 GRRA

Lieutenant Colonel H C S Gregory OBE



Lieutenant Colonel H C S Gregory (Greg) was born at Wallington, Surrey on 26 October 1916. After his father - who served in World War I with 1st Battalion The Royal Scots - died of wounds in January 1918, Greg was taken by his mother to the Nilgiri Hills (Blue Mountains) of South India where her family owned property. It was there that Greg spent many of his formative years, developing as a scholar of some distinction and as a good sportsman.

Regimental Tribute

Greg was 23 years old when war broke out, a man rather than a boy. When he was commissioned into the 10th Gurkhas in 1940 and joined the 3rd Battalion, he was older than the most recently joined regular officers from Sandhurst. By age and relative maturity, and probably with a hint of precocious gravitas, he clearly stood out as ready for responsibility and was soon made Adjutant. It was a post he was to fill with distinction for the next four years, two of them in battle...

Following the British retreat from Burma, the 3rd/10th joined the 23rd Indian Division in June 1942 in an all Gurkha brigade, the 37th, alongside 3rd/3rd and 3rd/5th. They were at once involved in long-range patrolling down on the Chindwin River, and sometimes over the river into Jap held territory. These operations continued throughout 1943. Jim Tainsh who joined 3rd/10th at Imphal in 1943 says he has never forgotten Greg's advice that his first priority must be to look after his Gurkha soldiers. He also remembers being ordered to ride a horse, an officer's reconnaissance vehicle in those days; it

bolted and he fell off. The next thing he remembers is Greg leaning over him and saying 'Tainsh, you'll have to do better than that in this battalion'.

In March 1944, when the Japanese took the offensive in their 'March on Delhi', the 3rd/10th and 3rd/5th, by now hardened veterans, distinguished themselves in breaking the Jap roadblocks on the Tiddim Road, which had threatened to cut off the withdrawal to the Imphal Plain of the 17th Division. Both battalions were themselves cut off for six days with Japs to south and north. Jim Tainsh who was wounded at this action reminds us that the wounded could not be evacuated during those six days and how grateful he and the other wounded were that Greg came to the RAP to visit and update them every day on the progress of the battle. Greg also wrote to Jim in hospital with battalion news. You never forget comrades like that.

Greg was next involved in the operations at Ukhrul countering the Jap thrust from north east of Imphal but in May the 23rd Division moved to the vital Shenam Pass guarding the approach to Imphal, from the southeast. The bitter defence of Shenam is often described as 'The ordeal at Shenam'. Whilst nothing can detract from the valour of the Royal West Kent's at Kohima, it should be noted that their famous siege lasted 15 days, and the clearing of Kohima and the road south to beleaguered Imphal took a further two months - two and a half months in all. But the defence of Shenam and Scraggy, the foremost defended hilltop which too few have heard of, raged at close quarters for three and a half months. When the Japs, hooking round the forward positions, threw the Rajputana Rifles off Gibraltar, the rearmost and highest hill on the pass, it was the 3rd Battalion's counter attack under Major Dick Edwards which retook it. Colonel Marindin of the 3rd/5th, looking back from one of the foremost hills, witnessed the action and, astonished and thrilled at the speed and vigour of 3rd/10th's assault, commented that it was the first time he had ever seen the Japs run. When, with the opening of the Imphal-Kohima road, resources enabled a major attack to be mounted at Shenam, the 3rd/10th was selected to retake Scraggy; in a four hour battle which finally ended the Japanese offensive on that front, ammunition ran out twice - 3,700 grenades were used by the Battalion that morning and 115 casualties were suffered. Credit of course to those in the front line but spare a thought for the 2IC, the Adjutant, the Subedar Major, the Quartermaster and the RMO who sustained the action. Greg, at the heart of it all, was awarded a Mention in Despatches.

The war then took Greg and the 3rd/10th through amphibious landing training, the unopposed landing on Malaya in September 1945 and then on with 37th Brigade and the

3rd/3rd and 3rd/5th comrades to the operations in Java. British, Gurkha, and Indian troops went only to establish a semblance of order in which to secure the release of the Allied POWs and internees (RAPWI) held hostage by the Indonesians and indeed disarm and repatriate the Japanese. But the Indonesians saw no such transparency and fought to prevent what they reckoned was an attempt to re-establish Dutch Colonial rule. Greg commanded a company in these operations from October 1945 to October 1946 in which the 3rd/10th suffered not far short of 100 casualties in a so-called year of peace. The Tenth history calls it 'The Java Nightmare' and 'this unhappy episode amid death, suffering, suspicion and treachery'. An Indonesian truce meant nothing and a promise that a road would be open could never be trusted; Greg's embussed company was ambushed more than once and had to fight its way through. He earned another 'Mention'..

With the disbandment of the 3rd Battalion in April 1947, Greg was posted to the Training Centre at Alhail and was the senior officer there during the difficult days of Independence and the Opt. Aged thirty he handled, with immense discretion, the inharmonious attitude of those opting for India (led by the Centre's Subedar Major) towards those opting for the British army. In the midst of acrimony, Nick Carter recalled that 'Greg's quiet calm, his impartiality, determination and serene air of authority met every crisis and was transmitted to us all'.

Joining the 1st Battalion, Malaya and the Emergency then followed and, in the 1950s, a posting to command a recruiting depot on the Nepalese border where Greg earned the MBE and a Brigade-wide recognition among Gurkha soldiers of his sterling qualities. There followed further operations in Malaya with the 1st Battalion where he was Mentioned in Despatches twice more. Chris Pike recalled that in 1954 'Greg was my first company commander and I learned more from him in my first two years than during the rest of my service. What was exceptional was his huge knowledge, respect and understanding of Gurkha customs, culture and tradition; his complete openness and honesty with all soldiers. He was deeply trusted and respected and held in great affection by all ranks'

Greg was appointed to command the Record Office. Here his methodical staff work and wide knowledge of the Gurkha soldier made him an outstanding holder of that important post. How fortunate it was that Greg was still the Record Officer at the time of the Borneo run-down, by now a Lieutenant Colonel. We can take pride in the fact that the acceptable terms negotiated with MoD were largely the work of Greg, John Chapple and Colin Maddison. Greg was duly rewarded with the OBE.

After retiring in 1972, Greg worked for ten years as an RO in the Liaison Office in MoD under Duncan Green, during which he assisted in the Gurkha pay review of 1979. There simply never was any question of a withdrawal from Gurkha affairs. On final retirement at age 65, he became Secretary

of the 10th Gurkha Regimental Association for fifteen years (1983 to 1999), Secretary and Editor of the Britain/Nepal Society and eventually a Life Vice-President. He was also an Honorary Life Trustee of the Gurkha Welfare Trust.

We cannot doubt that much of the Gurkha's loyalty, courage and robust cheerfulness rubbed off in his own character. To the end of his life, Greg maintained a steady correspondence with his old comrades in the east. Gurkha soldiers throughout the Brigade loved and respected his measured, impartial, patient and transparent handling of their careers. Greg tried to look for the best in people. Slow to utter criticism, he was a quiet, kindly, friendly, modest man; there was no great fire or ambition, certainly no presumption; no flashes of occasional brilliance; just a steady reliability and resolution, ever ready to help, unflappable and calm in a crisis; a man for the long haul; a 'love thy neighbour' Christian. We laymen would say he was a saint.

But let us not forget that this seemingly gentle, unassuming man was physically as tough as old boots – a man of oak-like durability. In his younger days he was a towering and rock-like centre half at regimental team level; later an excellent tennis player, with Gordon Shakespeare a FARELF doubles champion. In his eighties he could still walk ten miles (often to visit the grave of his beloved Joanna); in his nineties, still vehemently self-reliant. With all the work and energy he put into his life, he could not have survived to 94 if he had not been as hard as nails.

We have lost, as Jimmy Evans has written, one of the father figures of the Regiment - Greg served it in one capacity or another for sixty years - and our thoughts are with Lionel and his four brothers and the large Gregory family.

Maj Gen R W L McAlister CB OBE

Postscript

Lt Col Lionel Gregory, Greg's eldest son, who followed him into the Gurkha Brigade, has added the following lines:

To the end of his life, Greg was totally devoted to the memory of his wife, Sabina Joanna (nee Stryjska) whom he married in 1944 and whose father, a Polish Cavalry Officer, and three brothers were lost in the fighting to defend Poland at the start of World War 2. Joanna was with him until she was tragically killed in a car accident in 1978, four years before Greg retired in 1982. They had five sons - Lionel, Robert, Francis, Patrick and Christopher. On his own for over thirty three years, Greg continued to live at his home in Thanet, a corner of England that he loved, and, with great fortitude and resolute independence, to carry out his duties to the full in all his many involvements - particularly the Brigade of Gurkhas, the Gurkha Welfare Trust, the Britain Nepal Society, the United Services Catholic Association and the support of his local Church. He was also, throughout, the mainstay of his family in every way. He is buried next to Joanna in the churchyard of St Augustine's Abbey, Ramsgate.

Lieutenant Colonel Alastair Langlands OBE

Alastair Malcolm Langlands, who has died at the age of 88, was very well known to all in the 2nd King Edward's VII's Own Gurkha Rifles and to several generations of Gurkhas and their families and many others in Nepal society at large. Indeed there can have been few in Nepalese and Gurkha circles of his time that did not know him or know of him. And those who knew him personally regarded him with affection and esteem. He was a highly experienced and accomplished regimental officer, a shrewd expert on many matters Gurkha, a staunch friend, and a generous benefactor to numerous Gurkhas and their children and to Gurkha charities. He served in the 2nd Goorkhas from December 1947 to December 1973.

Alastair was born at Bannu on the North West Frontier of India on 5 December 1921 and died at Blackwater, near Camberley, on 14 June 2010. He was the son of Brigadier Eric Langlands, OBE, of the 8th Gurkha Rifles, who sent him to The King's School, Canterbury. He enlisted at the Officers' Training School, Belgaum, in October 1940 and six months later he arrived back on the Frontier to join the 1st Battalion 8th Gurkha Rifles, the battalion in which he had been born.

After the usual start as a novice company officer Alastair was sent to the Army School of Physical Training at Ambala as a PT Instructor before he began those long spells of regimental soldiering from which he learned so much about Gurkhas. In the 1st/8th, from 1942 and in our 1st Battalion from December 1947 to 1958 he was a Company Commander in Assam, Burma, Java, the North West Frontier of India, Malaya and Hong Kong for a total of more than eight years of which all but one or two were spent on active service. Those commands included, at various times, five out of the six companies in the 1st Battalion, and Boys' Company at the Training Depot. Besides that he was, for three separate periods, Adjutant of the 1st/8th and the 1st/2nd on operations in Burma, on the North West Frontier and in Malaya. And in between all those appointments, for many months of shorter spells he was 2IC or Commanding Officer of a battalion or the Training Depot. His skill, courage and devotion to duty were modestly recognised by a mention in despatches in 1946 for his services in Burma and another in 1952 for those in Malaya, although in the latter case he was recommended in vain for a higher award. In all he accrued a wealth of experience in regimental soldiering and knowledge of Gurkhas to which no officer could readily aspire today, and it was to prove invaluable in the many years he was to spend with Gurkhas in India and Nepal.

That second stage of his career began in 1959 when Alastair took over the Transit Camp at Barrackpore. He went on to command the Depot at Dharan and, following that, the Recruiting Centre at Paklihawa where for a while he was also Welfare Officer for the L of C. For his outstanding contribution at Paklihawa he was made MBE (Military) in June 1965. A later spell in command at Paklihawa, from 1968 onwards, was his last military appointment before he retired in December 1973 with the honorary rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

After thirty three years of soldiering Alastair entered civilian life as Manager of Lumle Agricultural Centre where he worked for the Overseas Development Agency for ten years. For his splendid contribution to agriculture in Nepal he was made OBE (Civil) in June 1983. After that he became Kadoorie Representative, British Gurkhas Nepal, based in Pokhara and working for Sir Horace Kadoorie for a further thirteen years and travelling through large areas of Nepal.

In 1996 Alastair retired to England where he continued his connection with Gurkhas and Nepal through his considerable charitable work. Also he became a Trustee of the King Mahendra UK Trust for nature conservation and later a Committee member. He was a lover of the countryside and wild life in India and Nepal, in which he been a keen walker and ornithologist and wrote interesting accounts of his travels and bird-watching for our journals and newsletters. But above all during his last years he may be remembered most for his huge generosity in supporting Gurkha charities. Especially he liked to help Gurkha children for many of whom he paid throughout their entire school and university (or similar) education in several countries. It is a mark of his strong belief in helping Gurkhas and their children and grandchildren that in the last twenty five years of his life he quietly spent hundreds of thousands of pounds on them. It gave him enormous pleasure to see those children become professional people well able to benefit from his help.

Over the course of its life since 1815 the 2nd Goorkhas produced many people, officers and soldiers, of remarkable character and quality in one way or another. Alastair Langlands was among them: we are privileged to have been his friends.

[This obituary, written by Colonel D R Wood, first appeared in the Sirmooree and is reproduced by kind permission of the Editor.]

Major W R Bates MC

Major W R ('Bill') Bates was serving with the 3rd Battalion 8th Gurkha Rifles (3/8 GR) when, on 4 March 1945, an attack was launched to clear the route between Mayagon and an isolated garrison in the Western Irrawaddy bridgehead.

Despite the support of Stewart tanks, the men ran into stiff opposition from the Japanese. At a critical point in the battle, the company commander was hit and fell into long grass. Bates was sent forward from Mayagon with orders to take over. He rallied the company, which was under heavy shelling and machinegun fire, and led an assault on the enemy's main position on the river bank.

Inspired by his leadership, his men charged and overran the Japanese bunkers. They killed many of the enemy and drove the rest out into the open where they were targeted by mortars and grenades. As a result of his action, a secure corridor was established through which two battalions were brought out from a perilous position. Bates's outstanding courage was recognized by the award of an immediate MC.

William Reston Bates was born in London on 18 May 1920 and, aged six months, travelled with his parents to Burma, where his father was chief engineer of the Burma Corporation in Namtu, Northern Shan States. Aged 10 he was sent to school at Oundle before going up to University College London to read Engineering.

Major George Challis CBE

George H Challis, who died on 2 October 2011 aged 90, was the last President of the 9th Gurkha Rifles Regimental Association, having been a devoted member since its inception in 1948. He was successively Secretary, Chairman and President and punctilious in ensuring continuing relations with the Regiment in India.

He joined the army in 1941 and was commissioned into the Lancashire Fusiliers from Sandhurst in September of that year. He volunteered to serve with the Indian Army and joined the 9th Gurkha Rifles at Dehra Dun. He was subsequently posted to 1/9th GR in the Near East and Italy and became Adjutant of the Battalion when it commenced the advance up the Apennines towards the Gothic Line.

The Battalion was involved in numerous severe battles on the way. In San Marino, it played a significant role in the liberation of the Republic from German occupation, and Rifleman Sherbahadur Thapa was awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross for holding off counter attacks and for rescuing two wounded Gurkhas. George Challis was the Battalion's last surviving officer from that historic engagement. In 2008, he was able to provide assistance towards the production of a book about the battle and in 2009 he attended a San Marino state opening of an elegant roadside memorial to Sherbahadur VC.

George Challis subsequently went with the 1/9th deployment to Greece where he continued as Adjutant in the

Bates joined the Army in March 1941 and, after a spell with Royal Armoured Corps training regiments, moved to India. He was commissioned into the Indian Army in May 1942 and posted to the 3/8 GR at Trichinopoly. A week after the action in which he was awarded an MC, Bates led his company in an attack across 300 yards of open ground. The Japanese were overwhelmed; 35 were killed for the loss of three Gurkhas killed and ten wounded.

Bates was among those injured and was evacuated to England. He was treated in a number of hospitals until April 1947, when he was declared unfit for further service and awarded a 40 per cent disability pension.

He then worked for the Eagle Star Insurance company until 1967, when he transferred to the Civil Aviation Authority, remaining there until he retired in 1983. Settled in Northwood, Middlesex, he kept himself well-informed on current affairs and the stock market. His war wounds gave him trouble for the rest of his life but he played golf at the Sandy Lodge Golf Club, listened to country and western music, and enjoyed watching boxing, football and cricket.

Bill Bates died on 12 November 2010. He was unmarried.

[This obituary first appeared in the Daily Telegraph and is reproduced by kind permission of the Editor of the Obituary Column.]

first engagement, street fighting in Piraeus, and subsequently as a Company Commander in peace keeping and humanitarian aid in the remote mountainous country close to the Albanian border in severe winter conditions. He was mentioned in despatches in both 1945 and 1946.

After being released from the Army, he took a career in bank management and held a number of distinguished public voluntary posts in the City of London. Amongst numerous activities, he was an Honorary Liveryman and held the office of Honorary Clerk to the Worshipful Company of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators (1984-1994). He was twice Chief Commoner of the Corporation of London, accompanied the Lord Mayor on official overseas visits including Russia and was awarded a CBE for his services. He was Master Tobacco Pipe Maker and Tobacco Blender (1992-1993) and at one time a member of the Council of the London Chamber of Commerce. One of his relaxing interests was the Pickwick Society, whose members meet in Dickens' old eating house in the City and traditionally take the names of Dickens' principal characters.

He was above all a sound and highly appreciated administrator in diverse fields as well as a Christian Gentleman.

He married Margaret in 1946, who survives him, and was a much loved parent and grandparent.

Bruce Roberts, latterly Chairman 9 GRRA

Major Bruce Kinloch MC

Major Bruce Kinloch, who has died 91, was awarded a Military Cross at the Battle of the Sittang Bridge in Burma.

In February 1942 Kinloch was adjutant of the 1st Battalion 3rd Queen Alexandra's Own Gurkha Rifles (1/3 GR). His battalion had been rushed from India to Burma after the Japanese invasion and endured days of choking dust as it hurried along winding jungle tracks through tinder-dry teak forests; the soldiers' aim was to reach the Sittang Bridge and so deny the Japanese a gateway to Rangoon and the heart of southern Burma.

On the morning of 21 February, they came under attack from Japanese bombers. These were followed by Zero fighter aircraft, which raked the columns of weary soldiers with machinegun fire and set the jungle ablaze.

The Japanese were holding a twin-hill feature on the eastern side of the river, close to the final approach to the bridge. Forward companies of 1/3 GR close by were pinned down by heavy automatic fire; when Kinloch, at Battalion HQ, was ordered to contact them he saw it as a death sentence. His CO went himself and was indeed killed.

At first light the next day Kinloch was awakened by three huge explosions. A decision had been made to blow the bridge before the Japanese overwhelmed the small bridgehead force, took it and crossed the river in strength.

Kinloch's battalion, together with most of 17th Indian Infantry Division, was stranded on the wrong side of a river 600 yards wide. Many in the forward companies had been taken prisoner and the rest - dog-tired with incessant fighting, short of food, water and ammunition - were outraged at being abandoned.

That afternoon, Kinloch put machine guns at the head of his force and cut through the jungle to the river. He organized a defensive perimeter and set the rest of the men to building rafts.

The Japanese seemed to have vanished. After reconnoitering the eastern end of the blown bridge, Kinloch climbed up a jungle track in search of some sign of the enemy. As he approached a huge forest tree, he saw the outline of a head. Drawing his revolver, he challenged the figure. The head disappeared. With one bound he reached the tree and, peering cautiously around the massive trunk, found himself looking straight into the face of a Japanese officer. The man was in black boots, wore a soft peaked cap and carried a Samurai sword.

Kinloch leapt back and, pulling a grenade from his binoculars pouch, rolled it, smoking gently, around the tree. He heard a gasp, a scuffle of feet and a shattering explosion.

The air came alive, he said afterwards, with the whip-like crack of bullets as machine-guns opened fire from all sides. A heavy machine-gun from across the river joined in as he sprinted back down the track.

He regained the bridgehead without a scratch but his men were being cut down by mortars and small arms fire. Kinloch had to find some ferry boats. As darkness fell, he and two comrades slipped into the river, pushing in front of them a bamboo raft lashed together with rifle slings and loaded with their clothes and pistols.

They swam across but saw no sign of Allied troops; eventually they found a sampan and, by dawn, after five trips, all the wounded from the different units had been ferried to the western bank. Kinloch returned to his depleted battalion on the eastern bank, which then moved two miles downstream, and the next night swam the river again to try to organize a larger ferry operation. While he was on the western bank he heard firing on the other side of the river and saw the Japanese swarming out of the jungle. After a fight the rest of the battalion was surrounded and forced to surrender.

Kinloch set off with some of the wounded men he had previously ferried over when, walking across a paddy field, he was bitten in the foot by a viper. A comrade pluckily sucked out the venom and Kinloch reached Allied lines with nothing worse than a swollen leg. He was awarded an immediate Military Cross.

Bruce Grant Kinloch was born at Saharanpur, India, where his father was stationed, on 27 August 1919. He was educated at Berkhamsted School, where he was in the Shooting VIII.

After RMC Sandhurst he was commissioned into the Indian Army in 1939 and posted to 3rd Queen Alexandra's Own Gurkha Rifles. He saw active service with the 1st Battalion on the North-West Frontier and took part in punitive operations in Waziristan against the Faqir of Ipi.

For much of 1943 the battalion, having re-formed and retrained, held a line of positions in the Chin Hills, Northern Burma. In December, Kinloch was ordered to attack a Japanese force which was dug into deep underground bunkers high up on a rocky, knife-edge ridge.

"Brigade must be mad even to suggest it," Kinloch told his CO. "Who do they think is crazy enough to tackle it?"

"You," his CO replied.

Kinloch led two rifle companies in the assault. In the event he was mistakenly bombed by Allied aircraft, shelled and mortared by the enemy, and forced to withdraw.

In 1944, he was second-in-command of 4th/9th Gurkha Rifles and subsequently commanded the battalion. After the end of the campaign in Burma, he ran some of the first jungle warfare courses and, after partition in 1947, joined the Colonial Service.

His first posting was that of District Officer at Kilifi on the Kenya Coast, where he became involved in the pursuit and capture of ivory poachers and smugglers. In 1949 he transferred to the Uganda Game and Fisheries Department as assistant

to the chief game warden, succeeding to that post a year later. Over the next decade he was responsible for the expansion and development of the department.

In 1960 he moved to the Tanganyika (later Tanzania) Game Department as chief game warden. While in this post he launched the College of African Wildlife Management at Mweka, to train Africans to become game and national park wardens in newly-independent African countries.

He retired in 1964 and, following a series of advisory posts as wildlife adviser to Bechuanaland (later Botswana), Cape Province and Malawi, in 1973 he joined a 4,000 acre mixed farming estate in the Yorkshire Dales.

After the death of its owner, he worked for the Yorkshire Water Authority in land and fisheries management. Four years in Spain followed before he retired to Fownhope, Herefordshire.

Major P A H Lumley

Patrick Lumley was born in China in 1921. At an early age he moved to Ireland, then later to Lancashire. He attended King William's College on the Isle of Man, before going on to University.

He joined the 4th Prince of Wales's Own Gurkha Rifles from British service in January 1942. In August 1942 he joined the 1st Battalion who were without any officers after the first Burma campaign. Very shortly afterwards he was severely wounded on the Tiddim Road, leaving a piece of shrapnel in his head which could never be removed.

After a spell of recovery leave he joined the Regimental Centre as a company commander from where he went on to 14 GR Training Battalion as Intelligence Officer and was

As well as contributing many articles to the Shooting Times, he published *The New Noah* (1955), *Shamba Raiders* (1972), *Game Wardens in Africa* (1981) and *Tales from a Crowded Life* (2008). *Shamba Raiders*, written with passion and authority, was particularly well received. It is an account of the struggle to preserve East Africa's herds of game which were then, and still are, threatened by poaching, wars and population growth.

Bruce Kinloch died on 21 June 2011. He married in 1943, Elizabeth Charter. She predeceased him and he is survived by their daughter.

[This obituary first appeared in the Daily Telegraph and is reproduced by kind permission of the Editor of the Obituary Column.]

shortly after promoted to command a company. He was released in August 1945 and returned to civilian life in the UK.

In 1948 he moved to Kuwait to work for the Kuwaiti Oil Company, finally moving back to England in 1966. A variety of jobs followed before he returned to oil, this time in the fledgling North Sea Industry. He retired in 1980.

Not one to recount war stories, he was nevertheless very proud of his association with the 4th Gurkha Rifles. After recovering from a major operation he somehow ensured that he got to Stoke Poges for the final reunion.

Patrick Lumley died peacefully on 4 August 2010. He will be sadly missed by his wife, family and friends

Major J C Wallace-Dutton



The military service of Major John Wallace-Dutton, who died on 20 February 2010 at the age of 39 years, spanned twenty years with the Welsh Guards, the Royal Logistic Corps and the Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment, of which over seven years were spent at Regimental duty with Gurkhas.

John Cynfi Wallace-Dutton was born in North Wales in 1970. He left school at the age of 16 to pursue his passion for field sports and became a gamekeeper on his father's shoot. Four years later, he decided to follow in his father's footsteps and enlisted in the Welsh Guards in 1990. On completion of his recruit training he was posted to the 1st Battalion stationed in Pirbright and served in the Prince of Wales's Company. As well as undertaking Public Duties, he did an operational tour in Northern Ireland and exercised in Kenya and the Falkland Islands. Three years later he was selected to undergo officer training and went to RMA Sandhurst, during which time he was Captain of Boxing.

He was commissioned into the RLC in August 1994 and, with his boxing background, was posted to 10 Transport Regiment in Colchester. It was in this first tour as a young officer that his love affair with Gurkhas began and he was cross-posted to 28 Squadron, which had just returned from its first tour in the Balkans. Soon after joining he commanded the first Kasam Khane Ceremony to be conducted by QOGTR in the UK in 1996. Towards the end of the year he deployed to Bosnia with the Squadron to assist in the drawdown of British Forces as the NATO Implementation Force (IFOR) transitioned to become the Stabilisation Force (SFOR). This involved the Squadron in closing down bases and transporting stores, equipment and vehicles in the depths of the winter in treacherous driving conditions. John returned with the Squadron to the UK in February 1997 and later the same year he was promoted and became the Squadron Second-

in-Command. In 1999 he attended the Junior Division of the Staff College and was posted to 23 Pioneer Regiment, which included an operational tour to Kosovo.

John returned to QOGTR at the beginning of 2001 on posting to Headquarters Brunei Garrison as the SO3 Logistic Support and Commander of the QOGTR Detachment. His arrival coincided with a reduction in the military personnel of the Detachment and their replacement by locally employed civilians as part of the Non-Deployed Establishment Review. In the meantime, the steady flow of visitors to the only UK Garrison east of Suez continued unabated and the Detachment, under John's leadership, continued to meet the demand for transport support. John completed his tour in 2003 and returned to the UK and a staff appointment in Warminster.

Two years later, in 2005, he achieved his ambition and assumed command of 28 Squadron in Aldershot. He hit the ground running and immediately set about preparing the Squadron, of whom over 40% of the drivers had less than two years service, for the forthcoming exercise season. On exercise, he provided a tasty interlude by undertaking 'morning clearance patrols' returning with fresh meat in the form of venison, which he had shot as an MOD deer manager. This, needless-to-say, met with the complete approval of the Squadron! His highly competitive spirit throughout his tour also led to the return of the Commander's Sword to the Squadron in his first year and its retention by the Squadron the following year on its return from Iraq.

The pinnacle of John's short military career was to command the Squadron on Operation TELIC 9 in Iraq. The Squadron deployed with other elements of the Regiment in support of 19 Light Brigade prior to Christmas 2006. Operating initially from the Shaibah Logistic Base it provided logistic support to the Brigade units both in Basra City and the surrounding countryside. It later re-located to Basra International Airport from where it helped to withdraw elements of the Brigade from Basra City. As well as its operational tasks, coupled with the threat of indirect fire from insurgents onto the base, the Squadron participated in all manner of sports and military skills competitions, most of which under John's leadership it won. The Squadron returned home safely in June 2007.

It was with this taste of success and at the peak of operational efficiency that 28 Squadron bade farewell to John in July 2007 on his posting back to Warminster to face the challenge of instructing junior officers in tactics. Sadly, he was to face an even greater challenge to his health and life over the next two years, which, despite his indomitable fighting spirit and bravery was eventually to defeat him. He was an officer of great presence and stature with much style, who led from the front, setting and demanding simply the best of himself and others. These were the hallmarks for which John will be remembered in years to come by those who knew him.

He is survived by Jo, who he married in 1997 while serving with 28 Squadron, and their three young children.

[This obituary first appeared in the Journal of The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment and is reproduced here by kind permission of the Editor.]

Captain John Murray MC

John Murray, who has died aged 88, was at the heart of many bitter engagements with Japanese forces in Burma.

On 26 May 1944, Major General 'Punch' Cowan, commander of the 17th Indian Division, asked for the loan of a battalion to help deal with the enemy-held feature known as Red Hill, close to his HQ on the Bishenpur Road, south-west of Imphal.

The task fell to 3rd Battalion 1st King George V's Own Gurkha Rifles (3/1 GR), part of 20th Indian Division. On the afternoon of 28 May, after an artillery barrage, the battalion attacked. A tank of the 7th Light Infantry came up in support but was quickly knocked out.

The Japanese use of grenades and highly-trained snipers proved very damaging. When the commanding officer, two company commanders and the adjutant were killed or wounded, the attack faltered. Furthermore, while the enemy used the pause to strengthen his positions, the Gurkhas' carriers became bogged down in the paddy fields.

At this critical moment, Murray, an intelligence officer, took command of the battalion, rallying his men, restoring the situation and, when ordered to withdraw, disengaging the remnants of two companies (which were still involved in fierce close-quarter fighting) without further losses. The citation for his immediate MC paid tribute to his leadership and added that he had shown coolness and self-assurance that were exceptional for his length of service.

John Murray, the son of an Army officer who had won an MC in the First World War, was born at Ayr on 15 December 1922 and educated at Ayr Academy, where he won the high jump. He was a cadet at the Indian Military Academy before being commissioned into the Indian Army and posted to 3/1 GR.

In a company attack on deep Japanese bunkers in Nabet, Sagaing Region, in early February 1945, petrol-tank bombs were dropped with the aim of suffocating the defenders. In an account of the action, the regimental history stated that the Japanese were unsubdued and retaliated in as committed a fashion as ever.

Enemy snipers in treetops, although engaged by machine guns, took a heavy toll, and close to 40 Gurkhas were killed or wounded before the attack was called off. The withdrawal and removal of the casualties, it added, was most hazardous, and would never have been achieved without the help of Murray and some of his comrades.

After the war Murray retired from the Army in the rank of Captain. He joined James Finlay and Co. manufacturers and merchants based in Glasgow, as a trainee accountant. He qualified in 1950 and subsequently became president of the Junior Chamber of Commerce for Scotland.

In 1962 he was appointed managing director of Finlay's subsidiary, George Payne and Co. based at Croydon, and in the 1970's joined the main board of the parent company. He retired in 1987 and settled in Edenbridge, Kent.

Murray enjoyed fly-fishing and gardening and, as a younger man, was a low-handicap golfer.

John Murray died on 6 February 2011. He married, in 1947, Margaret Wilson; she predeceased him, and he is survived by their two sons.

[This obituary first appeared in the Daily Telegraph and is reproduced by kind permission of the Editor of the Obituary Column.]

Captain Howell Parry

Howell Parry, who served in the 3/9th Gurkha Rifles, died on 7 August 2011 at the age of 89.

He was born in the seaside town of Barry in South Wales on 26 April 1922, the son of a railway worker in the coal docks, and after education at Barry County Boys' School, joined the Ministry of Labour as a civil servant. In 1940 he began his wartime service with the Royal Welch Fusiliers and early in 1943 responded to an invitation to join the Indian Army. He was commissioned into the 9th Gurkha Rifles in September of that year after training in Bangalore. There were three others with him: Jack Pasmore MC, who served with 3/9th in Burma; Jack Masters, who was severely wounded with 1/9th in Italy (and subsequently invalided out of the Army); and Alan Watson, subsequently a regular army Colonel and for many years Secretary of the UK Regimental Association; Howell was the last survivor of these close friends. He joined 3/9th in 1944, after their return from the second Chindit campaign but before their return to Burma and later operations in Java and Malaya in 1945. While active service with the Battalion was always a possibility, and he sadly lost a number of friends, he was seconded as 2IC of a training unit for newly-commissioned officers and ended his service as OC of the Boys' Company in the Regimental Centre. He served mostly at Dehra Dun and rose to the rank of Captain. His wartime friends included John Bradburne, later a martyred missionary in Zimbabwe, and Bill Kee, later a judge.

Howell Parry was a prolific contributor to 9th Gurkha Rifles Regimental Association newsletters and left several other manuscripts. In 1995 'One Man and his Dog' recalled the late Hedley Tanner and his excitable Bull Terrier, and a 1996 contribution recalled Lt Col Harper of the 3/9th, who decreed that his young officers should acquaint themselves with their principal mode of transport and should groom a mule. Howell, not being a 'horsey man' approached the job with some anxiety. The mule in the first attempts would not stand still but he began to relax and so did the mule - they both grew to like it, leading Howell to the conclusion that mules had a lot in common with Gurkhas "brave, resolute, loyal, stubborn if pushed too far, utterly reliable - the salt of the earth". A memorable encounter occurred in 1945 at Gorakpur station where, when Howell was

supervising ex-POWs from 2/9th GR back to their homes, the 1/2nd GR North Africa war hero, Subedar Major and Hon Lt Lalbahadur Thapa VC, greeted him with a confident salute and, as he was going on leave himself, offered to take over the task. His offer brooked no denial, but later Howell thought he should check what was happening, to be asked with smile, "Did you think I couldn't manage it?" They parted as the best of comrades.

After the war Howell resumed his career, moving from Wales to Scotland in 1964. He worked latterly for the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS), and after moving to Birmingham in 1976 played a notable part in resolving a major industrial dispute. He retired in 1981 and then became an Industrial Relations Adviser to the Smith and Nephew Group until 1987. In 1990, two management textbooks by him, Meetings and Successful Business Presentations, were published by Croner.

He married Barbara Spencer in 1950 and they had two children. After they had grown up he resumed a more active connection with the Gurkhas, attending regimental reunions at Winchester. To his great joy he was able to visit the Regiment in India in 1998 and 2000 - the latter occasion being for the celebrations of the Diamond Jubilee of 3/9th Gurkha Rifles (Chindits).

After Barbara's death in 1996 Howell moved around to live in Stratford-upon-Avon, Bideford and finally Gatehouse of Fleet in the south west of Scotland where he was an active figure in the local community. In 2005, he published a book of short stories, Life Begins at...60?

His association with the Gurkhas was a defining experience of his life. In a letter to Maj Gen Kishan Singh in 2008, Howell - conscious that by one of the accidents of war he was never posted to the Burma front - spoke of "a - for me - proud record, if undistinguished, and hardly worthy of public display". But he was too hard on himself. What he described was his immense pride in having served in the Indian Army, with those marvellous Gurkhas and especially with the 9th Gurkha Rifles. It came from the heart.

[This obituary is based on a tribute by Richard and Janet Parry.]

Captain (QGO) Aitabahadur Limbu

Captain (QGO) (Retd) Aitabahadur Limbu, Area Recruiting Officer (East) for British Gurkhas Nepal, tragically died in a road traffic accident near Tinkune, Dharan, on 4 November 2010. His loss was a deep shock to everyone in British Gurkhas Nepal as well as serving and retired Gurkhas who knew him in the wider Brigade.

Aitabahadur was born on 10 March 1954 in the Dhankuta District in East Nepal. His father was in the Indian Army but left to work on the construction of the Koshi Barrage in the Sunsari District, close to Itahari, Aitabahadur's future home.

Aitabahadur enlisted in the Brigade of Gurkhas on 5 November 1972 at Ghopa Camp in Dharan, the Brigade recruiting, transit, pension paying and welfare centre in East Nepal. After completing his recruit training at the Training Depot Brigade of Gurkhas (TDBG) in Hong Kong, he joined the 2nd Battalion 2nd King Edward VII's Own Gurkha Rifles (The Sirmoor Rifles) in 1973 - unusual for an Easterner but driven by the cancellation of the amalgamation of 1/2 GR and 2/2 GR and the need to bring both battalions up to strength quickly. The respect and affection that 2/2 GR held for him can be measured in the many tributes that came from members of the Sirmoor Associations in the UK and Nepal on the news of his death.

During his early service Aitabahadur was a very good Khud Race and cross-country runner, regularly competing in Brigade competitions. His evident ability as a soldier meant that he rose steadily through the ranks in 2/2 GR, first in A Company and later in Support Company, where he was Second in Command of the Anti-Tank Platoon and then Officer Commanding Medium Machine Gun Platoon.

In 1994, during the formation of the Royal Gurkha Rifles, he was posted as 2IC Gurkha Demonstration Company at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. He then joined 2nd Battalion RGR, an Eastern Battalion, where he took over as 2IC C (Assault Engineer) Company, embracing with his customary enthusiasm a diversity of assault pioneer skills. He went on to be the Battalion Training Officer in Brunei, his last post before

he retired from the British Army as a Captain (QGO) in 1998, after 26 years of service.

After his retirement from the Brigade, Aitabahadur worked for a while as security officer on a Dutch cruise liner. In 2003, he joined the Gurkha Welfare Scheme, the field arm of the Gurkha Welfare Trust in Nepal, whose mission is to look after ex-Gurkha servicemen and their families in need. It was a dangerous time to be working in the middle hills of Nepal where a brutal Maoist insurgency was in full spate. Aitabahadur's pragmatic temperament and diplomacy were well suited to working in such a difficult environment, where the GWS faced pressure from both sides in the field. Aitabahadur served as the Area Welfare Officer for the Diktel and Dharan Area Welfare Centres in East Nepal.

In 2007 he joined Recruiting Cell, British Gurkhas Pokhara, as Area Recruiting Officer (East) and Officer Commanding the newly re-established British Gurkhas Dharan, inside the old Ghopa Camp. He was selected on the basis of his deep knowledge of and high reputation in East Nepal. As ARO (East) he was responsible for the selection of all recruits from East Nepal, who make up 50% of the Brigade of Gurkhas. The fact that he was a Limbu from Dhankuta and had spent so much time in the middle hills gave him a huge understanding of the many young men that flocked to the selection centre in Dharan. His sympathies were always with the young men from the hills who were following in his footsteps, although he realized that the realities of the modern British Army meant that successful recruits had to have high education standards and speak good English. All of us who worked with him in Recruiting Cell remember him as a professional, courteous and warm-hearted man. He will be greatly missed.

He married Santisara during his first long leave in Nepal in 1975 and they had three children, whose education and future were the central focus of Aitabahadur's life. He is survived by his father and step-mother, his wife, and their three grown-up children, his daughter Dipakumari, and his sons Kamal and Ratnakumar. All the children work or study in Melbourne, Australia, a fact that Aitabahadur was always proud of.

WOI Somprasad Gurung GSPS

Warrant Officer Class I Somprasad Gurung GSPS, who was serving at the Army Personnel Centre in Glasgow, died on 19 July 2011, aged 42. His funeral took place in Invicta Park Barracks, Maidstone, on 9 August 2011. Colonel Brigade of Gurkhas, Col D G Hayes CBE, delivered the eulogy which is reproduced below:

"On behalf of both our Colonel Commandant General Sir David Richards and the Colonel of the Gurkha Staff and Personnel Support Company, Brigadier Nicky Moffat, I express to both Padma and Srijan the heartfelt condolences of the Brigade on the loss of their dear husband and father, Warrant Officer

Class One Somprasad Gurung, who died in Gartnavel Hospital in Glasgow on 19 July after a short illness, with members of his family and colleagues by his bedside. He was 42 years old.

Padma and Sirjan have lost a husband and father who is the dearest to them, who cannot ever be replaced. The Brigade has lost one of its most highly respected Warrant Officers whose death leaves us bereft of his wise counsel and professional talent. He was the epitome of loyalty and dedication to his profession. He would have been a most able influence of reassurance within the Brigade of the future.

He was born in Bhoksing Deurali, in the Parbat district of Nepal on 12 May 1969. He joined the British Army in April 1989 as a Regimental Clerk with The Queen's Gurkha Engineers in Hong Kong.

His father Lt (QGO) Motiprasad Gurung had served for over 25 years with The Queen's Gurkha Engineers, before retiring in 1986. It is because of those close family regimental ties with The Queen's Gurkha Engineers that we are assembled here today.

During more than 22 years service, WOI Somprasad served in a wide variety of units, appointments and theatres, including South Korea, the Falkland Islands, Brunei, Fiji, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada and Kenya.

Prior to taking up his appointment at the Army Personnel Centre in Glasgow, he served with the Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment, during which time he deployed to Afghanistan for six months as the Regiment's Assistant Intelligence Officer.

He was selected for promotion to WOI for appointment as the Divisional Career Management Officer (DCMO) for the Brigade in May last year, and was the first and only warrant officer to fill this captain's post.

Since taking up this demanding, wide-ranging appointment, he discharged all his duties and responsibilities with aplomb, and was admired for his calm, methodical and ever-reliable approach and attitude. He was both respected and justifiably popular. He had intended to apply for a commission within the Brigade this year but his health precluded that.

As a younger man he was a competitive footballer. Like many of his generation of Gurkhas, he was also a keen golfer and renowned for the length of his powerful drives, which undoubtedly contributed to his winning of the inaugural Bardell Golf Cup in 2009.

WOI Somprasad had a quiet, unassuming nature, but could

Mr Jim Davies

Mr Jim Davies, who died in March 2011 aged 92, was a stalwart supporter of the Gurkha Welfare Trust, The Royal British Legion, and other service charities. He was a leading figure in Crewe after six decades of dedicated service to the community.

Crewe-born and bred, Mr Davies took his first job as an engineer at Crewe works. During the Second World War, he served in the Royal Engineers and took part in several campaigns, including Greece and Iraq. In 1999 he was awarded the Royal Engineers Gold Badge of Merit in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the service.

Mr Davies retired in 2001 and signed off from his community and charity work with a reunion at the Crosville Club in Crewe

be firm and forceful when the occasion required. He had a meticulous eye for detail. Despite his natural reserve, he had a ready sense of humour and a bright, engaging smile; it was seldom that there was not a twinkle in his eyes. A natural family man, he was very much a team player and he clearly relished and enjoyed being an active member of a small, close-knit community.

Within our Brigade of Gurkhas we are very proud of our Clerks. They make an invaluable contribution to the operational effectiveness of all our units. They provide the foundation for our unit's administration and have a direct influence on the lives of our soldiers and their families. WOI Somprasad was at the pinnacle of his expertise when his distinguished life was tragically cut short.

He never had the privilege to serve in the uniform of the GSPS. However, I do know from the conversations that I had with him when I consulted him regarding its formation, that he was a keen advocate of the GSPS concept.

He recognized in the Company the road for further opportunities for our Clerks. It was for them that he placed a priority to ensure they received the benefits of broader career advantages which had not been available to him. It was typical that his priority was the minding of the career future of others. Furthermore, he would have felt very humbled that Brigadier Nicky Moffat the first Colonel of the GSPS Company has joined us in our congregation here today.

WOI Somprasad's death in the prime of life and career was as untimely as it was unexpected. We have lost not only a conscientious and truly professional colleague, but a dear and well-loved brother and friend.

May the blessings of all our Gods wrap their arms around WOI Somprasad, and we should pray that they shall give comfort and strength to Padma and Sirjan, for now and the years ahead.

Amen - Jai Gurkha."

which doubled as a fundraiser for the Gurkha Welfare Trust and St Dunstan's.

In 2002 he spoke to the Crewe and Nantwich Chronicle about his experiences in the Second World War, and explained how supporting war veterans was a cause close to his heart. He said: "The more money raised for ex-servicemen, the more the Legion can do to improve their quality of life. These ex-soldiers give up so much to defend the freedom of people in this country and we can't let the memory of their sacrifice fade."

[This obituary is based on a tribute which appeared in the Crewe and Nantwich Chronicle and is reproduced here by kind permission of the Editor.]

Book Reviews

The Fame of the Name by Lieutenant Colonel J P Cross

The first three historical novels on Nepal published by JPX are: 'The Throne of Stone', 'The Restless Quest' and 'The Crown of Renown'. This is the fourth book of a planned quintet in his series based on the Nepali hill family that describes, with panache and great imagination, the start of Nepal's dynasty and the commencement of Gurkha service into the domain of the British.

Readers familiar with the historical period of the Empire will be pleased to hear that the base plot covers both the Indian Mutiny and Kipling's 'Great Game', in which Russia's struggle to extend her influence into Nepal, Tibet and Afghanistan is steadily resisted by Britain. It covers in detail the 1911 Delhi Durbar, following which arguably began the decline of British Imperial aspirations.

The Indian Mutiny gave an insight into the martial prowess of the Nepalese hill man that has led, thus far, to an unbroken bond in excess of 150 years. JPX interestingly reveals that the Aryan Nepalese considered themselves superior to the 'peasant' hill men and showed little interest in them other than as cannon fodder in their own army and to use them for whatever taxes could be raised for their own benefit - in short, a vastly exaggerated and unwarranted superiority complex. In turn this gave rise to the recruited hill stock taking the opportunity to expand their fame as soldiers, helped by and allied to their belief in and unwavering loyalty to the British.

Following the Mutiny of 1857, direct British rule took effect but this had to preserve a delicate balance, well described by JPX, to enhance its relationship with not only Nepal and Tibet, but also with the predator waiting in the wings, Russia.

Britain's 1879 invasion of Afghanistan is well covered, and the lessons of Roberts' invasion (seemingly lost on current political thinking).

For all those with an interest in Nepal, the Gurkhas, India and the Far East this book is a 'must'. The Far East? Yes, the story weaves its way to Malaya - and here extraordinary research keeps the reader spellbound in recounting the successful Japanese invasion of the country told in detail from both sides. JPX also reveals, for the first time, the hitherto untold episode of the interaction between the late Lieutenant Colonel Charles Wylie,

I GR & 10 GR, and Captain Mohan Singh 1/14th Punjab Regiment, the latter subsequently captured and recruited by the Japanese into the infamous Indian National Army (INA). Had this interaction between Wylie and Singh, illustrated rivetingly by JPX, been revealed in the formal post-war inquiry and potential courts martial of the INA leadership, then it is conjecture that the death penalty may well have been imposed on certain Indian Army traitors who defected to the INA, in spite of the views of Pandit Nehru.

Healthy and justifiable criticism of Britain's handover resulting in the partition of India in 1947, together with the role played by Lord Mountbatten, is skilfully analysed and exposed.

One can but wonder how JPX, at an age well in excess of four score, manages to maintain a plot full of intrigue, laced with detailed research that breathes reality into a novel.

As I have said, for all those readers who have an interest in Nepal, the Gurkhas, India and the Far East, this historical novel is indeed a 'must'.

Reviewed by Peter Quantrill

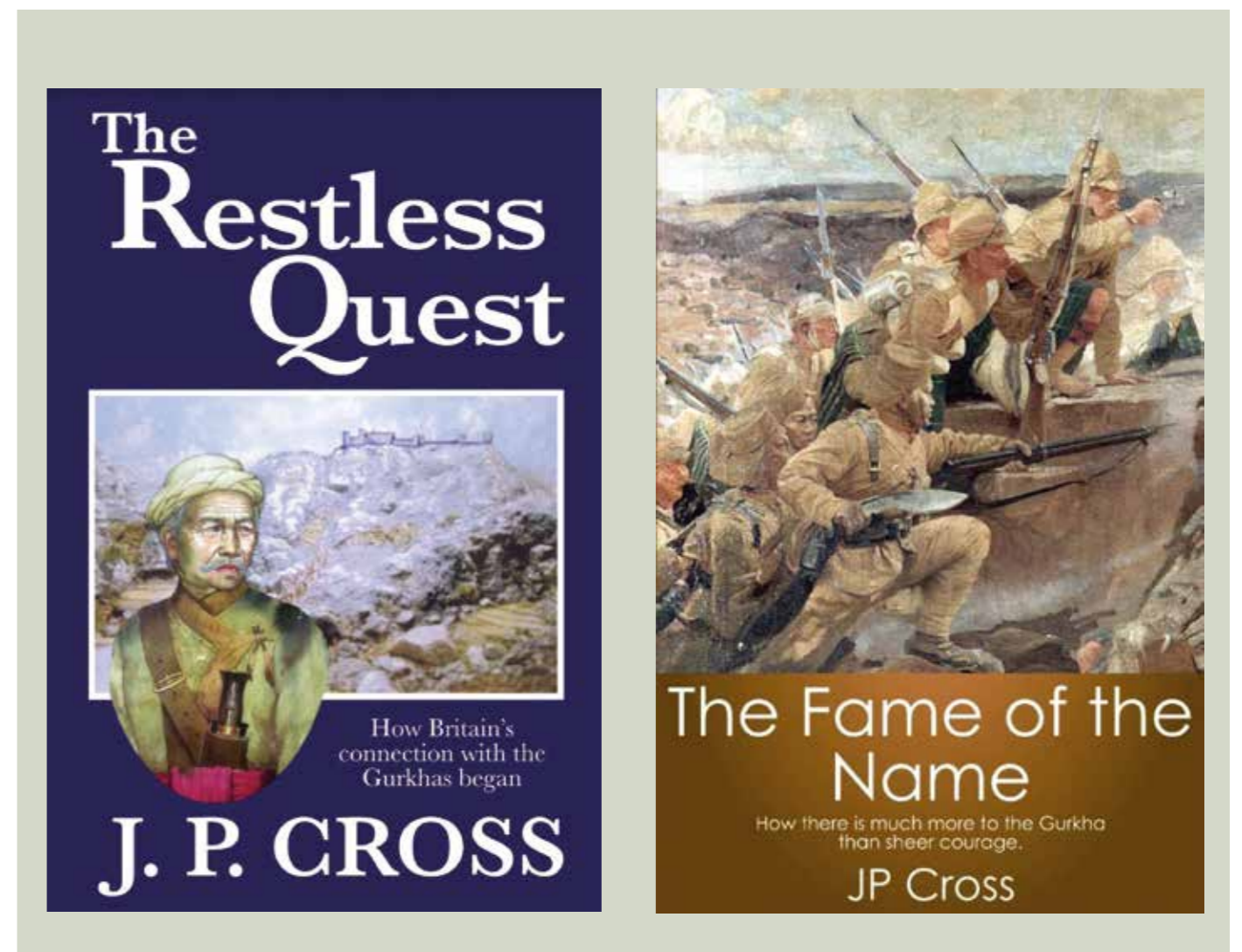
TWO BOOKS ABOUT THE GURKHAS By Lieutenant Colonel J P Cross

Few people are better qualified to write about the genius of the Gurkha than J P Cross. All but three of his 39 years in the British army were served with the Gurkhas and since retirement he has lived permanently in Nepal.

The Restless Quest covers a 70 year period leading up to the Anglo Nepal War of 1814-16. The story of the legendary Bhakti Thapa tells how the hill men of Nepal and the British in India originally developed a great respect for each other.

The Fame of the Name takes the story from the 1860s through to the end of World War II. The Gurkhas are justly famed for endurance, discipline and above all courage in battle,

[The Fame of the Name is published by Blenheim Press Limited, Codicote Innovation Centre, St Albans Road, Codicote, Herts SG4 8WH. ISBN: 978-1-906302-22-1. Price £19.99 (plus P & P). If purchased with The Restless Quest (normal price £15), there is a special reduced price of £24.95 (plus P & P) for both books together.]



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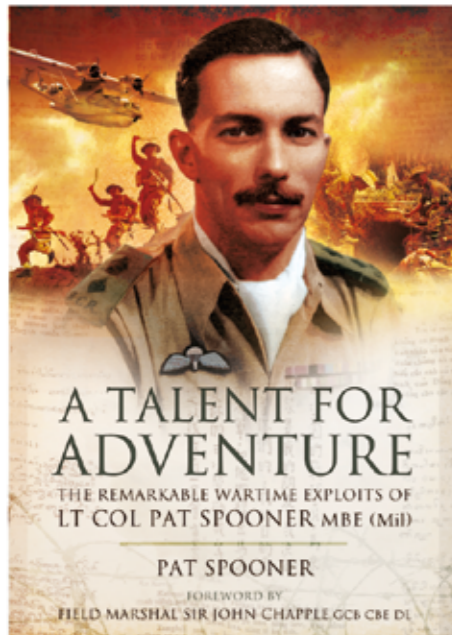
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Pat Spooner was born in 1920 in Simla, India, where his father was chaplain general. In 1939 he was commissioned from Sandhurst into the 8th Gurkha Rifles with whom he served in Iraq, Syria, Egypt and the Western Desert before being captured near Tobruk. He retired in 1948 as an honorary lieutenant colonel, since when he has enjoyed a multifarious and colourful career in the United States and England.

9781848848108 • Illustrated • Hardback • RRP £19.99 • 256 pages

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Acknowledgements

The editorial team express their sincere gratitude to all those who have contributed articles and photographs to this edition of *The Kukri*. Special thanks are due to the Design Studio Army Headquarters, to Major John Burlison and Mrs Jane Spurr who assisted with the proof-reading, and to our printers CDS.

Editor	Mr S L Lord
Assistant Editor	Mrs J Patterson
Designed by	Design Studio Army Headquarters Ramillies Building Marlborough Lines Monxton Road Andover Hampshire SP11 8HJ
Printed by	Corporate Document Services

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