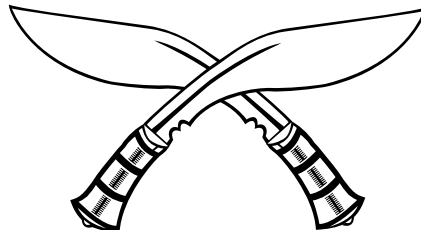


The Kukri



The Journal of
The Brigade of Gurkhas
2008



The Kukri

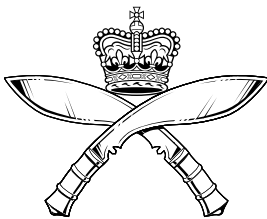
NUMBER 60

December 2008

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Headquarters Brigade of Gurkhas
Airfield Camp, Netheravon
SP4 9SF
United Kingdom

The Journal of The Brigade of Gurkhas 2008



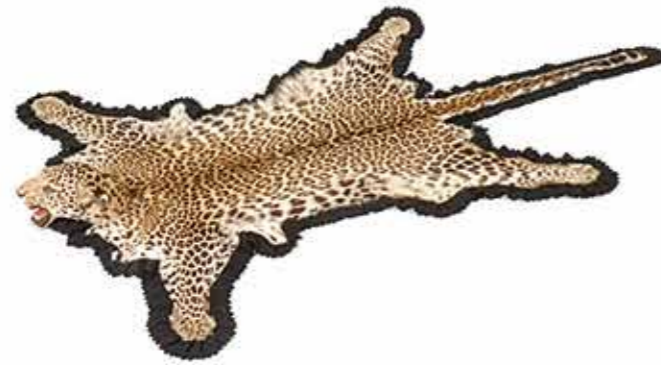
Front Cover
Queen's Gurkha Orderly Officers
Capt Khusiman Gurung RGR and Capt Sovitbahadur Hamal Thakuri QOGLR

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Editorial

"As the Warriors closed to the compounds they engaged with 30mm HE and chaingun supported by B Company snipers and the Fire Support Group, and used vehicles to breach walls before dismounting RGR and PWRR infantry to clear room to room with grenades and small arms fire. This aggressive dangerous work continued until after last light ..." This extract from Lt Col Chris Darby's article on the first three months of the 2nd Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles' tour in Afghanistan gives an arresting impression of the intensity of the operations on which they are engaged and of their bravery and fighting skill. There is much else in the same vein in the rest of the article – and in the 1st Battalion's 'haul down report', by their CO Lt Col Jonny Bourne, on their earlier tour on Operation HERRICK. Both of these accounts are reproduced in full in this edition of The Kukri, and there are further impressive and vivid articles by The Queen's Gurkha Engineers, Queen's Gurkha Signals and The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment which reflect a year in which the operational tempo of the Brigade and the wider Army has never slackened.

The operations have achieved considerable success. The Gurkha has shown himself, once again, to be especially well-adapted to the rapidly changing requirements of a counter-insurgency campaign. CO 1 RGR writes that: "The demands on the individual soldier, Officer and Rifleman alike, have been significant and this role has confirmed that we are now firmly rooted in the age of the 'Strategic Rifleman'. Across the Battle Group individuals have required the skills to enable them to live in and move around remote and austere terrain, with limited resupply, postured all at once to fight belligerents, to search out intelligence, to engage with the ordinary Afghan, and above all, to be mindful that in all they do they will be affecting perceptions – to the good or bad of wider mission success. Physical, mental and moral robustness have proved to be essential qualities." There is the clear appreciation that, notwithstanding the relentless fighting necessary against a ruthless enemy, the critical battle will be won in the hearts of men. As Capt Godwin says in his article on the importance of 'influence' – of winning and retaining local support – "it is difficult to maintain credibility when asking a man how ISAF can improve his life when standing in the rubble of his own house."

One more extract, from the article on a raid carried out by B Company 2 RGR, gives a further illustration of the character of the operations – and of the part being played by women soldiers in Afghanistan. The company is making a night march to its objective. "The main body moved more than one kilometre north before Cpl Begindradal turned east and back towards the Wadi. The second crossing proved to be more interesting because, being further north and with less water diverted to irrigation, the volume and speed of the flow was greater than earlier. As our female attack dog handler LCpl Lockhart crossed, Brit, her large black German Shepherd, was swept away down the river, only to be stopped on the end of his lead. As she and the three soldiers with her pulled Brit back in, the rest of the snake halted in the light of the rising moon and waited for their struggle to end. Once the soaking dog and handler were across..." Gentlemen of England now a-bed (editors of The Kukri among

them) shall think themselves accursed they were not there. We can only read this and other descriptions of courage and grit with the deepest admiration.

The achievements of units of the Brigade have been recognized by a range of honours and awards, including an operational OBE and five MCs. But inevitably success has come at a cost. In the first half of their tour, 2 RGR lost CSgt Krishnabhadur Dura and Rfn Yubraj Rai killed in action, to add to 1 RGR's loss of Maj Lex Roberts recorded in the 2007 edition of The Kukri. Officers and men have also been seriously wounded.

Courage and sacrifice have characterized the Brigade throughout its proud service to the Crown. In March 2008, we mourned the passing of a man who symbolized Gurkha valour in its highest form - Havildar Bhanbhagta Gurung VC. His Victoria Cross citation – which speaks of "outstanding bravery and a complete disregard for his own safety" – is reproduced in this Kukri, as is an obituary which first appeared in The Times. Also in 2008, a memorial was unveiled in San Marino to the memory of Rfn Sherbahadur Thapa VC. Readers will be interested in the article on this by the President of the 9 GR Association who was present at the unveiling – and at the battle commemorated. Meanwhile, the three surviving Gurkha VCs – Capt Rambahadur Limbu VC, Hon Lt (QGO) Tulbahadur Pun VC and Havildar Lacchiman Gurung VC – all attended the 2008 reunion of the VC/GC Association in London. After the reunion, Lacchiman VC took up residence in the UK, close to Tulbahadur VC in Hounslow (where they both have received support from the local council, the Department for Works and Pensions, the Service charities, the 6 GR Association (in the case of Tulbahadur) and HQBG's Gurkha Welfare Support Office).

The bravery and endurance, the discipline and loyalty, of the Gurkha – and his humour and good nature – are the themes of a new history of the Brigade written by Brigadier CJD Bullock, entitled 'Britain's Gurkhas', which will be published in November 2009. In his foreword to this book, the Colonel Commandant, General Sir David Richards, observes that: "Many fine writers and historians have turned their attention to the history of the Brigade of Gurkhas, but surely none have been better qualified to address the subject than Brigadier Christopher Bullock. He knows the Brigade in all weathers, and from many points of view. He writes, therefore, with unsurpassed authority – and with a very warm but informed regard for Gurkhas". General Richards goes on to say that: "I wholeheartedly commend Brigadier Bullock's book as our authorized history to anyone who wishes to know more about our splendid soldiers. You will be left in no doubt that Britain is fortunate indeed to have the Gurkhas as our friends and comrades". Readers of The Kukri will echo these sentiments and will want to get hold of a copy of 'Britain's Gurkhas' if they have not already placed an order. It covers the whole span of the Brigade's history from the Anglo-Nepal wars to the end of 2 RGR's tour of Afghanistan in April/May 2009. Details can be obtained from Third Millennium Publishing (Tel 0207 336 0144, email www.tmilt.com).

Last year's Kukri reported the completion of the comprehensive review of Gurkha Terms and Conditions of Service. Progress on its implementation, and other important developments in the Brigade, are covered in the Colonel Commandant's Report to the President of Nepal. Readers will note with satisfaction that recruiting remains so buoyant (17,000 applicants for 230 places in 2008) and, crucially, that the new Maoist-led coalition government has indicated that recruitment can continue for the time being and that substantive discussions will be held at the appropriate time. (For a perspicacious overview of the political situation in Nepal see the British Gurkhas Nepal chapter.)

The Colonel Commandant's report also covers proposals for the recruitment of Nepalese women in 2010, and the current 'bulge' in Gurkha manpower. Among other things, the 'bulge' is enabling the Brigade to raise up to four infantry reinforcement companies – the first of these (previously D now F (Tamandu) Company 2 RGR) was formed in 2006 and is deploying to Afghanistan again in April 2009 as part of 19 Light Brigade, while the second (G (Tobruk) Company) formed-up in December 2008 as part of 1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment.

The Corps units have also continued to develop. The Queen's Gurkha Engineers have formed a mechanized troop in 33 Squadron Royal Engineers, to add to the Commando troop in 59 Commando Engineer Squadron RE. If plans for a third troop in 2011 mature, this may provide QGE with the basis for a third squadron. Meanwhile, Queen's Gurkha Signals are focussing on expanding the Gurkha contribution to 18 (UK Special Forces) Signals Regiment, and consideration is being given to forming a further QOGLR supply squadron as part of 9 Supply Regiment, another very encouraging development in The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment's 50th Anniversary year.

2008 saw the poignant disbandment of four more of the UK-based regimental associations of the regiments of Gurkha Rifles which remained in the Indian Army after 1947 – although of course the Regiments themselves continue to go from strength to strength in India. The 4th Prince of Wales's Own Gurkha Rifles Officers' Association disbanded in 2007, and the 3rd Queen Alexandra's Own Gurkha Rifles Officers' Association, the 5th Royal Gurkha Rifles (Frontier Force) Regimental Association, the 8th Gurkha Rifles Regimental Association, and the 9th Gurkha Rifles Regimental Association followed them in 2008. A chapter is devoted to articles and speeches marking their passing. The 1st King George V's Own Gurkha Rifles (The Malaun Regiment) Regimental Association continues for a while longer but they are holding a final reunion in May 2009.

The former members of the disbanded associations remain members of the Gurkha Brigade Association as individuals and will continue to be able to meet at the Annual Memorial Service and Reunion at Sandhurst in June and the GBA events which are held each November on the Thursday before Remembrance Sunday – the simple ceremony at the Brigade plot at the Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey followed by the Royal British Legion Service and Royal Inspection, the wreath-laying at the Gurkha Statue in Whitehall and the Officers' Dinner at the Army & Navy Club in the evening. The Secretary GBA will try to

ensure that all these former members receive details of the GBA programme in a circular in January or February each year.

The GBA and Regimental Associations sponsored another All Ranks Reunion in July 2008, superbly hosted by the Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment in Aldershot, following the Nepal Cup Final. This concluded with a splendid performance by the Brigade Band and was much enjoyed by all the serving and retired members of the Brigade who attended. A similar reunion is planned for 26 June 2009.

There is little in this edition about current controversies bearing on the retired Brigade, not least because, by the time it is published, events will have moved on – particularly as regards immigration rules for Gurkhas who retired before 1997. However, the present welfare arrangements in the UK are covered in the article on the Gurkha Welfare Support Office, and we have a detailed report from the Gurkha Welfare Scheme on its superb work in Nepal – where the paramount need remains.

This editorial would be incomplete were it not to refer to the retirement of an exceptionally distinguished and devoted servant of the Brigade of Gurkhas – Col Roger Willsher, the SO2 Finance in HQBG. He set a matchless example of cheerful, professional, unselfish commitment to the Brigade and to the Gurkha soldier – and invariably worked the most appallingly long hours of overtime. Colonel BG paid eloquent tribute to him at a special dinner in April, attended by the Colonel Commandant and President GBA, and his speech is reproduced in this journal.

We are lucky, again, to have received several lively and absorbing individual articles, including Lt Gen Sir Peter Duffell's story of a strange encounter on the Hong Kong border and Lt Col Adrian Griffith on his abortive attempts to get to Kohima. Readers may well feel we could do with more material of this kind and the editor would be most grateful for contributions for Kukri 2009 ('deadline' 18 December 09).

We hope that the foregoing paragraphs will have given readers an idea of the weight and variety of the articles to be found in these pages; and we trust that, overall, The Kukri 2008 contains ample evidence of the substantial contribution which the Brigade of Gurkhas continues to make to the Army and to the Nation.

Report To The Right Honourable Doctor Ram Baran Yadav, President Of The Federal Democratic Republic Of Nepal

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

Honourable President

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

The operational tempo of the Brigade of Gurkhas remains extremely high. Gurkha units are contributing to all major operations being undertaken by the British Army. Over the past 12 months Brigade of Gurkhas units have been committed to Afghanistan, Iraq, Balkans, Cyprus and Kuwait; currently over 25% of the Brigade strength is deployed on operations mainly in Afghanistan. I am delighted to report that all members of the Brigade continue to achieve success on operations in very challenging circumstances. The military capability the Gurkhas deliver is highly regarded and valued. Concurrently the Brigade continues to excel in all other aspects of British Army life including performance on career courses, military and adventurous training and sporting events where Gurkhas have achieved further excellent results.

It is with deep regret that I reflect on the two tragic deaths of Gurkha soldiers whilst deployed on operations in Afghanistan. Rifleman Yubraj Rai of the 2nd Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles, died on 4 November 2008 as a result of a gun shot wound when his patrol came under direct enemy fire, 4 kilometres South East of Musa Qul'eh in Helmand Province. Rifleman Yubraj's body was repatriated to Nepal to enable the last rites to be carried out by his family in his home village in Diktel. Colour Sergeant Krishnabhadur Dura, also of the 2nd Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles, died on 15 November 2008 as a result of injuries sustained when the military vehicle in which he was travelling, was struck by an explosive device East of Dagan Musa Qul'eh in Helmand Province. Colour Sergeant Krishnabhadur's body was repatriated to Nepal on 27 November 2008, and flown direct to his home village of Bholetar in Lamjung District for cremation by his family. Upon the request of his wife, the late Colour Sergeant Krishnabhadur's ashes were brought to the United Kingdom



A British Gurkha on operations in Afghanistan – where the Gurkhas' language and cultural affinity enables them to engage with and influence the local community



Gurkha Recruits Passing Out Parade 2008, Catterick North Yorkshire



Gurkha Sappers building a bridge in Iraq

for interment at our Military Cemetery close to his barracks here in UK. We are caring for his wife and her two daughters, as they wish to remain in the UK for the time being.

Recruiting for the Brigade remains strong with an application rate of more than 17,000 in Nepal last year from which 230 male recruits were selected at our Depot in Pokhara. They have started their training in the United Kingdom. Our aim is to continue to maintain parity of opportunity by recruiting in both the east and west of Nepal. We have been encouraged by your Government's indication that our recruiting can continue; we look forward to engaging in substantive discussions at an appropriate time.

In my report last year, I referred to the Gurkha Terms and Conditions of Service (GTACOS) Review for the serving personnel in the Brigade of Gurkhas. You will be pleased to note that British Gurkhas now serve under the same Terms and Conditions of Service as their British counterparts whilst retaining the structure of the Brigade. The endorsement of the revised GTACOS, on which we have kept your Government fully informed, has meant implementing broad and very positive improvements for our serving Gurkhas. As part of our Government's ongoing effort to introduce these changes, I am delighted to inform you that the implementation programme is progressing well and is on schedule to conclude by 2012.

A significant aspect of the GTACOS implementation plan is to reflect the culture and customs of Nepal. For example we have completed the recruitment process of two further Buddhist Religious Teachers (RTs) in Nepal, and our Brigade now has 6 Hindu RTs and 3 Buddhist RTs stationed either in the UK or Brunei with the further 2 Buddhists yet to join us. Additionally, further work has been conducted in the planning for Nepalese females to be recruited into the Brigade. We continue to consider this issue in depth. Further work is in hand to ensure that our Gurkha recruit selection and training standards are set appropriately.

The revised GTACOS offered Gurkhas the choice to choose one of the two UK Armed Forces Pension Schemes

available to British officers and soldiers. This opportunity brought with it the requirement for Gurkhas to transfer to the full British engagement and with that the ability for soldiers to serve up to 22 years, which also enables them to qualify for an immediate pension under the UK Armed Forces Pension Scheme. This has caused the Brigade to grow significantly and we currently have upward of 600 Gurkha all ranks over and above the current liability of 2993.

We are now making good use of this additional Gurkha manpower, for example by providing Gurkhas who have served 5 years in the Brigade with the opportunity to serve in other parts of the Army. We have also created 3 Gurkha Reinforcement Companies to support the wider Infantry. We will need to adjust the future recruit intakes as we have done on a number of times in the past, to take account of the future structure of the Brigade. We shall of course inform your Government of such changes.

I understand discussions continue between the UK Government and 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 would hope that this work can be brought to a positive conclusion.

It has now been nearly 3 years since the introduction of the enhanced Gurkha Married Accompanied Service (GMAS) policy which took effect in April 2006. The policy permits all married ranks of the Brigade who have served for an initial 3 years within the British Army to serve accompanied. Service accommodation is allocated to Gurkhas and their families under Tri-Service regulations that apply to all members of the British Armed Forces. Previously married accompanied service was restricted. Whilst GMAS has been almost entirely delivered in most parts of the UK where Gurkhas are stationed, the large numbers of houses required has meant that delivery in these locations has been slower than we would have desired. The requirement for additional housing has placed pressure on our resources, but good progress is being made in the delivery of additional married quarters.



The Prime Minister The Right Honourable Gordon Brown's visit to 2 RGR



A Coy 2 RGR on patrol in Gereshk in Afghanistan

I am pleased to report that allocation of service accommodation in UK will be complete by August 2009. Likewise, there has been substantial progress made for our Infantry Battalions stationed in Brunei. The Brunei Garrison Estate Development Plan (EDP) is a major project building new barracks and married quarters and on current projection, GMAS delivery is likely to be achieved by February 2010, two years ahead of the forecast schedule.

As Chairman of the Trustees of the Gurkha Welfare Trust, I am pleased to report that the Trust, through its field arm in Nepal, the Gurkha Welfare Scheme, continues to provide essential welfare support to all ex-members of the Brigade of Gurkhas and their dependants in Nepal who are in need. In Financial Year 2007/08 the cost of this support exceeded £8,000,000, almost all of which was raised by public donation. The British Government provides funds in support of the Trust's administrative costs in Nepal, and also in support of the Trust's Rural Water and Sanitation Programme.

The Trust's priority remains the provision of a monthly welfare pension to the 10,200 or so ex-members of the Brigade and their widows who have no alternative source of income. In addition we also maintain a comprehensive medical scheme that provides both immediate and long-term medical support, the former through the Trust's network of Area Welfare Centres, the latter by the use of local hospitals. Other activities include the construction of schools, the provision of student grants in support of education and financial support for those ex-members of the Brigade who have to rebuild their lives after natural disaster.

This extensive welfare programme is enhanced by the Trust's focus on the provision of water to isolated rural communities. In partnership with the British Government's Department for International Development, and against the United Nations' Millennium Development goal to increase

access to sustainable water supplies and sanitation, in Financial Year 2007/08 the Trust undertook 86 water projects bringing fresh drinking water to over 14,000 people. The Trust is actively seeking ways in which its activities can adjust to changing welfare needs.

In the coming months the Trust will undertake an ambitious construction programme to build residential home facilities for those elderly ex-servicemen and their widows who are too old and frail to fend for themselves. These facilities will provide a dignified environment centred on a culture of respect and care for the elderly. The Trust's extensive activities reflect the British Government's continued commitment to the welfare of all Gurkha ex-servicemen in Nepal and the British public's high regard for the Gurkha soldier and his welfare in retirement. The Trust remains extremely grateful for the support of the Government of Nepal, through the Brigade of Gurkhas Welfare Co-ordination Committee, to enable it to carry out its wide range of welfare activities.

In conclusion, I am delighted to be able to reassure you that despite ongoing change and high operational tempo, the Brigade of Gurkhas remains in extremely good heart and morale is high. The Gurkha soldier continues to enjoy the undiminished support and praise of the British Government and British public. The Brigade remains an important component of the current and future British Army and its soldiers continue to acquit themselves with great distinction across the breadth of British Army life, while remaining exceptional ambassadors of Nepal.

Sir David Richards
General
Colonel Commandant Brigade of Gurkhas
February 2009

Honours and Awards

Queen's Birthday Honours List 2008

MVO

Capt Khusiman Gurung RGR
Capt Sovitbahadur Hamal Thakuri QOGLR

Operational Honours List

OBE

Lt Col A J P Bourne MBE RGR

MC

Maj P R G Pitchfork RGR
Maj D F Reid RAMC
LCpl Mohansingh Tangnami RGR
LCpl Agnish Thapa RGR
Rfn Bhimbahadur Gurung RGR

MiD

Maj M E Milford RIFLES (Seconded to 1 RGR)
Lt J A E E Jeffcoat RGR
Rfn Omprakash Ale RGR

QCVS (Afghanistan)

Lt Col R Wardlaw QGE
Maj G M Strickland RGR
Capt Devkumar Gurung QGE

JT COMDS Commendations (Afghanistan)

Capt D T Pack RGR
Capt Yambahadur Rana RGR
Lt EV Simpson RGR
Sgt Premkaji Gurung RGR
Cpl Dalbahadur Thapa RGR
Cpl Chandraprasad Lawati QGE
Cpl Basantajang Gurung RGR
LCpl Deepak Tamang QGE
Rfn Lalldhoj Gurung RGR
Rfn Padam Shrees RGR
Rfn Hombahadur Purja RGR

Honours and Awards (continued)

COMBRITFOR Commendations (Afghanistan)

CSgt Babindra Gurung RGR
 CSgt Jiwan Pun RGR
 Sgt Jiwan Rai QGE
 Sgt Ramsharan Shrestha RGR
 Cpl Deepakkumar Gurung RGR
 Cpl Dipendra Malla RGR
 LCpl Ambarbahadur Khadka RGR
 LCpl Sanjib Thapa Magar RGR
 LCpl Lalbahadur Pulami QGE
 LCpl Chandrabahadur Pun QGE
 Rfn Kulprasad Gurung RGR
 Rfn Kisan Pariyar RGR
 Rfn Novraj Gurung RGR
 Spr Nirmal Purja QGE

Operations

1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles

OP HERRICK 7, Afghanistan Commanding Officer's Haul-Down Report

By Lt Col A J P Bourne OBE

The 1st Battalion of The Royal Gurkha Rifles is now complete in Brunei having undertaken a tour of duty in Afghanistan (Operation HERRICK 7) between September 2007 and April 2008. The deployment of 1 RGR to Afghanistan represented the long overdue employment of a Gurkha Battle Group in a complex, contemporary, joint, inter-agency and multinational theatre of operations. The Battalion was fortunate to experience the sort of operation that any light infantry battalion would aspire to. The purpose of this report is to provide you with a flavour of what we encountered.

The Battalion had two distinct roles. The bulk of the force, less B Company, formed the core of the Regional Battle Group (South) (RBG (S)) – a manoeuvre asset available to the commander for employment across the entire region of southern Afghanistan, covering the provinces of Kandahar, Uruzgan, Zabul and Helmand. B Company deployed to Garmsir, in Helmand – initially under command of the Household Cavalry Regiment – as part of Battle Group (South), but latterly in an independent context. This report will initially concentrate on the RBG(S) element, turning to B Company later.

The RBG (S) role offers considerable national opportunities to the UK and Coalition – including the extension of the 'British Brand' beyond Helmand and a means to influence regional NATO campaign coherence. 1 RGR inherited the RBG (S) role from The First Battalion, The Royal Welsh Regiment, but because the latter had been at company strength and we delivered capability at battalion level, we were breaking new ground throughout. As a result, whilst it was always our intention to complete Operation HERRICK 7 having advanced the NATO campaign in Southern Afghanistan, we were also focused on advising the UK on how the RBG (S) could be optimized as a Battle Group capability, delivering operational effect at the regional level. By the end of our tour, we were being employed as a 'Second Echelon' Battle Group which created the conditions for the expansion of the Afghan Government and Coalition influence through surge operations. As the RBG (S), 1 RGR was the vanguard capability and a central pillar in delivering the regional security mission given the paucity of International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) troops, the vast majority of which are 'provincially fixed'. We were Regional Command (South)'s (RC (S)) only organic force element capable of giving tangible meaning to the phrase 'regional manoeuvre'. The RBG (S) was required to conduct full spectrum operations ranging from conventional warfighting at one end, to classic 'hearts and minds' (commonly known as 'Influence')

at the other end. These operations ranged from the defeat of massed insurgent groupings to the development of indigenous security capacity. During the tour, the RBG (S) element of 1 RGR completed a total of eleven operations across the region, under command of British, Dutch, Canadian and Romanian Task Forces (TFs).

Operations followed some common themes. The tempo was high and the emphasis was on versatility. All operations were joint and multinational in nature, right down to platoon level, incorporating Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) with the purpose of promoting indigenous security capabilities. The environment was harsh, and the pursuit of the enemy was demanding. Operations required robustness, endurance and perseverance in extreme conditions. The battlefield was well-suited to light infantry. The enemy was best engaged at close quarters by manoeuvre to his rear, so threatening his perceived safe line of escape and concurrently reducing the risk of collateral damage. Covert movement was optimized at night. But the enemy would shift to asymmetric attacks as soon as he assessed that he was overmatched, primarily through Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). On occasions, the Battle Group moved into areas never previously visited by Coalition Forces, deploying by air assault, air insertion, vehicles and by foot – the emphasis throughout being on manoeuvre and agility. All Arms integration was critical, in order to enable such manoeuvre. Many of these All Arms elements were from other nations, lending a distinctly Coalition quality to the Battle Grouping that occurred for each operation. Integrating and unifying the efforts of the wide range of agencies operating in RC (S), in order to harness the enormous potential of Coalition Forces when combined with the Afghans, required the flexibility at Battle Group level to regularly restructure. Opportunities to have decisive effect on a highly mobile insurgent were fleeting and unconventional, and initiative was required at all levels. The emphasis was on operational and tactical agility and dealing with complex expeditionary operations. Ground commanders needed to be alert to changes in atmospheric conditions and adapt their tactics accordingly. Our men had to be able to switch from high intensity fighting to 'Influence', and back again. The range of intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and strike assets available to the Battle Group was considerable. In my experience these assets were until relatively recently more commonly associated with brigade/divisional-level operations. Coordination of these supporting assets was complex and technical, and their combined effect was mission-critical. So challenges were not

limited to those forward, in the field; the headquarters had to be flexible in developing ways to make best use of the Battle Group's capabilities. However, we were clear from the start that whilst the Battle Group had to be postured such that it could aggressively seek out and fight the enemy, this was always with a view to applying force in order to create the time and space for the advancement of the other Lines of Development, focussing primarily on winning the consent of local people, and doing so on an enduring basis.

The Battalion, less B Company and our Rear Party, left Brunei in early September last year. In the days preceding our flights, it rapidly became apparent that we would be thrown straight into the thick of things. Our first tasking was in support of the British Task Force in Helmand. We were given the task of leading a thrust into a major Taliban stronghold that ran through the heavily cultivated area known as the 'Green Zone' that flanked the River Helmand, between Geresk and Sangin. The TF operation was timed to coincide with the handover between 12 Mechanised Brigade and 52 Highland Brigade. We were well supported. The Right Flank of The Scots Guards had been holding an area in the desert just outside the Green Zone against heavy attacks and this gave us an ideal launching point for our assault. Against the backdrop of a very well developed enemy surveillance capability (commonly civilians on motorcycles communicating with their Taliban commanders either by mobile phone, smoke or light signals), we knew that we could not disguise our main movement into the area, so we deployed to the base that had been secured by The Scots Guards by vehicle and by helicopter. It was a sobering time. Within five days of arriving in Theatre, our men were in contact with the enemy and as we were building up forces for the assault, two vehicles were hit by improvised explosive devices. In one of these a Royal Engineer, Lance Corporal Ivano Violino, was tragically killed.

The assault began just after midnight with a feint by the Warrior Armoured Fighting Vehicles of The Scots Guards. They suppressed the known enemy positions as two Companies of Gurkhas, led by a bridging party from The Queen's Gurkha Engineers (QGE), moved on foot through the darkness to a wide canal that bounded the 'Green Zone'. The small footbridge was inserted, and in the space of an hour, we had the best part of a battalion of Gurkhas moving undetected through the rear of the Taliban defences. I would wager that this was the first time for many years that so many units from the Brigade of Gurkhas were operating alongside one another in combat – as well as the QGE elements, I had Gurkha signallers with me in my tactical headquarters and Gurkha logisticians manning the sangars in the Forward Operating Base just 300 metres to the rear of the bridging area. At dawn, the I RGR Companies revealed themselves and then began clearing through the villages of Hyderabad and Mirmandab. C Company in particular found themselves faced with resistance as enemy snipers engaged their advance. However, they were able to combine some good infantry manoeuvre with employment of air support to continue to push on steadily. The Battalion spent about ten days in the Green Zone after that initial insertion. We switched rapidly between fighting and reassuring, and back again as the situation

demanding. The local population had been absent from the area for some time before our assault, but once it became clear that we had driven out the Taliban, they began to return rapidly. We did our best to assist them by providing medical support and advice on security, but we rapidly learnt that this was an area to which we needed to devote more effort if we were to achieve longer term progress. Given the nature of our role, which was necessarily transitory, this was going to require investment by the ground holding Task Force. This was a theme that we developed constantly throughout the remainder of our tour. It was on this operation that we really cut our teeth. When I addressed the Battle Group the afternoon before we broke into the Green Zone, I was struck by the veil of apprehension evident on almost all of the faces looking back at me. This was entirely understandable; for the majority it was the first occasion they were going to be in combat. By the end of the operation, many had been in contact and prevailed, they had seen comrades go down but successfully evacuated, and all had witnessed the benefits of their varied training. There was a real buzz as we gathered the force for recovery to Kandahar Airfield.

We were brought up short a day later when we suffered what turned out to be our only death on the tour, Major Alexis Roberts (known to us as 'Lex' and lately an instructor at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst where he was His Royal Highness Prince William's Platoon Commander). On conclusion of the operation, he was leading the vehicle convoy back to Kandahar Airfield when his vehicle was hit by an IED that was detonated via a hidden command wire as he passed by. His death was a blow to us all. He was everything that we Gurkha British Officers aspire to be – warm hearted, caring and thoroughly professional. A true Gurkha, loved by his men. We made it our goal to honour his sacrifice during the remainder of the tour, and we remain committed to support the wife and two young daughters that he left behind.

B Company, to which His Royal Highness, Prince Harry was attached, arrived in Theatre at this point, deploying to Garmsir one month after the I RGR main body. I will cover their tour in more detail later.

Whilst B Company was settling in to Garmsir, the rest of the Battalion was preparing for what was to prove our largest operation of the tour. The Dutch contingent, based in Tarin Kowt, had been experiencing problems with a sizeable group of Taliban operating freely from a natural sanctuary in the Baluchi Valley. Again, this involved a strip of Green Zone, but this time it was flanked by steep, high mountains. The Taliban had made regular forays out of this sanctuary, and in the previous eighteen months had managed to seize several police posts and threaten the Coalition forces in the area. We were committed to the most complex operation that the Dutch had planned in Afghanistan – their Commander speculated that it was their biggest operation anywhere for decades. Initially we were to clear a well established enemy from the village of Kala Kala at the mouth of the valley, before then advancing to clear several other influential villages where the enemy enjoyed complete freedom. We were supported on this operation not only by extra British Forces in

the guise of a company from The Royal Welsh based in Cyprus and the Royal Marines with their Armoured Viking vehicles but also by American, Canadian, Dutch and Afghan forces.

It was clear that we needed to gain surprise, so we opted for an insertion by helicopter on the darkest night. As we carried out our detailed preparation, the Australian Special Air Service was on the ground, gathering information for us, and securing our helicopter landing site. When the moment came, we launched in eight waves of five aircraft, landing the assault force in a small field 200 metres to the rear of the enemy defensive positions in Kala Kala. The remainder of the force was variously inserted into an observation post on the dominating high ground to the south, to command locations and fire support bases. Thankfully, we achieved the surprise we needed, and it was not until first light that the Taliban gained enough of an understanding of the situation to start the fight. We were in a position of considerable advantage by then, and although he fought hard for the next three days, our enemy never managed to regain the initiative. On one occasion, however, Sergeant Matthew Locke from the Australian Special Air Service was mortally wounded by enemy fire. Our men responded with considerable valour, dashing forward under fire over open ground, but we lost Sergeant Locke as he was being flown out of the battle. A number of the Australian Special Air Service troop involved in the incident wrote to me afterwards expressing their admiration for the support they received that day, describing the actions of our Gurkhas as definitive in turning the battle. As you might imagine, the incident has ensured that we now have a deep and lasting bond forged between I RGR and the Australian Special Air Service.

During the initial three-day 'break-in' battle, we were observing enemy activity further down the valley and we identified the main Taliban command and logistics node. As a result, having handed over a secure Kala Kala to the Australian Reconstruction TF, we lifted A Company and inserted it later that night close to the newly identified Taliban node. The action proved decisive and enemy resistance rapidly melted away. The preceding fight had precipitated the evacuation of a considerable number of villagers in the valley. This was a concern, but it was gratifying to see the villagers flood back in as soon as the realised the Taliban had fled. From the observation post we counted at least 600 locals returning to one village area alone. Once we had the valley to ourselves, we were able to comb through it in detail, accompanied by our Afghan Army colleagues. We found intelligence material, enemy trauma medical facilities and a network of defensive bunkers. We dealt with all of this over the coming days, with the men remaining on their feet in the heart of the Taliban sanctuary, tirelessly pushing forward to also search out any enemy that had chosen to stay behind. The operation concluded after about three weeks on the ground and we handed the area back to the Dutch. What we learned on this operation set us up for the remainder of the tour in Afghanistan. Amongst other things: we developed our Battle Group HQ; we had our first taste of the multi-nationality that was to characterize our operations; we learned how to manage an immensely complex Battlespace, usually from a Tactical HQ huddled up against a mud wall; we appreciated how crucial a

genuine understanding of the environment was – enemy picture and the framework of local society; and, importantly, we were beginning to see the benefits of the Gurkha in this distinctive Afghan extreme counter-insurgency environment – his ability to fight toe to toe, to move by foot carrying all needs, to live off the land and connect with the local people.

No sooner had we recovered back to our base at Kandahar Airfield, than we began preparation for our next task; essentially a raid into a very narrow valley, called the Chenartu Valley, that ran parallel to the main road between Kandahar and Tarin Kowt. Again, the Taliban had made this into a stronghold, and the American Special Forces had been repelled on several occasions as they had tried to penetrate the defences. On this occasion we were allocated to the Special Forces command. We rapidly realized during our planning that being a large Battle Group, we had a rather different approach to operations than the Special Forces which were more used to operating in smaller groups. Reconciling these variances involved a lot of work and there is no question that from the perspective of Coalition operations, this was our most challenging point during the tour. Nevertheless, it all came together and we established a modus operandi with the American Special Forces that enabled us to work together many times again in the months that followed. This had its distinct advantages – the technological advantage enjoyed by these units is remarkable. For example, they were able to control and watch all the action from hundreds of kilometres away, with all the necessary information at their fingertips, provided for by a number of assets that had been diverted from the Iraq theatre for this operation.

We deployed the Battle Group under the guise of a routine road move towards the Dutch base, but at night, after a small skirmish with some ambushing enemy, we dropped off an entire company and set them off walking across the mountains into what we had assessed to be the 'back door' to the enemy dominated valley. C Company made a fantastic effort to cover twelve kilometres in pitch black over some of the most inhospitable terrain in Afghanistan – they spent much of the foot move climbing, rather than walking. By dawn they had secured a helicopter landing site on the edge of the valley, into which we flew A Company, who then carried on, fresh and ready to clear out the enemy. As A Company moved into the valley, we could hear the Taliban commanders discussing the options. Seeing the size of our force, they decided not to engage us. As they often do in these circumstances, they cached their weapons, withdrew to a distance or mingled amongst the villagers to observe us at close quarters.

This operation lasted just ninety six hours. Apart from establishing the relationship with American Special Forces that was to stand us in good stead later on, we established during this operation the communication means to enable us to command our operations from Kandahar Airfield. The advantages of this were considerable as it was here that we had unprecedented access to higher level Intelligence and to other 'second echelon' forces, such as the helicopter TF. We were finding that, whilst the strategic Intelligence was excellent, because most of the areas

to which we were deploying were new to Coalition forces, the low level Intelligence was relatively weak. Having access to the facilities in Kandahar, while our forces were unearthing local Intelligence, enabled us to analyse what was being found and feed it back into the field for subsequent exploitation. Similarly, there is nothing quite like face-to-face contact with supporting TFs to achieve what you need!

We entered into a four-week period during which we sent home half of the Battalion at a time for rest and recuperation. For this period, we operated with a skeletal Battle Group HQ and an enhanced Company. Both companies had some of their hardest fighting whilst conducting independent operations. Firstly, A Company flew to Helmand to relieve the Royal Marines in Sangin for their part in the assault on Musa Qal'eh. The assessment was that the Taliban might try to strike at Sangin during operations in Musa Qal'eh in order to divert the British effort. Early on A Company received reports from the local police chief that the Taliban were massing in numbers between sixty and a hundred to the south of the town for an attack. The Company pushed out under cover of darkness ready to meet the enemy head on. At dawn the enemy attacked. A Company spent the entire day thereafter locked in skirmishes through the settlements that bounded the Helmand River. In all, the battle lasted some ten hours. Despite taking some casualties, it is clear that their actions prevented a major setback for the Coalition and there were many examples of individual valour displayed.

For their part, C Company was tasked to assist the Canadians in a major clearance of the volatile Zhari Panjwayee area, west of Kandahar City, from where an increasing number of IED attacks were being launched. In fact, their operations held particular significance for us as the area was close to where Major Lex Roberts had died. Working closely and very effectively with the Canadians, C Company experienced stiff resistance initially, but the Company maintained a steady momentum, and by combining some aggressive infantry work with skilful use of air support, the Taliban suffered some significant setbacks. In the follow up, several items of bomb making equipment were discovered, and the conditions were set for the construction of more police posts in the area. Apart from the obvious military success of this operation, it was from this time that we established a long-standing relationship with the Canadian TF.

As they returned to Kandahar Airfield, the men of C Company had the opportunity to meet His Royal Highness, The Duke of Kent who called on us on his way back from a visit to the Scots Guards in Helmand.

We came back together as a Battle Group in the New Year and were given a somewhat different challenge. We were to mount a one-month long operation in a 3000 square kilometre area of responsibility, similar in size to that occupied by the majority of the British Brigade in Helmand. We were aware that the Taliban were active in the area and were given an indication of likely concentrations, but nothing conclusive. The area was renowned for IEDs and we knew that we would be most vulnerable on the channelled routes into the area. Our aim therefore was to infiltrate as undetected as we could

be. There was a particular shortage of helicopters over this period, so the break-in was going to have to be by vehicle. Our movement up to the area using one of the primary highways was bound to be noticed, but we patrolled around one of the Canadian Forward Operating Bases to give the impression that this was our sole intent. Meanwhile, a small reconnaissance force pushed out to explore possible routes through the high passes that we might use for the subsequent infiltration. One of the vehicles conducting this task was hit by an IED. The crew of three, including our other Major Roberts, Leigh Roberts, who had replaced Lex Roberts after his death, was thrown forty to fifty metres from the impact point. All three lived, although Lance Corporal Netrabhadur Rana lost his lower left leg and the other two were also severely injured.

This was a setback, but on the basis of the evidence we gathered later, we were able to modify our techniques and we infiltrated the area successfully the next night. Judging from the voices we could hear on the radios, it was our assessment that the enemy which were watching us comprised a number of non-Afghanis, but they chose not to engage us. Consequently, we took the opportunity to focus more heavily on developing the credibility of local Government, promoting security arrangements and reassuring the local population. By now the Afghan winter had truly set in. Conditions were bitter, and the Companies were conducting night movement in temperatures of minus fifteen degrees. In conjunction with our Influence work, we pushed elements towards the northern fringes of our area of responsibility to a region renowned as a Taliban thoroughfare for transit around the region – the so called 'jet stream'. We received intelligence of a major Taliban node in a town, which by all accounts had become the base for a number of Taliban leaders after the fall of Musa Qal'eh. We gathered ourselves and, following some excellent covert surveillance work by the Recce Platoon in appalling weather conditions, descended on Lam in a Battle Group pincer movement combining air assault with tracked vehicle insertion. With us we had elements of the American Special Forces with which we had worked previously. The enemy avoided us, but we were now making inroads into very remote and inaccessible areas of the region and the Taliban was forced to take refuge in the mountainous areas at the height of the winter.

The manoeuvre in Lam increased our credibility amongst the population in the area and we capitalised on this by setting up two 'shuras' for the Provincial Governor of Kandahar. Both shuras were very well attended and local Governance was well served by these events. It is always difficult to measure success when it comes to Influence activities, but one incident in particular highlights the positive effect that this operation had on the area. Generally speaking we found local people very receptive to our presence; they were just reluctant to commit themselves until we could guarantee we were going to stay in an area permanently. On only a couple of occasions did we come across a group of compounds where the population was hostile. One such area happened to be just south of the District Centre where we intended to hold one of the Kandahar Governor's shuras. Despite the attitude of the locals there, C Company continued to work with the people holding meetings with elders at which

many things were discussed, including measures by which the local people could help warn the Coalition about IEDs. On the day of the Shura, as the Governor's vehicle convoy approached, quite out of character a number of locals ran onto the road to warn our soldiers of an IED hidden in a culvert. Such a warning would have been unthinkable a few weeks before, and showed us how much can be achieved in a short space of time by engaging with local people and treating them with respect and dignity.

In my view, we came close on this operation to optimum employment of the RBG (S). Rather than simply deploy to an area to strike enemy forces, we had the capability to facilitate the expansion of existing Afghan Development Zones on behalf of the in-place TFs, which simply did not have the wherewithal to conduct such resource-heavy operations. As we witnessed on this operation, we could take responsibility for an area, hunt down the local Taliban and use the time and space afforded by his withdrawal to establish a framework around which local governance, development and security might be developed. Key to this was a plan by the in-place TF to ensure our work was part of a wider enduring plan, as was the availability of adequate indigenous elements, such as the Police and the Army for us to promote them. In my opinion, a scheme of manoeuvre based on employment of the RBG (S) in this way could eventually enable the Afghan Development Zones to be joined. This was something HQ RC (S) was working up as we left.

Our final major operation took us to Maiwand, the site of the ignominious British defeat of 1880 (of course made good by the arrival of, amongst others, the 2nd Goorkhas on the scene a few weeks later – see review of Britain's Gurkha War later in the journal). Maiwand was regarded as another hub of Taliban activity – a major crossroads from which they could spread across the region from Pakistan and a point through which a number of those evacuated from Musa Qal'eh had passed two months earlier. We deployed by a combination of road move and helicopter. The landing for A Company proved harder than anticipated, with the Chinook slamming into ground that was obscured not only by darkness but also a thick cloud of dust. Many received minor injuries, but thankfully the momentum was not lost. Thirty kilometres to the east and not far from their previous exploits in Zhari Panjwayee, C Company found that their helicopter assault had surprised a large number of the enemy. Initially, it looked as if this group of enemy would fight, but in the end they decided to flee the area, moving at speed south to a major river. C Company moved quickly to cast a net around them, chasing the enemy for three kilometres before being able to positively identify them as hostile and so engage them in accordance with our Rules of Engagement. The unladen Taliban were wading across the Arghandab River at the time.

Thereafter, the pattern mirrored recent operations. We had brief encounters with enemy forces, but otherwise exploited the opportunities provided by their inactivity, working specifically during this operation on local governance and indigenous security forces. Sadly, the Afghan Army unit we were working with withdrew early following a dreadful incident involving the accidental discharge of a Rocket Propelled Grenade into a room occupied by Afghan Soldiers. The injuries were horrific, but our

medical team was instrumental in saving the lives of those they could and this was appreciated by the Afghan chain of command. It was a shame, because we had learned from our previous operation quite how essential ample Afghan involvement is to the success of the Coalition mission. Our Gurkhas forged some excellent relations with the Afghan forces, generating trust, improvements in performance, and occasionally eliciting information which led to the capture of local enemy leaders and much useful evidence. The road move back to Kandahar Airfield was to be our last activity in the field. As ever with road moves, friction abounded, but it passed without incident and we were all struck by the poignancy of the event, as our route took us over the spot where Lex Roberts had been killed. It was fitting that the entire Battle Group gave him the final salute. I know he would have liked that.

B Company's operation was very different from that of the rest of the Battalion. They remained in Garmsir for the entire tour, as opposed to the manoeuvre role that the RBG(S) had. The Company was initially under command of the Household Cavalry Regiment, but later took responsibility for the area of Garmsir as an independent Company Group, reinforced by artillery, and armoured vehicles from the King's Royal Hussars. As an aside, it was satisfying to see our long affiliation with the King's Royal Hussars further developed – our association dates back to the battle of Medicina during the Second World War. The nature of the battle in Garmsir required good honest and basic soldiering skills and as such it was an environment in which the Gurkha soldier again excelled. Much of the fighting was conducted from the static check points on the edges of the local District Centre, against an extremely persistent enemy. The knowledge of the ground held by the Taliban allowed them to manoeuvre into firing points unseen and engage the B Company positions with considerable accuracy. Despite a suite of complex surveillance equipment, it was often the uniquely sharp eyesight and senses of the Gurkha soldiers that facilitated the Company's effective response to an attack. The Company placed high value on enhancing their battle picture and for much of the tour observed rather than engaged the Taliban in order to track the enemy forces, an activity that His Royal Highness, Prince Harry played a role in for several weeks. In support of this task the Company conducted covert platoon-sized patrols into enemy positions applying tracking experience gained in Brunei, to establish Taliban infiltration routes and ambush positions. The Company chose its moment to strike in the later months of the tour in two relatively large deliberate operations, seizing and holding new ground and effectively establishing the release point for the American Marine Expeditionary Unit's operation.

B Company completed its tour with a real sense of pride in seeing the development that had taken place in the Garmsir area. When the Company arrived in Garmsir, the front line with the enemy ran right across the southern boundary of their base, Forward Operating Base Delhi. By the time the Company departed it had pushed the enemy back several miles. In order to achieve this, the Company was involved in one or more heavy exchanges of fire almost every other day of their tour. Garmsir was a very different place from when B Company had arrived, and the Taliban no longer enjoyed the freedom to form up in

large groups and travel between Pakistan and Afghanistan as it had previously. But it was the effect achieved in the local environs of the Forward Operating Base Delhi that really marked out the difference a Gurkha sub-unit could make, over and above the ability to fight. The B Company men have remarked to me how impressed they were by the resilience of the Afghan people who continue to work often in close proximity to intense fighting. Operating out of a fixed base for a number of months, the soldiers of B Company were able to engage with these people and establish meaningful relationships. The men noted tangible changes to the life of the local civilians, who benefited from the cultural awareness of our Gurkhas – not least in terms of the regeneration of the local economy through the sale of so many goats and chickens that further supplies had to be shipped in from elsewhere in Helmand. B Company earned many accolades for the work they did, from across the Coalition.

We have come a long way since the early days of our deployment. As the Commanding Officer, it has been very satisfying to observe the progress. It had been a while since a Gurkha Infantry Battalion had done this sort of thing and we knew we had a responsibility to do well in order to ensure that the system continues to commit us to demanding operational roles in the future. We have every reason to be proud of our people. The demands on the individual soldier, Officer and Rifleman alike, have been significant and this role has confirmed that we are now firmly rooted in the age of the 'Strategic Rifleman'. Across the Battle Group individuals have required the skills to enable them to live in and move around remote and austere terrain, with limited resupply, postured all at once to fight belligerents, to search out intelligence, to engage with the ordinary Afghan, and above all, to be mindful that in all they do they will be affecting perceptions – to the good or bad of wider mission success. Physical, mental and moral robustness have proved to be the essential qualities. The Gurkha has been exceptionally well suited to this role and to this operational environment. He has fought the enemy at close quarters and prevailed, but perhaps most significantly, he has connected with the local people. Whether it be the man tending his fields, the many, many Afghans who sold us goats, or the fellow Afghan soldier, across the region our Gurkhas communicated,

Air Operations with Regional Battle Group (South) on Op HERRICK 7

By Capt T P Tuppen, Air Operations Officer, 1 RGR

"The force which confronts the enemy is the normal; that which goes to his flanks (and rear) the extraordinary. Generally, in battle, use the normal force to engage; use the extraordinary to win."

– Sun Tzu

As Regional Battlegroup (South), 1 RGR found itself, during Op HERRICK 7, at the kinetic edge of operations across the region. As such, we enjoyed a regular presence on Commander Regional Command (South)'s Main Effort and, in particular, access to aviation assets commensurate with that position. As well as opportunities, this access to aviation presented a steep

interacted and established relationships, engendering trust where time allowed. This will be the lasting impression of Operation HERRICK 7 for 1 RGR.

On a personal note, Operation HERRICK 7 was a fascinating and privileged professional journey. Amongst other things, this operation confirmed: (a) the immense sense of personal responsibility as you watch men depart on your bidding to fulfil a task you have devised for them in the face of a known enemy threat and in circumstances where the currency is human lives (as well as the tragedy of losing Major Lex Roberts, fifteen of our men were severely wounded); (b) what it is that makes some people so exceptional under this sort of pressure, and others weaker – often the ones you didn't expect in either case; (c) how, when the circumstances are right, a real intimacy can develop amidst a pretty tough male community; and finally, (d) how vital leadership is in an environment where many bystanders might assume business is done by orders and obedience – in fact, from my experience, military command in combat is all about persuasion, mutual confidence, and establishing the right balance between being in the right place to make decisions, but also being there physically on the ground, with the soldiers, to provide inspiration when it matters.

Others are better placed to judge our success, but we were flattered to be awarded the Canadian Forces Unit Commendation at the end of our tour, an award which has only ever previously been presented to four other non-Canadian units. It was given as a mark of their appreciation for our efforts in the Kandahar Province and was presented to us by the Canadian Chief of Defence Staff. The citation stresses the 'outstanding élan and extemporary combat skills' displayed by our soldiers.

I feel this is a fitting note on which to conclude. It is my honour to report to you that the fighting skills for which the Gurkha is historically famed are alive and well. On the basis of this operation, it is my view that when these renowned skills are combined with the other extensive 'softer' skills which our men displayed so regularly during this operation in Afghanistan, the formula is a winning one. Jai RGR!

learning curve for a Battlegroup trained and deployed outside of an Airborne Brigade.

The lack of aircraft – both Attack Helicopters (AH, Apache) and Support Helicopters (SH, predominantly Chinook) – has been well documented in the domestic press. In this respect, 1 RGR was more fortunate than most: the requirement for rapid, decisive effect meant that operations included multiple Air Assaults (including one at BG level) and frequent insertion, extraction and re-supply tasks, all conducted with a combination of AH and SH.



British CH47 collecting C Company 1 RGR from Lam Valley, Northern Kandahar District following a clearance operation

The most prominent involvement of aviation was during Op SPIN GHAR, which involved an Air Assault into the Baluchi Valley, approximately 200km North of Kandahar. This represented the culmination of the skills and experience gained by the Battlegroup in theatre. It comprised the insertion of three Rifle companies into a known Taliban sanctuary unvisited by coalition forces for 18 months, observation call-signs onto ridge-lines 2500ft above the valley and a headquarters element into a position from which to command the battle.

The assault began two hours before first light, and was complete within three hours. It involved five Chinooks, four Apaches, two Black Hawks and two Lynx (from the UK, USA and Netherlands Armed Forces), as well as Special Forces elements to secure Helicopter Landing Sites (HLSs) and Canadian artillery providing offensive support. All of the troops involved were subsequently sustained for a fortnight by air. As well as routine re-supply, this included extraction of casualties and detainees as well as the insertion of specialists, vehicle spares and intelligence material.

In the development of procedures to be applied to the planning and execution of aviation operations, several key principles – some general, some theatre-specific – were identified:

Realism – the high demand for aviation assets across theatre means that plans should be based on a realistic assessment of what is available for each specific operation.

It should be recognised that Air Task Forces from different nations bring a variety of caveats and capabilities (often dependent upon readily changeable political direction) and planning should be tailored to reflect these.

Joint planning and rehearsals – the aviation provider (be it British, American or Dutch) should be identified as early as possible and joint planning conducted at the earliest opportunity. The aim is that both ground troops and air crews understand and trust each other implicitly before crossing the start line. On occasion, this requirement was directly at odds with the process of centralised allocation (often late in the planning process) of multinational aviation assets by the Regional Headquarters.

Security – the use of aviation brings with it significant risk and security is at a premium. The loss of an aircraft full of troops could signify strategic failure on two levels: it would not only represent a considerable challenge to public support for continued involvement in Afghanistan, it would also limit even further the assets available to support troops on the ground. Maximum assets (ISTAR and Close Air Support, in particular) must therefore be made available to ensure security during the insertion of troops and subsequent extraction of aircraft. Once again, early allocation of assets to ensure their involvement in detailed joint planning assists greatly.

In addition, two capabilities were identified as critical to the Battlegroup's ability to make maximum use of aviation assets in theatre:

Air Cell – unless permanently established, an air cell should be generated at least six months prior to deployment. It should comprise as a minimum an Air Operation Officer, an Air Operations Warrant Officer and a Buzzard Operations Sergeant. It should ensure that suitable qualifications and experience are sufficiently integrated into the BG planning process from the start and it should oversee the planning and execution of all aviation – both operational and routine – throughout the tour.

Advance Force capability – as outlined above, security of the HLS is critical to the success of the mission. The provision of a Recce Platoon configured for long range patrols on foot and in vehicles, and with the training and communications to talk

direct to aircraft, would avoid reliance on other nations' Special Forces to identify and, where necessary, secure HLSs prior to an assault or insertion.

The dependence of coalition forces on aviation is clear, as are the opportunities provided by the assets already in theatre. Broad doctrine is long-established, but techniques for operating within the multinational environment specific to RC (South) will continue to develop over the coming years. One truth, however, will remain: helicopters are critical to the rapid achievement of decisive effect and the ability to get the most out of them is a battle-winning skill.

Under the Influence? Thoughts on Influence at Platoon Level from Op HERRICK 7

By Capt W D Godwin, RGR

Introduction

The lead section of 2 Platoon was struggling to cross the drainage ditch while carrying the infantry foot bridge. We had covered the first 400 metres of open ground between Forward Operating Base Arnhem and the canal in good time and had passed the first of two previously used and 'likely occupied' Taliban positions without incident. Tracer from the Rarden Cannons of the Right Flank, Scots Guards firing into the Witch's Hat, 1.5 km to the South, lit up the sky and provided both reassuring distraction and effective deception as the Platoon cleared the obstacle and covered the remaining 400m to arrive at the bridging point without contact being made with the enemy. We were leading A Company on 1 RGR's first Operation on HERRICK 7 and it was with a combination of surprise and relief that the "actions on contact while carrying the bridge" paragraph of my orders had not been tested. Our G2 and previous units' experience in the area had given us good cause to expect to have to fight our way into Op PALK WAHEL in the Upper Gereshk Valley. However as the hours, days and weeks passed frustration replaced surprise at the apparent absence of the enemy in an area soaked in evidence of his presence. This absence was contrasted by a conspicuous presence of the civilian population. Although often reduced, this presence would prove to be a constant of the operation and the tour, regardless of variation in the Area of Operation. Contact was eventually gained with the enemy but only on his terms and ground when his identification and fixing were most difficult. These difficulties in achieving positive identification have been well-rehearsed and were expected. What was not expected, however, was the difficulty in encouraging the enemy to commit to contact in the first place. This proved to be a valuable reminder of an enduring experience of Infanteers that the time between contacts will make up the majority of any operation. What we learned was that this time offers at least as many opportunities to achieve the effects of the mission, as the time spent in contact. This article will examine three sets of examples from the main subjects of these effects before offering some recommendations in the light of 2 Platoon's experiences.

Enemy

What our experiences showed was that the enemy was positioned and equipped to engage us but was choosing not to. Our posture was having a strong deterrent effect on the enemy and as a result we were able to exploit excellent freedom of movement and therefore dominate the ground. This enabled us to disrupt and undermine the established enemy presence both by the physical destruction of his defences (trenches, rat-runs) and the psychological challenge to his control of the ground and the CIVPOP. Moving constantly on our feet helped give us the unpredictability that made ambush difficult. Indeed, lapses resulted in ambush by direct fire weapons and IED on separate occasions and reinforced this lesson. Although militarily frustrating the net effect on the enemy of the deterrence described above was still defeat. That is not to say that the greatest influence on the enemy was achieved exclusively out of contact. Robust response in contact when it was gained contributed significantly to the same deterrent effect. Whether and how we employed the weapons systems available to us became as important a part of our influence concept as the Shura we held. The net effect was that in dealing with the enemy threat, the main effort of winning and maintaining local support for government/International Security Assistance Force was compromised less: it is difficult to maintain credibility when asking a man how ISAF can improve his life when standing in the rubble of his own house.

Civilian Population

The relative lack of contact also forced a change in focus in activity away from the enemy and towards the CIVPOP at a practical and not only conceptual level. The aim was to build local peoples' trust in ISAF forces and therefore encourage repopulation and a move towards a return to normal life. The hope was that the more established the community was by the time of our departure, the more difficult the Taliban would find it to re-establish themselves in the AO. At a tactical level the humility, imagination and professionalism of the soldiers in the way they did business went a long way in gaining respect. The

natural amiability of the Gurkha soldier out of contact was an obvious advantage and there was an Asian cultural affinity that was also of great benefit. However, patrolling around rather than through recently ploughed fields, leaving occupied compounds clean by burning rubbish and using proper toilet pits were small ways of practically demonstrating the sincerity of ISAF's information message that we are there for the community's benefit. In summary the cumulative influence on the CIVPOP despite lack of contact with the enemy was still very positive and expressed itself through the progressive repopulation of the AO even over a period of weeks.

Afghan National Army

The final area of potential influence at Platoon level is in joint operations with indigenous forces. We had been well briefed on the standards and limitations of the Afghan National Army (ANA) before our deployment and expectations had been adjusted accordingly. Indeed many of these expectations were unfortunately met and serious thought had to be given to how to mitigate the unintentional threats of operating with an ANA call sign. That said, every frustration was also an opportunity for education, and on many occasions an increase in expectation, in combination with clear training and instruction, resulted in modest but marked improvements in the standard of soldiering. In this way something closer to an effective stand-to was achieved, the number of negligent discharges reduced and the damage to CIVPOP property during searches also reduced. Much is made of the cultural gap between ISAF forces and the ANA and the need to respect the fact they are in their own country. However in our experience this was too often used as an excuse for behaviour that was not a result of differing culture but standards. There is a good opportunity to create and promote a sense of professional responsibility by appealing to and training up what we have in common as Infanteers and opponents of the Taliban - not only in formal training but also while conducting joint operations. This again will reinforce the ISAF information campaign and help encourage trust in a complicated relationship between CIVPOP and Government forces.

Conclusions

An Infantry Platoon is not resourced to do more in the way of actual Provincial Reconstruction Team tasks. What it can do is alter the way it does its routine business (patrolling, fighting, harbouring, etc) to minimise the negative influence of those actions on the indigenous population while simultaneously

maximising the opportunities for positive influence on the various players outlined above. From our experiences throughout Op HERRICK 7, recommendations to help achieve this fall into three categories.

Firstly, the exclusive focus on the enemy in 'Question One' of the Estimate needs to be revised. Developing a thorough understanding of the civilian picture helped shape the plan around what is widely accepted as the main focus in any counter-insurgency: the civilian population. In this way effect (kinetic or non) on the enemy remained important but only in as much as it supported the intended influence on the CIVPOP. The result at Platoon level was the ability to take greater initiative in supporting a pro-active campaign with the CIVPOP rather than fighting a purely reactive battle against the enemy in an environment where his location and identity were often ambiguous at best.

Secondly, we need to develop the understanding that the key question is not whether but how we are influencing. Influence is not a concept restricted to specific activities or individuals; rather every action or inaction will have its particular influence. At Platoon level this means encouraging soldiers and junior commanders to be aware of the contribution to the influence campaign their individual conduct can make. As a Platoon Commander this means continuing to focus on doing the traditional business of infanteering well, while trying to develop the habit during the estimate and the action of analysing its influence on those we are working for, with and against (i.e. CIVPOP, government forces and the Taliban). With this self-awareness in mind, influence can be mitigated or exaggerated to help ensure the net effect is deliberate and measured.

Thirdly, early operations during HERRICK taught us to become tactically flexible in terms of patrol techniques and weapons employment in order to try and turn the theory above into effective practice.

In conclusion, influence must not be considered a separate set of effects or actions; it is the net result of all effects - deliberate or otherwise - in combination. As such the concept that the business of influence is the preserve of a select number of individuals or activities must be challenged. Every member of the Platoon is an 'Influence Officer'. This does not demand retraining but simply continued focus on doing the basics well in the above mindset so our influence is deliberate and positive.

2nd Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles

Operations in Afghanistan The First Three Months (October to December 2008)

By Lt Col C B Darby CO, 2 RGR

The Deployment

The Battalion deployed on Op HERRICK 9 after a hectic period of pre-deployment training and then finally some well-earned leave. The Battalion departed to Afghanistan over a period of a month in October and despite the whole logistical nightmare of moving our troops and equipment all over Helmand Province, the process happened without major problems through the hard work of OC Combat Support Systems Company, Maj Kris Beauman, and his team which allowed the sub-units to move quickly through to their new base locations. The first three months have been surprisingly busy for all and have already involved a full Battle Group attack, a number of close shaves and the tragic loss of two of our own; CSgt Krishna Dura and Rfn Yubraj Rai. The Rear Party have produced sterling work under the RAO, Maj Bruce McKay, looking after our casualties and their families; and Gurkha Reinforcement Company 1 (Foxtrot Company) under command of Maj Chris Conroy have remained behind undertaking their own pre-deployment training with 19 Light Brigade ready to deploy on Op HERRICK 10 in the Police Mentoring Role.

The Battalion's centre of mass in Helmand is in Musa Qal'eh (MSQ) but the Battle Group is far from an all Gurkha affair. The RGR element comprises Battle Group Headquarters, B Company Group under Major Ross Daines, the Intelligence Surveillance and Target Acquisition (ISTAR) Group (Recce Platoon, the Snipers and a small Fire Support Group), manpower for two specialist Observation Posts and A1 Echelon. However, this RGR core is augmented by an Armoured Infantry Company Group from 1st Battalion The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment (1 PWRR) (with 21 Warrior Infantry Fighting Vehicles), a Squadron Group from the Queen's Dragoon Guards (with 19 Mastiffs), a Tac Party from 8 Battery 29 Commando Regiment Royal Artillery, a troop minus from 77 Squadron, 36 Engineer Regiment Royal Engineers, and a number of Electronic Warfare, ISTAR and combat service support specialists. We also have 85 US Marine Police Corps Mentors who live and fight with us under an 'agreementcom' command relationship. The BG Headquarters lives in a Forward Operating Base (FOB) that abuts the MSQ Wadi and the Governor's compound and is known colloquially as the 'DC'. The combat elements live in the field and return to the DC to 're-cock' only; it is a hard existence and will become harder as the winter fully sets in. Our primary logistic and artillery support hub, under command of Maj Ed Oldfield, is FOB Edinburgh, which lies 10km west in the desert and is linked to the DC by Route GREEN – a desert track that crosses two wadis and contains a number of steep switch-back climbs that remain a focus for Improvised Explosive Device (IED) activity. To add to the logistic complexity of this already vulnerable route, it is

also assessed that Route GREEN will be impassable to all traffic for long periods in the winter.

The remainder of the Battalion is spread throughout Helmand. A Company in the Police Mentoring role, under Maj Chris Boryer, is working for Brigade HQ out of Lashkar Gar and has deployed small groups of Police Mentors to Battle Group South (the QDG in Garmsir), Battle Group Centre (the Danes in Geresk), Battle Group North (45 Commando in Sangin), and Battle Group Centre South (a composite battle group centered on Nad-E'-Ali). The men operate in direct support of the Afghan National Police and are at the forefront of operations in their Area of Operations. Reports from all the BG commanders whom they support are full of praise for the work the soldiers are conducting, but it is hard and dangerous at the best of times. The majority of the men operate from austere patrol bases that are subject to varying degrees of direct and indirect fire on a daily basis and their charges vary significantly in their professionalism, training and understanding of the concept of 'police work'. (GRC 1 (Foxtrot Company) is currently earmarked to take over from them on Op HERRICK 10.)

D Company under Maj Jody Davis is a full manoeuvre Company Group attached to BG (S) in Garmsir. They operate in their own AO and are based primarily in FOB Delhi; the previous home of B Company 1 RGR on Op HERRICK 7. The Company is responsible for securing vital ground around the Garmsir Bazaar; conducting the dangerous and seemingly endless task of countering the IED threat; securing a number of isolated and often targeted out-stations, and providing a surge capability for Battle Group and Brigade strike operations – tasks that include providing indirect fire support from their integral mortars.

The Bastion Support Group and our B Echelon are based in Camp Bastion under the QM, Maj Rod Gray, and are providing first rate support to all our deployed elements and to a number of attached arms whose own G4 chains are creaking under the weight of their own demands. As a result, they are setting the standards in most of what they do throughout the Brigade.

Our two independent platoons; one operating from FOB Keenan in the Danish AO and one with the Commando Logistic Regiment (CLR), are reported by their Commanders to be equally successful. Capt Rupert Anderson's Force Protection Platoon is the force of choice amongst commanders and crews when it comes to protecting the CLR's large and vulnerable convoys (often comprising up to 80 logistic vehicles and as long as 7 km). Capt Tom Rose, supported by the RSM, is dominating an AO with 38 men as an 'uber' Operational Mentoring & Liaison

Team, a ground holding force, a manoeuvre platoon group, and a QRF for the Danes – an extraordinary performance given the task had previously been conducted by a British Company Group supported by an Afghan National Army Company.

The dynamics in MSQ are different to almost anywhere else in Helmand. Whilst the BG faces separate groups of hard, determined, well-equipped and well-trained insurgents to the North and South of MSQ we also have a creditable Afghan police presence and a capable Afghan Army Kandak (Battalion). We also enjoy the benefits of a ferocious local Governor and a Stabilization Team that is alive to the requirement for 'Afghan good enough' (rather than a Whitehall solution), and which is content to work with, rather than try and lead, the military. The result of this complex cocktail is an insurgency in its truest sense rather than open warfare, and thus an opportunity rather than stalemate. These dynamics also allow us to use our individual strengths to mount a combined and comprehensive assault on the insurgency and, to date this approach appears to be working. The Afghan National Police (ANP) with their USMC mentors operate in and secure the District Centre. Beyond this the Afghan National Army (ANA) hold a now more complete ring (thanks to Op MAR NONU, see below) of Patrol Bases on which the insurgents focus their efforts, and this allows BG HQ to manoeuvre forces around the PBs to strike the insurgents as they are fixed by the ANA. But this is a symbiotic relationship. Without the PBs, the insurgents by-pass the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and close to within small arms range of the DC (as happened in June 2006). And without ISAF manoeuvre the insurgents by-pass the PBs and again, close up to the DC (as happened in May 08 and during the October Relief in Place this year).

Until recently this approach had enabled the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and ISAF to constrain insurgent freedom of manoeuvre and control to a zone 2 ½ km North and 3 ½ South of the DC; the intervening area was subject to intimidation, IEDs and opportunity shoots. However, these lines were very much chosen by the insurgents and allowed them to operate in relative confidence almost anywhere in the AO. Countering this challenge was made more complex by the requirement to deepen the security rather than broaden it; we are far from the Main Effort here and scarce combat resources are needed elsewhere.

Despite these constraints it quickly became apparent that security would only be enhanced if the existing security envelope could be reshaped such that it better followed historic civil boundaries and if obvious holes in the PB ring could be filled by the ANSF. In essence we needed to redefine the Forward Line of Own Troops (FLOT) on our own terms in order to wrest the initiative from the insurgents and then keep them on the back foot in order to set the conditions for next summer's fighting season. This involved establishing a base line from which to launch targeted strike ops throughout the winter and also a line, understood by the local nationals, behind which the Stabilization Advisor and the Afghan Government could provide focused, concentrated 'Reconstruction and Development' (R&D) in the MSQ Area of Operation. This requirement manifested itself in the MAR NONU series of operations.

Op MAR NONU I (4/5 November 2008)

By 1730hrs on 3 November, the day before the operation C Squadron QGD(-) had deployed to a desert laager to the east and south of the Bagni Wadi; B Company Group 2 RGR was at a Forward Mounting Base in PB (S); Battle Group Tactical Headquarters and the Heavy Weapons Company of 1/3/205 was at US (PB); and the Warrior Coy Gp was at FOB Edinburgh following an Equipment Care period at FOB Bastion and a Road Traffic Accident the night before.

At 0130hrs on D-Day B Company departed PB(S) with its Afghan National Police and headed west for a Forming-up Point (FUP) to the east of Objective PRIDE (the first objective). The move took four hours because of the Improvised Explosive Device threat and the low light levels but by 0530 they were in position 400m north of the Line of Departure without having been compromised. Half an hour before first light the Queen's Dragoon Guards also moved and began to clear their routes onto the high ground that overlooked Yatimchay. As dawn broke the Heavy Weapons Company, supported by 1/3/205 Tac and an Afghan National Army Company (-) were grouped into their Fighting in Built up Areas (FIBUA) teams, and the Mastiffs crested the rise and deployed into overt observation and covert strike positions ready to support the infantry in the green zone below. Within five minutes intelligence identified that the Mastiffs had been spotted and that enemy forces were beginning to position themselves to counter any threat to Yatimchay. It quickly became apparent to Officer Commanding B Company that there was little to be gained in remaining in the open and so he advanced H-Hour to take maximum advantage of the confusion caused by the sudden appearance of the Mastiffs.

For the next three hours atmospherics gradually deteriorated as B Company moved from compound to compound across open ground clearing Objective PRIDE while C Squadron covered them from the high ground to the east. In Dagan the Heavy Weapons Company, led by their OMLT began to clear south. By 0945 large groups of women and children were moving north and south out of Objective PRIDE and B Company advanced steadily towards its Limit of Exploitation on Route BLACK. At the same time intelligence indicated that enemy forces were preparing to ambush the Afghan National Army once they had cleared past prepared positions, and that they had laid IEDs to the south of Dagan. At 0930 the OMLT reported a group of 8-10 males in uniform in Objective BASS but couldn't confirm that the area was clear of civilians and so were ordered to hold their fire. Meanwhile, in the east, B Company had cleared Objective PRIDE but had received warning of likely enemy forces' attack positions from local nationals as they escaped the area and so, while the company received a battery resupply, the Officer Commanding repositioned his fire support group to meet the threat and to better cover the 600m of open ground that had to be crossed next.

As the Afghan National Army entered the southern third of Dagan, B Company began to cross the open ground from compound Q3U 17 to compound Q3U 18, a distance of 600m. With 5 Platoon in the lead 200m from the nearest cover the enemy opened fire. The lead section of 5 Platoon was the

primary target and took heavy and sustained rounds from at least four firing points but the remainder of the platoon was also caught in the killing area and the platoon commander (Lieutenant Oli Cochrane) 50m east of the lead section took a round through his radio and another through his ammunition bandolier. With the entire platoon taking cover in furrows in the fields it became apparent that we had a casualty, so while the remainder of 5 Platoon crawled 200m to the nearest compound, Lance Corporal Gajendra Rai, the section 2nd in Command and Rifleman Dhan Gurung dragged the casualty with them firing when they could. At this stage the Mastiffs on the high ground could see the contact but were unable to provide fire support because of the proximity of B Company to their beaten zones. However, they reported significant, sustained and highly accurate tracer fire from numerous firing points impacting in the compound walls and fields around all four of B Company's positions.

While Officer Commanding B attempted to extract his point platoon from the killing area the OMLT and the Afghan National Army came under fire from two separate buildings in Dagan. In one of these contacts a Forward Observation Officer was pushed to the ground by a 1 PWRR sniper who then used his rifle to engage and kill a fleeting enemy. Guns and mortar support were requested for B Company and a Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System (GMLRS) strike called for building 26 in support of the Afghan National Army. Back at B Company, elements of 5 Platoon had managed to crawl the 200m to cover and it was at this point that Rifleman Manju Gurung stepped from behind a compound wall and, at considerable risk to himself, engaged and killed three enemy at a range of 200m. While B Company remained under sustained, heavy and accurate small arms fire, four Recce Platoon Jackal vehicles were deployed with the Regimental Medical Officer to collect the casualty, and a Troop fire mission of 105mm was called in to cover the Company Sergeant Major's group as they carried the casualty to the exchange point. At this stage Officer Commanding B had identified that enemy forces were using southern compounds for suppressive fire and compounds to the west for heavy weights of more accurate fire. While B Company manoeuvred to engage these firing points simultaneously, and thereby relieve the pressure on the CSM, GMLRS hit and destroyed an unnumbered compound to the south west of Taliban Crossroads and US (PB) provided accurate suppressive fire onto compound 26 to allow the OMLT and Afghan National Army to take cover and engage the same target and targets further to the south. Compound 26 was subsequently engaged by an OMLT call sign with a LASM and a Hellfire missile from an Apache denied the compound for the duration.

Recce Platoon had linked up with the CSM at this stage and under sporadic small arms fire transferred the casualty to a Jackal which then returned to US (PB). Concurrently, Officer Commanding Warrior and one of his platoons arrived and secured an Emergency Helicopter Landing Site. The Medical Emergency Response Team, holding in its CH47 at FOB Edinburgh, then decided to deploy to recover the casualty and, against oft repeated and long standing advice, flew south from Edinburgh before turning east and then north and approached US (PB) over the enemy forces' firing positions that were

engaging B Company and the Afghan National Army. It also flew over concealed positions in depth from which it took fire. An unforeseen consequence of the aircraft's approach was to highlight these depth positions to the QDG on the high ground who subsequently engaged them with snipers, HMG and GPMG. Back at US (PB) and light on dismounted infantry soldiers, elements of the 2 RGR Recce Platoon were then embarked into the Warriors to enable mounted and dismounted combat, and while B Company remained under heavy, accurate and sustained suppressive fire, the Afghan National Army and Warriors were directed to work in close cooperation to finish the building clearance of Objective MONK before clearing vulnerable points between buildings to allow the Warriors to move to and clear the compounds abutting the Wadi (Objective BASS). A smoke screen covered the Warriors as they moved from MONK to BASS, and 30mm HE and chain guns were used in intimate support as the dismounts cleared the objective. Subsequent exploitation identified that the location had been used as a firing point and that it contained empty cases and blood trails. The dismounts also found what was assessed to have been a casualty collection point and covered escape routes into the Wadi and the dead ground beyond.

By this stage it was about 1630hrs. Warrior and RGR call signs had cleared and held Objective BASS; the OMLT and Afghan National Army held Objective MONK; B Company held Objective PRIDE and remained under sporadic but heavy fire; and the QDG were identifying and engaging depth positions close to Yatimchay. In order to free up the Warriors and therefore use them to assault across the open ground into GUINNESS a fourth manoeuvre element was then formed from the remainder of the 2 RGR Recce Platoon, the 2 RGR Snipers and four Mastiffs, and these elements were sent to relieve the Warriors in BASS. On arrival they occupied the three compounds that abutted the Wadi, and placed an anchor observation post in the Wadi to watch the western flank and lateral movement between Yatimchay and Ahmad Khwazi. As this occurred C Squadron and the OMLT identified an enemy forces command and control node on high ground to the south of Ahmad Khwazi; a location that was identified by the Warriors the last time they operated south of the Kariz line. With a composite force holding the vulnerable western flank, the Afghan National Army/OMLT in the centre having conducted an impromptu but effective Relief in Place with their own reserve, B Company on the eastern flank, and C Squadron in depth, the two platoons of Warriors and their mixed RGR/PWRR dismounts were manoeuvred to a line of departure north of the Kariz line from which they could launch onto GUINNESS.

With B Company still in contact, the Afghan National Army and OMLT in hard cover and the QDG engaging depth targets with Javelin, HMG and snipers the Warriors launched south. 105mm HE provided heavier weights of fire support and as the proximity rounds detonated B Company reported seeing a number of secondary explosions in and around Taliban Crossroads and the buildings in GUINNESS. An Attack Helicopter provided more pinpoint support and prosecuted both individual targets and targets identified by the QDG who also reported indirect fire fired into GUINNESS from Ahmad

Khwazi (assessed to be 107mm rockets); Officer Commanding Warriors later reported the same indirect fire. As the Warriors closed to the compounds they engaged with 30mm HE and chaingun supported by B Company snipers and the Fire Support Group, and used vehicles to breach walls before dismounting RGR and PWRR infantry to clear room to room with grenades and small arms fire. This aggressive dangerous work continued until after last light at which time the Warriors were withdrawn to co-locate with B Company for the night.

Throughout the evening of the operation and into the next day, all force elements received sporadic fire from the same enemy force positions and so at 0630 on 5 November, the Warriors cleared GUINNESS for a second time. By 1030hrs Line TETLEY was secure and the enemy forces had withdrawn south to Yatimchay out of contact. Fire into depth continued for the duration of the second day and included strikes onto Mastiffs with what appeared to be 14.5mm rounds that had a secondary effect; conclusive sniper and Javelin engagements; and sporadic small arms fire. However, throughout 5 November and into the 6 November, local nationals returned to the area and passed information about the enemy forces and their dispositions to ISAF FE.

The operation and subsequent search identified the following:

- **BASS:** Firing platforms, empty cases, blood trails & prepared rat-runs into the Wadi.
- **MONK:** Firing Platforms, IED making materiel, Home Made Explosives and empty cases.
- **SPITFIRE:** An IED fabricating/Home Made Explosives storage facility, firing platforms, empty cases & RPG boosters and a semi-detonated IED.
- **GUINNESS:** An IED comprising 15kg of Home Made Explosives, numerous other IED detonation points (assessed to have detonated as the result of indirect fire), firing platforms, empty cases and RPG detritus, drugs, and a weapon.
- **Between GUINNESS & Yatimchay:** A series of well prepared trench and defensive systems running east-west linked north/south by rat runs and communication trenches (elements of these now form the new Forward Line of Enemy Troops and remain occupied).

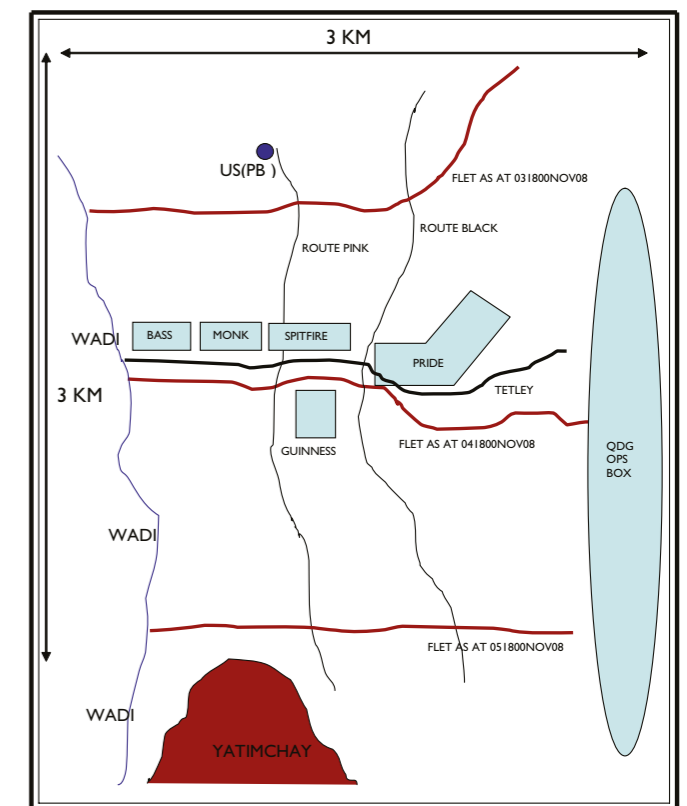
And follow-up activity confirmed that no civilians were hurt during the battle.

The price of this operation was high however and the loss of Rifleman Yubraj Rai hit us all hard, but his sacrifice helped us to defeat the insurgents in the south and we are determined now, more than ever, to ensure that his life was not lost in vain.

Op MAR NONU 2

The first MAR NONU operation sought to redefine a well-established defensive line on our terms. The battle was fought over open farmland interspersed with groups of compounds and the insurgents had established minefields in support of well-prepared defensive positions. These positions were linked to each other and to the rear by communications trenches, rat-runs and Kariz lines, and their primary Command and Control location lay some 2 km to the south and west across a Wadi and well out of direct fire range. This complex terrain was further complicated by the presence of standing corn that provided cover from view and which we could not easily remove for fear of alienating those farmers that did remain. The challenges associated with Op MAR NONU 2 were completely different.

The north of the Area of Operations (AO) is significantly less open. Bordered to the east by a warren of desert compounds and to the west by the Musa Qal'eh (MSQ) Wadi, the land in between is a patchwork of small fields, tree lined irrigation ditches and deep canals running north-south. Here and there large groves of trees make observation difficult and the presence of pomegranate orchards, overgrown compounds and an area of marijuana-laced jungle on the fringes of the Wadi increase the complexity of this terrain. Throughout the summer the insurgents had used this corridor to transit to within striking distance of the District Centre and form-up for attacks, and as shelter, safe-haven and cache for weapons, stores and IEDs. Unlike the south (until recently) there was no Security Force (SF) Patrol Base (PB) from which to interdict insurgent activity - Satellite Station North to the south and east of the desert compounds was too far away to have a direct effect, and Roshan Tower, while an excellent location from which to observe the enemy and, potentially, to strike them at long range, is perched



on the edge of a cliff some 150ft above the valley floor and so is impractical as a base from which to deny enemy movement.

The absence of a permanent SF presence in the Wadi or in the neighbouring Green Zone meant that the insurgents had sewn the area with IEDs throughout the summer and used the gaps as ambush locations to hit the Afghan National Security Forces and the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders (5 SCOTS). The urban and jungle fringes had become equally dangerous and the area was seldom patrolled in anything less than company-sized groups as a result. The initiative was held by the insurgents; the government was unable to operate in the area and the Taliban were entirely content with this far from satisfactory state of affairs. To add to the challenge, the insurgent stronghold of Kats Sharbat lay some 4½km to the north and, as the previous Battle Group had found out, the insurgents defended ground with increasing ferocity the further north coalition forces pushed.

The key therefore was to wrest the initiative from the insurgents, and the best way to do this was to establish an ANSF Patrol Base in the middle of the Green Zone. If correctly positioned we reasoned that it would allow coalition forces to interdict Enemy Forces (EF) and their IEDs; deter intimidation; and push the insurgent safe havens north. We also reasoned that if we could build on what we had learned during Op MAR NONU 1, maintain the momentum that this operation had generated, and reinforce what we hoped were the insurgents' beliefs and fears, there was a strong chance that we would be successful. The challenges associated with achieving this goal however were interesting. First, I had been told that there was very little appetite for any additional permanent ISAF locations (they tied down force elements that could be better employed elsewhere); a fundamental point and one that I agreed with wholeheartedly. This meant that I had to persuade the ANSF to man the PB; my second problem. Third, I had to identify a location that was defensible, iconic and sustainable over the long-term. Finally, I had to persuade the Governor of the necessity for action – a considerable challenge given that he was rumoured to be content with the status quo.

A series of shuras, some fast manoeuvring to secure resources and re-position assets, and confirmation from the District Governor that there was a requirement for positive action by the security forces, set the conditions for the op and so, after a quick re-cock, the Battle Group was poised for its second operation in ten days.

The plan was to use a large deception group comprising armoured and reconnaissance vehicles to demonstrate in the vicinity of the Taliban stronghold of Kats Sharbat. This activity would reinforce the insurgents' belief that ISAF and the ANSF were intent on capturing their northern safe haven and thereby fix them in place. Manoeuvre, air, aviation, direct and indirect fire employed by this potent force would further enhance this belief and, it was hoped, draw reinforcements north away from our target area of operations. It should also allow us to identify enemy commanders and their associated command and control nodes for subsequent exploitation. While this powerful group fixed the enemy, a combined ISAF/ANA/ANP group would sweep north within boundaries to reduce the remaining enemy threat

before holding on a line to prevent insurgent infiltration south. Behind this line specialist search teams and ordnance disposal officers would clear target compounds of IEDs in order to allow the infantry, with engineering support, to build a Patrol Base (PB) in the Green Zone. The endstate was a well-found PB in the north of the AO that completed the MSQ PB ring, and from which ANSF/ISAF could interdict north and deny enemy movement south.

By 1800hrs on D-1 Battle Group Tac HQ had deployed to Roshan Tower by Recce Jackal vehicles and established itself in the forward Observation Point overlooking the upper MSQ Wadi. B Company Group 2 RGR was complete in the District Centre having completed battle procedure and its link-up with the Royal Engineer Search Advisor (RESA), Royal Engineer Search Team (REST) and the Improvised Explosive Device – Denial (IED-D) Team. B Company Group 1 PWRR remained in the south dominating the gains made during Op MAR NONU 1. And the Recce Group, comprising a half squadron of Mastiffs from C Squadron QDG and elements of the RGR Recce Platoon in Jackals had forward based to HIMAL OP in preparation for their feint the following morning.

At 0500hrs on D-Day the Recce Group departed HIMAL OP and headed north up the Farhad Mandah Wadi in dead ground to MSQ and Kats Sharbat. After about 3 km of fast movement on dry river beds the Recce Group turned east at speed and broke onto the high ground overlooking their objective. It became immediately apparent that the ground was unsuitable for Mastiff and so it was decided that the callsigns should split. The half Squadron moved back into dead ground before pushing 800m further north and cresting the rise for a second time to find that they had excellent fields of view onto Kats Sharbat, its approaches and had room for manoeuvre. Meanwhile, Capt Kit Kyte and his Recce callsigns pushed south to where they had seen a cutting in the Wadi wall which they believed would take them onto the high ground overlooking Kats from where they should be able to offer, and receive, support from the Mastiffs to their north.

While the Recce Group moved north to be in position for daylight, B Coy 2 RGR made ready and, after a final check, exited the FOB to begin their clearance of the DC. Under a setting moon they pushed slowly north under the command of Major Ross Daines who carefully choreographed the movement of his subunits to minimise their exposure to known enemy ambush positions, clear compounds of interest and areas of scrub, and to identify likely areas for search by the RESA/REST in an area that was known to contain large, complex and cunningly disguised IEDs. While B Coy crept north Tac HQ used the suite of ISTAR assets located at Roshan Tower to sweep the route ahead of them, identify movement and the hot spots that signified digging, and to maintain eyes on the north of the Wadi to ensure that the enemy did not move south to intercept. Overhead the high pitched whine of Hermes 450, an Unmanned Air Vehicle known colloquially as 'Green Eyes', faded in and out of earshot while several thousand feet above it a pair of US Navy F18s kept station in case they were needed.

As dawn broke the Mastiffs were in position to the north and west of Kats Sharbat. Further to the south, having moved through the cutting to gain the high ground, the RGR Recce had discovered an old Soviet defensive position that overlooked their objective and, after a careful clearance, occupied it; with the bodies of their Jackals hidden in BMP scrapes the boys were able to observe to their front and cover the open ground with GMG and HMG without having to expose any more than their heads and shoulders. Dismounted, the commanders occupied a series of trenches to the front of their vehicles and it was from these that the first reports of movement came. Having been ordered to make a conspicuous arrival as dawn broke the effect achieved was significant. Within minutes Intercom (ICOM) chatter between enemy commanders indicated that they had seen ISAF forces; and minutes after this hundreds of civilians were seen moving west from their houses and compounds across the Wadi and through the Green Zone to escape the anticipated contact. This exodus took perhaps 15 minutes and so by about 0645hrs all movement had ceased. However, the volume of the ICOM chatter that our attached Electronic Warfare Teams picked up confirmed that we had the attention of the enemy, and that they were calling on their men to prepare for an attack. At this stage the Commander of the Recce Group was directed to increase the confusion. He complied and moments later a large artillery smoke and illumination mission was landing in the area of the enemy-occupied compounds; this obvious show of intent was supported by vigorous, tactical vehicle movement. The ensuing ICOM chatter was reported and logged for subsequent use.

By 0830hrs B Coy 2 RGR had cleared up to its line of departure and without pause rolled through picking up an Afghan National Army company on its eastern flank. Together these sub-units pushed north through the fields, streams and desert compounds of the northern MSQ Wadi while around them nothing moved. There were no civilians in the fields, no children in the streets and no animals released to pasture. This continued throughout the day; an interesting development for an area that until the day before had either been subject to predictable civilian activity, or a significant number of large-scale small arms attacks.

When coalition forces reached the mid-point of their clearance – Objective SAINTS – elements were siphoned off to sweep the area for IEDs and to secure it against small arms attack while B Coy and the ANA continued to push north. Once SAINTS was secure a troop of Mastiffs pushed north up the MSQ Wadi to deliver RESA/REST, the IED-D and a DROPS vehicle loaded with defence stores and logistic supplies for the new PB. In an attempt to continue the distraction to the north, and thus reduce further the threat in the south, the Recce Group was then ordered to fire another smoke and illum mission but to deepen the confusion by adding movement and direct fire. Within minutes the guns were thumping away behind Roshan Tower; the Mastiffs were appearing, moving and then reappearing from a series of defensible positions on the ridge to the west of Kats, and the RGR Recce engaged a lone hill to the rear of a series of compounds. Recce and the Mastiffs also engaged a Taliban commander who had remained in the deserted compounds to report on ISAF movement.

By mid-afternoon the search teams had completed their scrutiny of the compounds we had selected for the new Patrol Base and had moved onto a secondary target. However, while elements of the security force moved to begin the build of the PB, the QM and the Adjutant investigated a series of suspicious looking wires protruding from the compound's wall. An immediate return of the Ammunition Technical Officer confirmed the suspicious nature of the wires and within minutes the REST Team had traced the wires to a 40kg IED dug into the floor of the future PB. At almost the same time the ANA came under sporadic small arms fire and an ANA rifleman was wounded. During the course of the casualty extraction a second IED was discovered, while further to the south a third device was discovered by the PWRR Warrior Company who remained in their AO.

With night beginning to fall the Recce Group were ordered to withdraw. The deception had been a complete success but the stock of the Group ended a notch higher after their successful interdiction of a number of high-profile commanders, and their accompanying 'dickers' as they attempted to flee west in a variety of vehicles; few made it. Finally, as the sun set and darkness descended on the valley below Roshan Tower there was an ear splitting roar and a blinding flash followed immediately by a star burst of light as the seat of the explosion was spread over several hundred meters. The IED-D Team had exploded the large IED found in compound 260; the resultant fire burned all night.

Throughout the second day B Coy and the ANA maintained their block at the northern end of the MSQ Wadi in order to allow the Royal Engineers and all remaining RGR manpower to build the key components of PBWOQAB (which means Eagle in Pashtun). Confused as to the reasons for our activities the day before, and aware that the second day of Op MAR NONU 1 had been as ferocious as the first, the insurgents stayed away from the block and our construction and this allowed the IED-D to clear the IED discovered by the ANA the day before. As a result, by dawn on the second day WOQAB was almost secure enough to occupy and so, as the ANA withdrew to their base at Satellite Station North, Tac HQ redeployed to WOQAB and spent the morning filling double height HESCO Bastions by hand using sandbags before a double contact in the early afternoon. The small arms, machine gun and RPG fire that ensued identified that the insurgents had woken up to our real aim and these attacks set the tone for the remainder of the month for B Coy.

Op MAR NONU 2 was a complete success. The overt show of force to the north and west of Kats Sharbat using heavily-resourced manoeuvre, fire and airborne platforms precipitated a mass exodus of the local population and, subsequently, fixed Enemy Forces in place, drew reinforcements north away from our operational focus, and generated significant J2 (intelligence) for subsequent exploitation. As we departed, the locals returned to their compounds – none of which had been damaged during the operation. Under the cover of this significant show-of-force Afghan National Security Forces and ISAF Force Elements pushed north through the MSQ Wadi to blocking positions well into the enemy area of influence without a shot being fired. Behind the block an Improvised Explosive Device-Denial Team cleared



Tacon Patrol



Night Support

a number of target compounds and neutralised two IEDs without incident and Patrol Base WOQAB was constructed. The new PB interdicts enemy ingress south from the Baghni Valley; completes the Musa Qal'eh PB ring; and continues to confuse the enemy as to our long-term intent. The evolving threat is entirely as predicted and Local National atmospherics remain positive (immediate follow-up by a Stabilisation Team again proved invaluable). Our focus in the north will now switch to dominating the Area of Operations; building Local National confidence; interdicting Enemy Forces and IED movement south; and understanding the area in order to generate intelligence for subsequent Company-level (Battle Group supported) targeted strike ops focusing predominately on Counter-IED activity.

Two Vignettes

Recce Platoon 2 RGR – The BG (NW) 'Find' Group

Despite the tactical success of MAR NONU 1 & 2 it was too early to tell whether the results were long term and so we needed to keep the Dush on the back foot. A key element in the delivery of this concept was the Recce Group that would now be required to conduct discrete, independent operations on the flanks to maintain pressure on the enemy and keep him guessing as to our long-term intent. C Squadron (-) Queen's Dragoon Guards commanded by Major Nick Thomas, and the Recce Platoon elements of the Battle Group's organic FIND force commanded by Capt Kit Kyte (OC Recce Platoon 2 RGR) formed the Recce Group. On a Thursday in the middle of December, a mixed force of Mastiff and Jackal departed Musa Qal'eh (MSQ) District Centre for the eastern desert and a patrol into the area of Wach Kariz where a Heavy Machine Gun had been spotted during Op MAR NONU 1. The patrol formed up the night before and left for the Baghni Wadi and the desert beyond well before dawn broke on the 18th. Having stopped to search the vulnerable point for threats over the culvert at the entrance to the Wadi the convoy moved off and by the time the sun began to rise above the mountains of Kajaki the recce team had made it into the eastern desert without incident. Clear of the compounds and buildings that mark the edge of MSQ the desert becomes a series of rolling hills dotted here and there by individual compounds and isolated brick walls, and it was in this landscape that the recce callsigns turned south for their objective.

Following the dips and folds in the ground the convoy remained hidden from the screen of 'dickers' that protected the approaches to Wach Kariz but, despite this, as local nationals began to stir, plumes of white wood smoke spiralled into the clear blue sky. Each spiral could be traced to a compound and each compound linked to the progress of the Recce Group as it moved stealthily towards its objective. By the time OC QDG and OC Recce had reached their initial lie-up position, a total of 14 plumes of smoke marked their route south, and hasty calculations identified that despite the early start, covered approach and contact-free move, the Taliban had received between one and two hours notice of the ISAF advance.

The HMG used by the Dush during Op MAR NONU 1 had been mounted on a vehicle and supported by indirect fire and a screen of infantry. The aim of the patrol therefore was to flush out the gun and to quantify its supporting fires so that both could be destroyed either as part of today's operation or subsequently. In order to achieve this, the recce commanders intended to manoeuvre the more heavily armoured Mastiff onto the high ground to the north of Yatimchay to threaten the flanks of the enemy defence. Previously this had drawn fire and, eventually, provoked the Dush into using prestige weapons in a coordinated attack. It was hoped that belligerent action by the Mastiff today would achieve the same effect. Having exposed their firing points the aim was to guide the Recce Jackals onto the target and then engage the enemy with Javelin supported by GMG, HMG and GPMG fire.

With the element of surprise now in question the commanders of the two groups adjusted the plan before remounting their vehicles and moving onto the high ground. From my position in the Green Zone some 2km to the west the appearance of eight Mastiffs and their unhurried adoption of an overt and menacing position of overwatch just metres from what the enemy perceived to be their own backyard was impressive. Unfortunately, with the Mastiffs occupying the optimum positions from which to observe into Wach Kariz and Yatimchay, and in which to receive fire, there was little room left for the RGR Recce vehicles and so Capt Kyte decided to push his Jackals forward of the Mastiffs but slightly to the east so that they were not exposed to the HMG threat and, perhaps more importantly, so that they were ready to engage the HMG should it be fired.

Leading his group of seven vehicles from their laager, OC Recce followed the low ground to minimise the chance of being seen before climbing onto a piece of high ground adjacent to that occupied by the Mastiffs. As the vehicles crested the rise the lead crew discovered a jerry-rigged ICOM rebro station complete with solar panels, transmitter, and car battery while, nearby, two long poles sported antennae and wires linking the whole together. It was the work of moments to gather the electrical components and of seconds to reduce the poles to kindling; the first use of a kukri in anger by 2 RGR for some time. While the lead crew was dealing with the device the remainder of Recce manoeuvred so that they could cover defensive arcs unimpeded, and it was at this stage that they noticed the down-turn in atmospherics. Women and children were seen scurrying away from nearby compounds, the number of men watching the ISAF 'soap opera' reduced significantly, and ICOM chatter reporting Taliban movement and imminent 'attacks' increased. Kit and his crew remounted during this deterioration in conditions and by the time they were rolling again the compounds to their front were deserted.

After a further ten minutes, Recce settled into positions from which a hasty move to support the tethered Mastiff was possible and, once in position, Javelin CLUs and snipers were deployed to look into the desert around the target area. For about 20 minutes nothing moved then, suddenly, the desert to the right of the vehicles burst into a life and, a few seconds later, the unmistakable sound of machinegun fire rose from the desert compounds. Moments later the air above the crews crackled with fire followed seconds later by the deeper thump of reports from the firing point. Eventually the crews identified the firing point some 800m away and OC Recce signalled for the Jackals to move into dead ground. As the lead vehicles began to roll, their move covered by the second half of the callsign, Cpl Basanta Rai, a sniper from the last vehicle, positively identified a series of 'dickers' lining the high ground about 800m to the south. As Basanta watched, he saw members of this screen talking to each other and into radios and then gesticulating; moments later the machinegun fired and he watched as the rounds landed close-by the target area corresponding with the direction of the arm waving. Confident that there was a connection between the arm-waving Afghans and the incoming machinegun fire, Basanta asked for, and received permission, to fire a warning shot. Moments later the closest dicker lay sprawled in the dust, his motorcycle lying some 10ft beyond in a smoking heap, a single .338 sized hole in its engine block.

As the Jackals gathered pace they began to take additional, more accurate fire from the compounds immediately to their front. Initially assessed as sniper fire Recce readjusted their assessment as the rounds became more sustained so, with small arms fire bouncing off the side armour of their vehicles, Recce engaged with HMG and GPMG. Within moments the incoming fire had been reduced to occasional bursts. As if on some sort of agreed signal, however, as soon as the most imminent threat was reduced another, closer contact was initiated and soon Recce was taking fire from, and returning fire to, three sides while continuing to move away from the initial contact site. As he moved OC Recce took stock with a view to identifying how he

might re-infiltrate in support of the Mastiff once he had broken contact, and it was while doing this that he noticed that the line of dickers previously deterred by Cpl Basanta had returned and that one particular individual appeared to be coordinating their actions. Swinging his GPMG through 90 degrees Capt Kyte engaged this apparent leader and he dropped from sight. With the enemy fire diminishing Recce halted and began to search the contact points for any sign of the HMG that, ultimately, was their target. But before a complete survey could be completed the Dush added accurate 82mm indirect fire (IDF) to the mix. After 12 rounds OC Recce signalled a further move and 20 seconds later his vehicle disappeared in a blinding flash. Two kilometres away I watched a plume of smoke and dust rise from the contact point and then listened to the radio crackle into life 'Contact, explosion. Wait out.' I recognised Sgt Bupal's voice so knew that he wasn't the target but beyond that there was little information available.

Kit Kyte came-to metres from his vehicle in a cloud of dust, grit and smoke. A cursory check established that his arms and legs were still attached and that despite the blood in his mouth nothing unpleasant had happened to the rest of him. Picking himself up he jogged through the clearing dust desperate to find the rest of his crew and bumped straight into Cpl Sajan 'Bob', and it was while they were confirming that they were both OK that Rfn Dhan, their gunner, kicked the side door of the vehicle open and emerged, grinning, into the growing sunlight. Miraculously none had been injured but the IED that they had struck had blown the front passenger side wheel, the wheel over which Kit sat, some 100m into the desert. It also smashed the underside of the vehicle beneath Kit's seat and mangled a number of pieces of equipment, including Kit's SA80 that now lay bent in two beneath his battered chair. Still in contact, the crew then stripped their stricken vehicle of anything useful and, with fire continuing to land around them, they scrambled aboard the remaining Jackals and moved into the dead ground before a link-up with the relative safety of the more heavily armoured Mastiffs. As an after note, when Major Nick Thomas (OC C Sqn QDG) was asked to recount what he had heard during the contact, the only thing that really stuck in his mind were the words uttered in response to his own 'Are there any casualties?' a question to which he received the reply 'We've only got one casualty, it's me, I'm CAT C...no...I'm a bit less than that...no...I'm alright...I'm still moving'.

The patrol continued on task for a further hour before returning to the DC. The stricken Jackal was recovered and has now been repaired; the Mastiffs identified and marked the carrying platform of the HMG; impact points on the Mastiffs identified the weapon as a 14.5 mm HMG; and the insurgents remain penned in Yatimchay concerned about their flanks.

D Company 2 RGR - Ops Company Battle Group (South)

D Company has extensive experience in Afghanistan and so we were the natural choice to detach to support operations in the 'Snake's Head' area of southern Helmand. Continuing the excellent work begun by B Company 1 RGR a year ago,

D Company Group 2 RGR is based at Forward Operating Base DELHI and has its own Area of Operations (AO) as part of the Queen's Dragoon Guards Battle Group (Battle Group South (BG(S))). The Company is responsible for securing the vital ground of the Garmsir Bazaar; conducting the dangerous, and seemingly endless task of countering the Improvised Explosive device (IED) threat that pervades the Snake's Head; securing a number of isolated, austere and oft targeted out-stations; and providing a surge capability for Battle Group and Brigade strike operations – tasks that include providing indirect fire support from their integral mortars.

By mid-November D Company had established itself in its AO and CO BG (S) was keen to use the boys' intuitive feel for the ground and understanding of the AO to best effect. With this in mind it was decided that D Company would surge south across the Front Line of Enemy Troops (FLET) to target insurgent bomb makers and their network of safe houses. Using intelligence provided by the IX Group at Brigade and information generated by the Battle Group's own patrols OC D (Maj Jody Davis) planned the surge and delivered his orders.

At dawn on D-Day the Company departed for a series of initial objectives. This surge, conducted by Tac HQ, a strong Fire Support Group (commanded by Sgt Hiss) and 11 Platoon, unearthed some interesting information but failed to discover anything decisive, and so the OC decided to push south to Patrol Base (PB) Jugroom and an overnight stop with B Company 1 RIFLES. The plan was to laager the patrol's Mastiffs and WMIKs outside the PB before conducting a joint patrol the following morning in the vicinity of Jugroom Fort. However, shortly after D Company arrived, the OC received information that a complex IED had been discovered in the area planned for the following day's patrol and that the device was likely to be defended by a number of heavily armed Taliban. With this in mind the plan was adjusted; D Company would push into the area supported by elements of B Company 1 RIFLES who knew the ground and, once the IED had been secured by D Company, a team of specialists would be flown in to deny the device.

The following morning, before dawn, the joint patrol began their push south. Under cover of the Fire Support Group the infantry moved slowly through the broken landscape around Jugroom Fort. In anticipation of a contact the platoons moved from cover to cover using a series of defensive trench lines prepared by the Taliban only months before. This cautious movement continued until Tac HQ and 11 Platoon, under command of Lt Hawley, neared the limit of the Fire Support Group's covering fire at which point the platoons went firm and the WMIKs, commanded by Capt Hughes and Sgt Hiss, jockeyed south and into position to cover the next bound.

And so it continued; a nerve tingling series of moves south over open ground with the occasional burst of Taliban ICOM chatter adding spice to an already charged atmosphere. With the sun now high in the winter sky it also became apparent that the locals knew something was in the offing; goat herders hurried north ushering their herds before them; those tied to the land avoided eye contact and appeared to dig more quickly;

while civilian traffic using the only route through the area dried to a trickle.

After several hours D Company had pushed to within 500m of the suspect device. With the interpreters' ICOM scanner reporting corresponding moves by an unseen number of Taliban, the boys then used the sparse cover afforded by a winter tree line and a series of irrigation ditches to invest the target. The FSG meanwhile moved to screen the remainder of the Company from the visible line of 'dickers' that had shadowed the Company south. A series of tightly coordinated moves ensured that the cordon was sustainable and then the Company waited while a team from 11 Platoon moved. The ICOM burst into life and, in the distance, groups of locals suddenly ran for cover. Convinced that an attack was imminent OC D decided to take the initiative; Cpl Santosh Rai was ordered to move his team onto the high ground overlooking the cordon, the FSG to make corresponding adjustments to the security ring, and Lt Crawley to continue on task. In support of Santosh's move, and in order to further confuse the watching enemy, D Company's mortars were also ordered to fire. Within moments Cpl Santosh had his men moving, and the combination of aggressive, threatening movement, unexplained flanking fires, and a low-level high-speed over-flight by a visibly heavily armed US Marine F18 was sufficient to deter the Taliban.

Under cover of the over-flight Lt Crawley continued with his confirmation and, after what seemed like several hours, his small team returned to Tac HQ and reported the discovery of two daisy chain IEDs linked to a pressure plate initiation device. He also reported the presence of a separate pressure plate IED. All were sited to target ISAF of Government troops as they took cover in near-by shell scrapes, and all would have inflicted significant casualties if they had been initiated. With this knowledge OC D arranged for the deployment of the Bomb Disposal Team and the Company remained in place while the devices were explosively cleared. A cautious recovery followed with the different groups covering each other as they moved north – the Disposal Team safely sandwiched in the middle.

Afterword

Though successful, the price of our operations in Afghanistan has been high and the loss of CSgt Krishna Dura and Rifleman Yubraj Rai hit us all hard. However, we have already defeated the insurgents in the south and they remain confused as to our long-term intent, and in the north a new ANSF Patrol Base has been inserted in a well-known enemy engagement corridor. These operations have allowed the 2 RGR BG to put the insurgents on a more reactive footing throughout MSQ District and as a result their focus has now moved away slightly from the kinetic attacks to a more asymmetric approach within the AO, with greater use of IEDs and suicide IED attacks. (The IED threat in the AO has remained high throughout; but the new vehicles (Mastiffs and Jackals) have shown their worth in this challenging environment.) Elsewhere the rest of the Battalion receive plaudits for all they undertake and continue to maintain the high regard from all concerned for the Gurkha on operations in Afghanistan.

Op HERRICK 9 2 RGR Battle Group (North West) - Influence

By Major T C M-K Jackman OC Sp Company 2 RGR

"Reports that say that something hasn't happened are always interesting to me, because as we know, there are known knowns; these are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns – the ones we don't know we don't know." Donald Rumsfeld.

When broadcast, this quote sounded a little bizarre; it does make sense, but for those still requiring an American to English translation it might read more pertinently if it was translated as:

'There is information that we have; there is information that we want but that we don't have; and there is information that we don't know that we need.'

In the context of 2 RGR's latest foray to Afghanistan, and despite significant collective previous experience, it was pertinent and we arrived in Musa Qal'eh at the stage of the last two. In terms of the first: we knew where we were, what we had, and we had a pretty good idea of what we needed to do!

Context

Musa Qal'eh was a 'young' Area of Operations (AO) when we arrived. The area was re-taken after Op MAR KARADAD in December 2007. Since then the Force Elements (FE) in the District Centre (DC) itself have increased from a Battle Group (BG) Tactical HQ and a Light Company to the BG HQ, an Armoured Infantry (AI) Company Group, a Mastiff Squadron, a Rifle Company Group, Artillery, Engineers and the enablers that have now been established here. This article will explain the activities that are referred to as 'Influence' in the context of the complex insurgent environment that we faced in Musa Qal'eh.

It became clear as we prepared for Op HERRICK 9 (H9) that consent would be the key aspect of success and the CO laid the foundations for understanding this concept in the Battalion early. In order to win consent the BG would have to understand and in order to understand we would have to become involved in the fabric of the communities in which we would be conducting operations. It was obvious when we arrived that there were areas within the AO where we would be operating and fighting amongst the local communities. There were also areas that had been abandoned by their communities, and so whilst infrastructure existed in varying states the areas were populated by insurgents. It also became clear that the spectrum of operations that we were likely to have to undertake would vary from very kinetic operations, such as the BG clearance that developed into a BG attack (Op MAR NONU 1) to more discreet and constant activities to gain and retain the consent of the people amongst whom we would operate (deepening).

Understanding

'To understand' are words that are used on a daily basis when planning and operating in MSQ. There are many places within our established AO that we had very little information about. Simple information such as village names, their boundaries, whether they had a mosque and a mullah, who lived in which compounds, where the most dangerous dog lived, which families had relatives who were fighting, what crops were being planted; when and by whom? Who owned land and who were tenants, who owned livestock? On a larger scale it was important to understand the rural life cycle. When would crops be planted, what constituted rural infrastructure, what levels of activity would occur at different stages during the cycle, how was the water managed, how would changing weather affect the communities, who represented the communities, how did this work, what did the Government mean to the communities, what impact would security forces' presence have on the communities, what effect would all these factors have on the enemy?

We also had to consider how the communities represented their issues, disputes and their own development needs to the District Governor (DG) and his shura. Did the DG's office and his shura have the capacity, competence and resources to resolve these issues? It was clear from day one that in order to understand our area and therefore have a positive influence on its people and its traditional institutions and begin to wrestle the initiative from the insurgents we would have to operate amongst the communities, and develop close relationships with the DG, his shura and the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). Only by doing this were we likely to begin to be able to have an influence and gain consent, increasingly dislocating the insurgents from the population.

Mindset

We like simple things. Military doctrine is no different and many an officer has had to articulate complex processes in simple ways in an effort to capture meaningfully what it is that we do and how we think. For some, PowerPoint is a wonderful tool for this doctrinal development because there is almost no limit to the variety and complexity of baffling diagrams or slides that can be produced. Current Counter Insurgency Doctrine devotes a chapter to influence. Sadly its scope is limited to what was the domain of information operations replacing 'Information Operations' cunningly with 'Influence Operations' and confining the scope to the information domain.

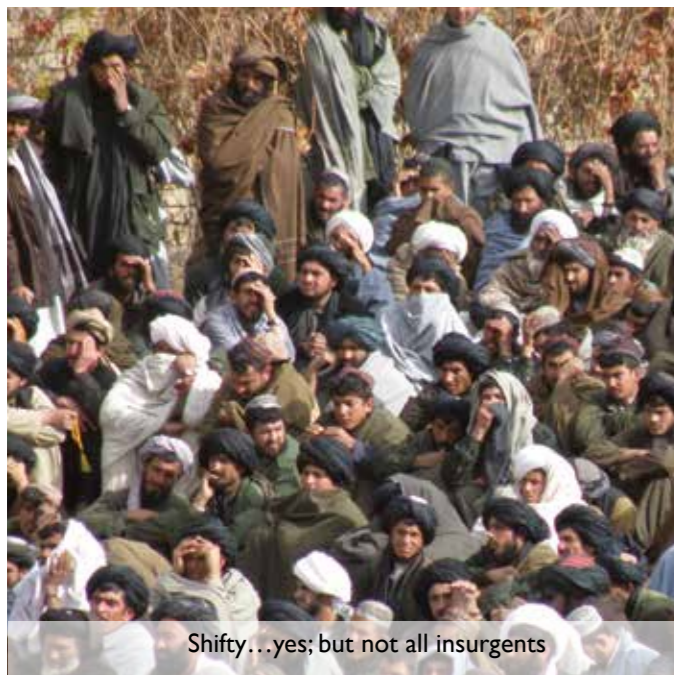
Being good Infantrymen and slow readers, easily confused by Venn diagrams, we departed from the doctrine early. Rather than constraining ourselves to information or non-kinetic influence, we took the view that everything we did had an influence because everything we did or said would have an enduring



Weeding a field of poppies - the main local cash crop



Man with tree



Shifty...yes; but not all insurgents

thread or impact in terms of perception, whether that was local or insurgents or both.

At the lowest level, meeting people, being culturally sensitive and being a frequent feature of the local communities was likely to have the most enduring effect. This was only possible by living amongst the population. The application of proportionate and precise violence against the insurgents was also likely to have as much influence on them as the on the local people's perception of our strength and ability (highly respected qualities in Pashtun society). The more difficult conundrum was, and remains, working out the potential outcomes of any activity and considering the second, third and fourth order effects of everything we do. The key to trying to predict these was, and remains, understanding our environment and its people, particularly as the situation evolved.

The other early obvious realization was that, rather than the traditional notion that we would operate in a spectrum of operations ranging from kinetic to non-kinetic activities (hard – soft), our situation was likely to mean that we would be operating kinetically and non-kinetically concurrently most of the time – a continuum of soft and hard effects. The sum of all our effects would therefore equal our influence. It was not unusual to conduct operations from people's compounds, and commanders were not infrequently faced with the situation where their men were fighting from the roof, while they patiently explained to the occupants what was going on. This was the case, the BG benefited from adopting this wider scope, embedding the capabilities associated with soft effects into the BG HQ and its decision making process from the outset which delivered coherent, complementary effects and thus influence throughout the tour.

Posture

Despite considerable previous operational experience in Afghanistan, we were new to Musa Qal'eh and its people. Previous experience carried some weight, but was not a magic key to unlocking trust. The area's people are deeply conservative and very wary of foreigners; this factor was also exacerbated by high illiteracy rates and a general lack of education amongst rural communities who have been disappointed by successive regimes for three decades. The importance of being a 'man of your word' cannot be over exaggerated. Consequently no promises were made and what we could deliver was put in the simplest terms and delivered. There was little more powerful in this environment than doing what you say. We stated that we would clear Dagan and push the insurgents back to Yatimchay; we did. We told the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP) that we would secure a Patrol Base (PB) in the middle of the Green Zone (GZ) between Satellite Station (North) (SS (N)) and Roshan Tower OP (RT); we did. Living by what we said was vital to building trust. Of equal import was the requirement to 'tread light'. It would have been easy and possible to impose ourselves on the fragile communities, throw money at projects and create false micro economies. We had stabilization funding, but it had to be used with great care. The Military Stabilisation Support Teams (MSSTs) deployed forward

and instilled the notion, early, that we could facilitate self help. Where work was identified we encouraged communities to provide the working men, pay them the daily rate, ensuring that local contractors and local resources were used. Occasionally expertise was required to help during planning stages but once a solution was agreed, the outcome would be as good as the people of MSQ could deliver. It is believed that this lighter touch also helped restore some pride to naturally proud people who had had their self esteem eroded following years of conflict.

Capabilities

Much has been made by the press in recent years about equipment, but, for the slightly longer of tooth, recent weapons procurement has delivered an array of weaponry that gives us perhaps more firepower at our disposal down to platoon level than has ever been the case. Importantly much of this was precision weaponry, whether artillery rockets, air delivered munitions or the snipers (either 105mm sniping artillery - which became known as the Dragon Gun - or traditional infantry snipers). The resultant accuracy as well as the BG's understanding of the application of firepower through rules of engagement led to a situation where we had no verified reports of civilian casualties, another key component in retaining consent.

The application of force required clear and decisive judgement as the accompanying photos illustrate:

- Op MAR NONU I following an artillery barrage onto well-prepared insurgent defensive positions in an area that had been abandoned by the population for months.
- The 'Dragon Gun' in action. This 105mm light gun was accurate and deadly. It had a very significant physical and psychological impact on the insurgents who became very cautious having been completely taken by surprise by its first rounds. Its accuracy and shock effect on the insurgents was praised by the locals who lived in the target area, who said that they 'liked the accurate artillery'.
- Warrior withdrawing from contact. Shock action, firepower, mobility and protection comprehensively defeated the insurgents in Obj Guinness during Op MAR NONU I. Locals were reassured by the presence of the 'tanks' as long as we didn't drive over crops.

At the other end of the capability spectrum we had an excellent array of modern airborne and ground based daytime, thermal and radar cued optics, enabling target acquisition well beyond our Forward Line of Own Troops (FLOT). A small but effective Unmanned Aerial Vehicle detachment with day and night Full Motion Video (FMV) capability complemented our BG surveillance devices. These capabilities were supported by Platoon and BG level Electronic Warfare (EW) intercept, and we could draw on Task Force Intelligence Surveillance Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance (ISTAR) assets including EW intercept and direction finding. We also had a radio broadcasting station that transmitted to a range of around 15km, Civil Military Co-operation (CIMIC) staff, a Reconstruction and Development Engineer (R&D), and an intelligence cell that was



ANP Searching - Locals searching locals created the correct impression and gave no opportunity for criticism of ISAF from the insurgents



Arty Op MNI



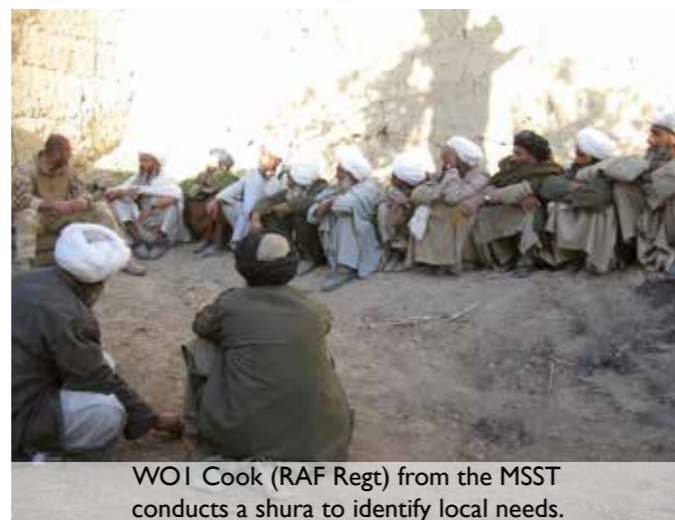
Dragon Gun



PWRR Warrior withdrawing from contact at USPB

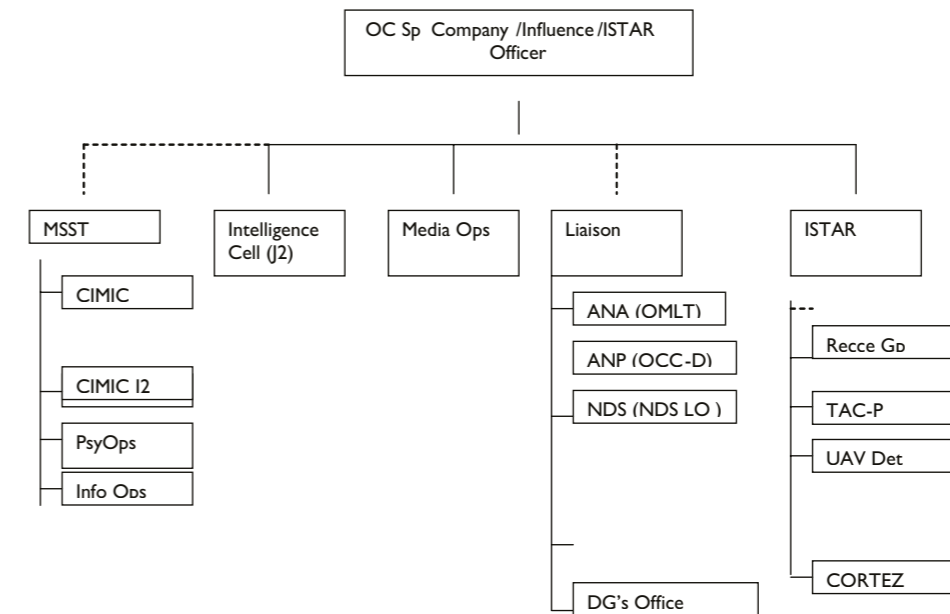
re-orientated to understanding the environment and how the insurgents interacted within it, rather than simply focussing on the insurgents themselves; it also developed working intelligence linkages with Afghan National Army and Police intelligence, the Afghan National Directorate of Security (NDS) intelligence and CIMIC intelligence. We had a civilian Stability Advisor principally responsible for enabling the growth of Afghan institutions and mentoring economic and social development and a Political Advisor responsible for mentoring the development of governance. The ANA were mentored by Support Company 1st Battalion The Rifles, with the HQ providing mentoring for the Kandak (Afghan Battalion) HQ co-located with our BG HQ. The ANP were mentored by a mixed bag of US Marine Corps mentors, Close Support Royal Military Police (CS RMP), Law Enforcement experts and MoD Police; this grouping being drawn together by a small hub of Royal Marines (RM) called the Operational Co-ordination Centre-District (OCC-D). It was these latter elements that were drawn together under the influence banner within the BG HQ.

The Battalion 2IC naturally assumed the role of BG Chief of Staff with control over operations and plans for the Combat and Combat Support (CS) elements. OC Sp Company was given the responsibility of controlling all influence elements and ensuring that their activities were coherent with the CO's intent and coordinated with all BG activities. The lead varied



WO1 Cook (RAF Regt) from the MSST conducts a shura to identify local needs.

between the type of operation and at the beginning sy ops tended to be supported by influence but we found as time went by that most security operations supported influence effects. Whether supporting or supported, as highlighted above, we found that it was vital that all planning and execution phases had to incorporate the fusion of the two (what is now being called Joint Action). So the Influence element of the HQ was structured as follows:

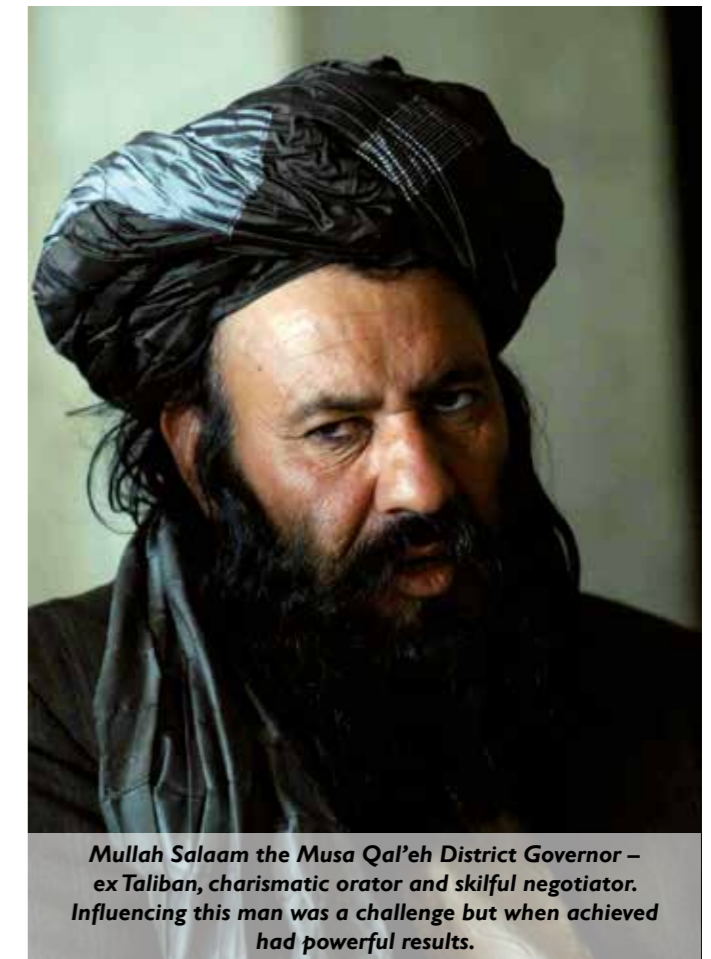


Successes

There were many. There were disappointments too, but perseverance began to pay off as the actions behind the concepts outlined began to coalesce. Local people started to tell us about Improvised Explosive Devices, communities began to recognise individual commanders and personalities, we began to recognise local personalities, people began to talk openly to patrols, and we began to understand how people were intimidated. We reacted to complaints, listened to problems and helped where possible to facilitate local solutions.

An example of this development was the reaction of the Mullahs. We were conscious that Mullahs were a key to the communities, particularly as opinion formers. We knew that there were many mosques, varying from very small single-room buildings that looked like small dwellings in villages to larger more obvious walled and comparatively-well appointed compounds. Despite this it was not apparent that we had met any Mullahs. It was not until a shura on an MSST patrol supported by B Company, that the Military Interpreter, a Long Service List WO1 (ASM) sporting a full grey beard, noticed an elderly man sitting at the edge of the shura listening intently, but clearly not participating in it. Having established a good rapport with the shura, WO1 (ASM) Hedges turned to the stranger and asked who he was. He replied that he was the Mullah and following a discussion it transpired that Mullahs were wary of ISAF because of persecution under the Soviets and therefore were not keen to reveal their identities. Having received this information, BG HQ encouraged the ANA Mullah to record a series of sermons describing the respect that security forces had for Mullahs which was broadcast on the radio. In the following weeks the BG were met by over forty Mullahs and began to gain an understanding of their role, community relationships and networks. We began to understand that they were not decision makers; this was the responsibility of the elders. It was understood that Mullahs should not be addressed as a separate audience but encouraged to come to shuras and contribute. They also had a key role to play in undermining insurgent propaganda and intimidation which was a constant theme. The insurgents used mosques to post

night letters to frighten people into not speaking to us. Taliban Mullahs preached vehemently critical sermons, frequently using inflammatory rhetoric to accuse the 'infidels' of invading the country and introducing un-Islamic customs and culture. It was through patience, understanding and perseverance that we were able not only to win consent but also to hold it in the face of such strong insurgent information ops.



Mullah Salaam the Musa Qal'eh District Governor – ex Taliban, charismatic orator and skilful negotiator. Influencing this man was a challenge but when achieved had powerful results.

Another key success was the establishment of a formal judicial review process. We came to understand that the insurgents implemented Sharia law in the areas under their influence. Although brutal, this was reasonably popular because it was open and perceived to be fair. By contrast the DC had a gaol which was full. Most of the detainees had been incarcerated having been arrested and left there with no process to deal with them. It was a clear weakness and played into the enemy's information operation of alternative and effective government. Having discussed the negative impact of the situation with the DG, ANP and NDS it was unanimously accepted that a local process was required to deal with detainees. A shura was formed which would review each case weekly and make recommendations as to subsequent judicial dealing. There were three broad courses of action, all based on evidence. Detainees who were combatants would be sent into NDS custody at the provincial capital for trial and serious criminals would be sent to Lashkar Gah (LKG) in police custody for trial. Petty criminals arrested for misdemeanours would be dealt with by the DG's shura. At this they could be represented by their communities' elders. If the individual represented a criminal threat (a habitual petty thief) a guarantee was required to be secured from his community before his release; re-offence would lead to the forfeit of the guarantee. This process fulfilled a key tenet of Pashtun Wali – Badal (justice) and having been introduced has remained in place. It has led to a number of other developments. The ANP were forced to begin to develop chains of evidence and comprehensive case files after it was discovered that a number of the early cases were dismissed in LKG due to lack of evidence. This has led to a number attending investigators' courses. Details of where detainees are within the process are now being obtained from LKG and published on the DC and outlying noticeboards so that communities are aware of what is happening. Communities are informed of the judicial process in action and the information provides a disincentive to potential fighters and criminals.

Summary

The mindset that we adopted was correct. The Afghans are good at identifying their problems; solutions often require considerable discussion. There were times when we had to nudge issues diplomatically but firmly in the right direction. Patience but tenacity was required. It was critical that everyone in the BG (all units and all ranks) understood that influence encompassed everything and that small mistakes could have huge consequences. We fought for consent and won it, we also worked constantly to retain it. We adopted a comprehensive long-term



approach, thinking to the endstate, not the end of our tour, and it is hoped that the blood and sweat expended is sufficient to ensure that the progress that has begun will continue.

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

[Footnote:

CO's direction to the Battalion prior to Pre Deployment Training: *'In an insurgency the people are the prize and the key that unlocks this prize is consent, it is therefore axiomatic that in any given insurgency protagonists battle predominantly for consent. In Afghanistan there is a direct correlation between consent and perception (perhaps the country's most potent form of media) and perception can be influenced. For this reason influence must underwrite everything that you do. You must influence how, what and when people think; reinforce or discredit rumour through demonstrable activity then allow people to draw their own, albeit pre-ordained (by us) conclusions. Design and conduct operations to influence perception and hammer these perceptions home at every opportunity with as much guile, subtlety and finesse as you can muster. Ensure that every action, reaction, message and decision is designed to shape opinion and influence but understand that this places a premium on your approach, bearing, attitude and response from the outset. Recognise that everything you do and everyone you meet has the ability to influence.'*

Op KAPCHA BAZ

By 21171770 Rfn Ganga Limbu 11 Pl 2 RGR

(With added material from his Platoon Commander as Rfn Ganga was too modest to describe his own actions!)

It was bright and sunny day, the sky was glorious. All the members of D (Tamandu) Company including the Queens' Dragoon Guards HQ element were lined up on the HLS, ready to fly further South in our AO. This was a battle group operation and we were going to Mian Poshteh. Three minutes later one of the Sergeants shouted. All of us were lined up and ready to go. As soon as we were in, the chopper lifted. All of the platoon members squeezed in next to me. As the chopper soared I felt giddy. I looked into everyone's eyes. I thought they might be thinking the same as I was; a kind of fear.

It was silent inside the chopper, just a moment before landing. We needed a few minutes to settle down, we were about to land in the heart of the enemy positions. The crewman of the chopper gave a two minutes signal; we landed in the desert just 1 km away from the Green Zone and our objective, the enemy co-ordination node in the bazaar.

We cleared a route for the A Squadron Jackals who were supporting us. We were on a bund line with my Section Commander (ACpl Anil) over-watching the Green Zone. All the villagers were fleeing from their houses. This was a clear indication of enemy presence. As we were crossing the canal, we got intelligence to suggest that something had been set up to ambush us. After that we split into two groups, Cpl Kailash and his section pushed forward on the eastern flank. Our section, including Bombardier Biggs (RA), was pushing through a compound moving rapidly. We stopped in a treeline nearly 70 metres away from a compound, which was considered a potential enemy firing point.

While we were observing that compound "dickers" were spotted by Rfn Prayash. Our snipers fired a warning shot at them and it was revealed that they were Taliban. From the planes looking down, an area near a compound was identified as being full of enemy forces. After some time, a GMLRS (a very long range GPS guided missile) was fired onto a woodline behind

Op GALLIPOLI STRIKE I

By Rfn Tarabhadur Rana, 4 Platoon, B Coy, 2 RGR

B Company 2 RGR had been in Afghanistan for about one and a half months and had been out patrolling on the front line to the north of the Musa Qal'eh District Centre (MSQ DC) in Helmand Province. Within that time we had done several successful operations both to the north and south of the DC. We had established a new patrol base to the north called PB Woqab and from there we began to operate. Although the construction of the new PB was in progress, B Company concurrently conducted a strike op in the Green Zone to the

the compound. It killed five and left the insurgents running in panic. Our section then opened fire, with 50 cal support from the Jackals.

We continued to move forward clearing suspected buildings and soon we approached the first major road junction. Cpl Kailash's section went straight, clearing towards the junction and holding just short. Our Platoon Commander sent our section round to the left of the building to clear and provide support for Cpl Kailash's next move. As soon as we came round the edge of the last building, Rfn Bipin opened fire with an aimed shot; then a rapid burst of PKM splattered towards us, while Cpl Kailash's section's lead men were pinned down near the junction. The A Squadron Jackals with guns and rockets pushed forward into the enemy's killing area to fire at the Taliban whilst Cpl Kailash's section pushed forward and jumped into a ditch to return fire. We were engaged by five RPGs as well as repeated bursts of PKM.

During this action an A Squadron soldier was shot during the heavy firing. The Platoon Commander then asked for a volunteer to take his place. I volunteered and ran forward crossing 100m of open ground to crew the 50 cal. The Jackals continued to attract a barrage of RPGs. When the 50 cal stopped I switched to my LMG to continue firing at the Taliban. A few minutes later a 500 lb bomb was dropped less than 200m away to finish the fight, allowing another platoon to move forward.

After a long and exhausting day of operations, we moved back to our previous helicopter DOP. Then we moved a further 2 km back in order to avoid enemy IDF (rockets and mortars), where we spent a night shivering in bivvy bags, as we had not expected to stay out. Nobody slept a wink because of the cold with everybody desperately waiting for the dawn. The next day we ran back onto the Chinooks and flew back to our FOB. I looked into everybody's face and could tell they were excited and itching to tell their story to their buddies.

north of Woqab. It took Platoon on 2 December 2008 and was called Op GALLIPOLI STRIKE I.

Our Company Commander was Major Ross Daines and his intent was to strike at the enemy to push them further north so that they couldn't interfere with the building of Woqab and so that we could have more freedom of movement to the north. In addition it was Platoonanned to leave Fire Support Group B in ambush in the Haji Rasheed Gardens (HRG) in case the enemy

tried to follow us as we withdrew. The composition of the Company was 4 Platoon (commanded by Lt Hough), 6 Platoon (commanded by Capt Gajendra) and the FSG (commanded by Capt O'Connor). There was also Roshan Tower OP on top of a cliff which could support us with Javelin, 81mm Mortars, HMG and good optics. We also had CAS available on call and other assets we might need.

B Company moved out at 0830hrs. It was a two-up formation of advance with 6 Platoon on the east of HRG and 4 Platoon on the west with the FSG and Company HQ behind us. 4 Platoon went straight to the jungle on the west side of HRG and cleared the compounds there. 4 Platoon then covered arcs to the north and west across the MSQ Wadi. As 6 Platoon moved up through the gardens they surprised some enemy and there was a contact. During the contact LCpl Kushal Rai was shot in the neck. The round passed straight through his neck and caused much less damage than it could have done. 6 Platoon returned fire immediately and dragged Kushal into a safe place where first aid was given. 4 Platoon pushed to the very north of HRG to cut off any escaping enemy and to stop any more moving into HRG. The Mastiff QRF from MSQ DC arrived very quickly and took Kushal to the DC where he was CASEVAC'd by the MERT. CAS came on station and started to fly over us, dominating the area with their sound.

Once Kushal was evacuated we continued to move north and 4 Platoon crossed the open ground north of HRG without any more enemy action, though there was lots of ICOM chatter. Shortly after we had occupied a compound and set ourselves up as fire support for 6 Platoon's move across the open ground, Roshan Tower saw enemy in compound Q5C 13 which was only a few hundred metres from our position. CAS was called and a 500lb bomb was dropped which landed right on target. There was a big cloud of smoke and dust that hung in the air for a long time.

Raid North of Patrol Base Woqab

On the back of Op MAR NONU 2 in November 2008, Patrol Base Woqab was established in the Shawaruz area, three kilometres north of the Musa Qal'eh District Centre. The Patrol Base was occupied by B Company Group 2 RGR which assumed responsibility for the area of operations surrounding it. We were supported by the Roshan Tower Observation Post (OP), one kilometre to the west, and the Afghan National Army (ANA) one and a half kilometres to our south-west in Satellite Station North. Four kilometres to our north lay the Taliban stronghold of Kats Sharbat. The patch of Green Zone between the Patrol Base and Kats Sharbat was the contested area over which the Taliban and Coalition Forces (ISAF and the ANSF) would fight a patrolling battle for the coming five months of Op HERRICK 9.

In line with the CO's intent, B Company centred the battle on the hearts and minds of the local people which meant that every action taken would be with the specific purpose

4 and 6 Platoons continued to move north while the FSG got itself into the ambush position in HRG. 4 Platoon would occupy a compound on the west side of the axis and then provide fire support for 6 Platoon as they moved up the east side of the axis and then 6 Platoon would provide fire support for 4 Platoon. Some compounds were occupied by locals and some were not. We had to break into compounds through locked doors. The threat was escalating as we moved further north. ICOM suggested that the enemy were ready to attack us again and would do so soon. As a result, everyone was using their best skills and tactics, using all the cover available and running at best speed across open ground.

4 Platoon cleared compounds Q5C 6 and 7 and a section was positioned on the roof of each covering north. There was a lot of open ground to cover in the next bound and preparations were being made to give us cover. However, the ICOM suggested the enemy were waiting for us to move so we waited for a while to see what would happen. Unfortunately the enemy fired a few rounds at us and Rfn Anil was shot. The bullet hit his rifle and ricocheted down the side of the barrel and hit his thumb. 4 Platoon immediately returned fire and Anil was extracted off the roof so that first aid could be given. He was given morphine and a first field dressing. Again the Mastiffs came up the MSQ Wadi to extract a casualty. Now that we had two casualties and our mission had been achieved we were told not to go any further north. The extraction was the reverse of the advance and soon we were moving back through HRG, leaving the FSG in ambush. Just after dark some enemy moved into Q5C 17 and were ambushed by the FSG from HRG.

It was a good operation and I felt very proud to be part of something that was successful. However, we were all upset at having two casualties in a day.

of supporting the locals and improving their quality of life to persuade them that the Government of Afghanistan and the Coalition Forces were capable of improving their lives more than the Taliban ever could. Many strands of activity were required to take place concurrently with the Military Stabilisation Support Team leading on interaction with civilians. Although it quickly became apparent that the majority of locals living between the Patrol Base and the District Centre would side with the Government, the same could not be said for those living closer to Kats. It would be critical to provide sufficient security to prevent significant Taliban influence south of the Patrol Base - but how would we achieve this?

We shared the view of our predecessors that few Taliban fighters lived south of Kats, but that the enemy would "shoot and scoot" from prepared defensive lines which would allow them the time and space to make ready a defensive position further north. This meant that there was an almost permanent

presence of fighters in the area but that they moved frequently and did not present a conventional target to be struck. In fact, the Battle Group's assessment was that the majority of the enemy were locals who farmed for a living and fought when necessary. The temptation was to leave them alone and focus on the locals closer to the Patrol Base but this would have been a mistake because the Taliban were very keen to spread their radical influence near us and, given too much space, the locals living near and south of us would have been severely intimidated. The decision was therefore made to conduct raids if targets were presented.

It came to the Company's attention that a cluster of compounds one and a half kilometres to the north of the Patrol Base was being used as a staging post by the enemy. On several occasions the Roshan Tower OP had observed groups of Taliban receiving instructions in these compounds and then moving south to conduct attacks. It was suspected that a commander spent most of his time there and it was also considered likely that some weapons and ammunition were stored in the area. During a previous operation on high ground to the west of the Musa Qal'eh Wadi, the Company had been engaged with AGS-17 and small arms fire from just south of the compound cluster and it was hoped that, if a similar target array was presented on the high ground, the enemy might choose to fire from the same position.

Op GALLIPOLI STRIKE 4 was conceived and, after the Battle Group Headquarters allocated the Recce Platoon to support, it was decided that it would take place on 21 and 22 January 2009. The basic plan was to move the Company to the compound cluster, covertly. The Recce Platoon would then appear on the high ground to draw interest in order to allow the Company to sally forth and give the Taliban a bloody nose from an unexpected direction! This beautifully simple concept was going to be much more complex in practice but, if it worked, we would catch a group of fighters at close range and give them the fright of their lives. The winter weather meant that there were no leaves on the trees, no crops in the fields and very long fields of view throughout the Green Zone. This meant that the Taliban normally "scooted" well before we were able to close with them and it was difficult to see the whites of their eyes. If attacked from the north they would have no choice but to stand and fight and our superior firepower would lead to their destruction because they never surrendered.

Battle preparation was conducted on the 19th and by last light all force elements were in place. The Recce Platoon was positioned in Roshan Tower with their Jackal vehicles which were mounted with Browning Heavy Machine Guns (HMG) and Heckler and Koch Grenade Machine Guns (GMG) which would add significantly to the firepower available for the Operation. One of our main constraints as a light company group was the ability to carry ammunition, but the Jackals would have sufficient HMG and GMG ammunition to support for a protracted period. The Fire Support Group (FSG) and 5 Platoon would form the main body of the Company with 4 and 6 Platoons committed to guarding the Patrol Base and on Rest and Recuperation in the UK. The Rehearsal of Course of Action Drill was complete by

mid-afternoon and, final checks of equipment finished, everybody rested in preparation for the Company's biggest move north since the occupation of the PB two months previously.

Reveille was before midnight and we were moving at midnight, with the moon only due to rise at 0225 hours and even then it was only going to be 30% but would provide light for the move through the complex terrain of the Green Zone. There would also be insufficient light for the Taliban to spot us. With 5 Platoon leading the Company snake we moved west from the PB and after half an hour stepped into the Musa Qal'eh Wadi, a four hundred metre wide expanse covered with large rocks and interlaced with freezing cold snow melt water straight off the Hindu Kush. Some of the water courses in the Wadi were only ankle deep but others were a testicle-freezing waist depth. The crossing went well and by 0115 hours we were in the narrow strip of Green Zone west of the Wadi and in the low ground to the east of Roshan Tower. The lead Section Commander of 5 Platoon, Cpl Begindradal Limbu, quickly led the Main Body to a small track running north under a set of fifty metre high cliffs, and we moved silently north. Despite the occasional barking of a dog from a compound roof there was no sign of life and no indication of compromise. After three months in theatre the Company's night movement skills were slick and the sight of that silent group of sixty men padding forward with Head Mounted Night Vision Systems attached and clouds of condensed water vapour coming from their mouths as they breathed heavily in the freezing winter air will stay with me for some time.

The Main Body moved more than one kilometre north before Cpl Begindradal turned East and back towards the Wadi. The second crossing proved to be more interesting because, being further north and with less water diverted to irrigation, the volume and speed of the flow was greater than earlier. As our female attack dog handler, LCpl Lockhart, crossed, Brit, her large black German Shepherd, was swept away down the river, only to be stopped on the end of his lead. As she and the three soldiers with her pulled Brit back in, the rest of the snake halted in the light of the rising moon and waited for their struggle to end. Once the soaking dog and handler were across the rest of us joined up as squares of four men grasped each other and jerked spasmodically across to the far bank. Roshan Tower was observing the east bank very carefully for any sign of enemy activity but everything remained quiet and the Javelin Command Launch Units detected no insurgents. Just short of the bank and in the cover of some reeds we stopped and each man placed sand bags over his feet. These were to reduce the ground sign that sixty men could not avoid leaving and enhance our chance of maintaining secrecy. Once the bags were all firmly taped around ankles we continued the move east and into the virgin territory of no-man's land.

As men slipped and slid up the muddy bank we left far more sign than we wanted to but it was unavoidable. There was a temporary halt as the FSG was split from the Company Headquarters, the result of heavily laden men struggling to move over difficult ground while maintaining awareness by observing carefully through their Night Vision Systems. After linking up with the FSG again the move east and then north continued with

each man picking his way carefully along a narrow mud ridge dividing two fields destined to produce poppy in the summer. Over the previous month the Battle Group had observed the target area very carefully and a combination of Close Air Support, Unmanned Air Vehicles and observation from Roshan Tower had convinced us that our target compound was unoccupied and would provide the perfect position to remain covert while the enemy responded to the Recce Platoon's "bait" on the western ridge line. At the southern wall of the compound, the 5 Platoon Commander, 2Lt Oli Cochrane, halted his platoon and the search dog, Max, moved forward with his handler, LCpl Stu Canavan, to sniff the wall and the entrance at the south-western corner of the compound. The infra-red cyalume attached to Max's collar was visible as he moved rapidly and methodically from east to west while sniffing earnestly for any sign of home made explosives or other compounds which might indicate an improvised explosive device (IED) designed to catch us on the way in. As soon as LCpl Canavan signalled the all clear, Cpl Begindra's section moved forward with their hand-held metal detectors and confirmed the dog's findings. The door was latched but unlocked and movement into the compound was quick and quiet.

The same search dog and metal detection process followed for the entire compound. Without fuss the Main Body filed inside, the door was shut quietly and the Company Sergeant Major, Warrant Officer Class 2 Ramkumar Rai, allocated administration space for the two platoons and the Headquarters. We hoped to evade the insurgent 'dicking' screen by hiding quietly in an unoccupied compound. With no reason to search the compound, the unarmed insurgent reconnaissance would flow around it and, fingers crossed, the armed enemy would move past our position to their normal firing position from where they would shoot at Recce, nine hundred metres west on the ridge.

Our security relied entirely on the close observation being provided by ever-watching eyes of Roshan Tower, nearly two kilometres to the south. Our problem was that, despite being able to observe very well to our east, south and west, the OP could see very little to the north. We were blind and our security depended on remaining absolutely silent. We were settled by around 0500 hours and with an hour and a half before first light the exhausted troops, who had been on the move for five hours, pulled out their bivvy bags and Softy jackets, and did their best to get some rest. The Headquarters monitored the Battle Group Command and Company Command Nets, waiting for any information about enemy movements or reactions to our presence. All was quiet and the Company dozed fitfully in the sub-zero pre-dawn darkness. As the night turned to grey first light around 0630 hours the voices of Capt Danny O'Connor (OC Roshan Tower) and Sgt 'Lurch' Allison (the Joint Tactical Attack Controller based at Roshan Tower) provided information about the surrounding area as the local civilians awoke and began going about their everyday business. The platoons roused themselves and bivvy bags were stashed in day sacks and cold breakfasts eaten as everybody prepared themselves for the day ahead.

Roshan Tower reported people moving out of their compounds to conduct morning ablutions but, initially, there

was nothing to indicate that the Main Body had been detected and we sat tight, hopeful that our presence was unnoticed and that the plan was on track. Shortly before first light the Recce Platoon had brought the Jackals to life and they were moving slowly and cautiously north but to the west of the ridge and therefore unsighted by the enemy. With everything remaining quiet there was nothing to indicate any alarm. Suddenly, at about 0700 hours we heard shouting at the south-east corner of our compound and the hairs went up on the back of everyone's necks. Capt O'Connor reported that he was observing one civilian standing at the corner of the compound and shouting like "the village idiot". Of more concern, the individual appeared to be looking at the ground on the path where the main body had moved in and it looked distinctly like he had picked up ground sign. A couple of minutes later, six fighting-age males joined the individual and they engaged in conversation. They obviously suspected there was something up because suddenly Roshan Tower reported that one of them was climbing up the western wall of the compound to try and see over the top. The three metre high wall defeated him and he dropped back to the ground. The next thing we knew was that Roshan Tower was shouting down the net that a group of fighting age males were moving towards the entrance. I warned the sentry just before somebody started banging on the door. We all remained hidden and silent but the individual trying to enter was determined and I instructed the sentry to open the door and call him into the compound. As this individual was brought inside the rest of his group ran away at high speed to the north with one of them speaking rapidly into a two way radio. The suspect who entered the compound stated that it was his compound although one of the attached Afghan National Policemen (ANP) immediately stated that he was a known IED maker.

The action on compromise was well understood and the Company swung smoothly into action. Our main weakness now was that the position had no depth as the entire Main Body had been cramped into a small compound (50 metres square) for concealment. We had no idea how many enemy fighters might be in the area but our position needed to be improved regardless. Electronic intercepts indicated that the enemy was alarmed to find ISAF so close and there were numerous call signs on the net passing information and orders. I instructed the FSG Commander, Sgt Tekbahadur Mabo, to move immediately to the compound north of our current position. The arcs from west through north to north-east were excellent from that location and would prevent the enemy from getting too close on the dangerous flank. The FSG moved out of the compound and around to the eastern side where all hell broke loose. The Taliban had moved at lightning speed and were positioned to the FSG's east, across a canal and less than one hundred metres away. The fire directed at the FSG originated from here and also from further away to the north. Numerous enemy were engaging concurrently and the Company Second in Command saw a red tracer round pass inches from the nose of Rfn Santosh Gurung, a General Purpose Machine Gun (GPMG) gunner. They all hit the ground and stayed down for the initial fire. We had learnt in previous engagements that the first few seconds were the most dangerous. After this first burst of enemy fire had ceased the FSG spread out as well as they could in the very small space between

the compound and the canal and began returning fire, mainly to the east. Hearing the contact from inside the compound was a shock because the weight of enemy fire, brought to bear so rapidly, was unexpected and completely unhinged the prepared plan which saw the FSG continuing north and into the next compound. There was now a very real danger that, with the enemy only 100 metres to the north, they would occupy the compound to the north as well and dominate two flanks. The two platoons had to spread out quickly into mutually supporting positions that dominated the open ground around us.

The Company Tactical Headquarters moved to join the FSG and assess whether it was going to be possible to move north. It was immediately clear that moving north would entail the severe risk of sustaining casualties from the enemy to the east as well as to the north. The narrow corridor to the north would also mean nigh on thirty men having to squeeze through what could quickly become a killing area. After a minute's assessment the FSG and the Company Tactical Headquarters moved south again and then west along the southern wall of the main compound to the compound directly west which abutted open ground with the Wadi beyond it. The intent was to move north along the western wall of this compound in order to get the FSG to the originally intended position but approaching from the west rather than the south. Once again, the move north would require the FSG to move along a narrow piece of ground exposed to enemy observation and perhaps fire from the north. Instead of taking this risk we entered the compound we were near and Sgt Tek ordered a GPMG gunner and sniper pair to occupy the roof facing north. After a hasty compound clearance, which proved the compound to be empty, a small group of machine gunners, snipers and a Javelin operator bounded up a mud staircase and doubled forward across the roof. As they crested on to the roof the enemy opened fire again from the north and bullets buzzed like hornets around their ears. Miraculously nobody was struck and within a few seconds they were in position although unable to return fire as the incoming fire was so intense. All of the men were sheltering behind a low mud wall which provided some cover from view but virtually no protection from fire. Rfn Rupendra had the special treat of seeing two bullet holes appear either side of his head as an enemy machine gunner targeted him with his PKM. The Fire Support Team (FST) quickly appreciated that the roof was going to be the best position to control fire from and without hesitation Capt Nick Newton, the FST Commander, and Sgt Madan Jimee, the Mortar Fire Controller, sprinted forward to a good position of observation as well.

At this time the Recce Platoon Jackals crested the ridge 900 metres to the west, orientated themselves quickly, identified the enemy and requested permission to engage. The grenades and heavy machine gun rounds which started striking the enemy positions had two effects. They diverted attention and also forced the enemy to take up positions which were shielded from the west. After the initial burst of fire, the Jackal crews focussed their attention to the north in order to provide early warning of reinforcement or the deployment of enemy heavy weapons. Some PKM fire was also directed at them but changing positions was fraught with danger, because the ridge was seeded with IEDs, so generally the vehicles remained in position until

they were forced to move when the crack of incoming fire became too sharp.

Roshan Tower was doing a good job indicating enemy firing positions but was not in a position to engage with any of the assets available because of the close proximity of friendly forces to the enemy. From the roof the FST Commander identified the enemy firing points and then requested permission to engage them, cognisant that the artillery would be falling 200 metres to the north. Permission granted, the controller in Roshan Tower passed the orders to the gun line located at Forward Operating Base Edinburgh to the south-west and we all waited impatiently for the first round to arrive. In the mean time, 5 Platoon was ordered to secure the original compound and Lt Cochrane did so by leaving an element of the Platoon on the roof observing north and east while the rest of the Platoon deployed outside the compound to the east covering the canal and the enemy firing points the other side of it. There was still significant enemy fire emanating from the far side of the canal and 5 Platoon was trading it back. The first round of 105mm high explosive was spot on target and a full fire for effect mission was called and started landing very effectively in the compounds the Taliban were occupying. With 81mm Mortars contributing to the effect, despite a white phosphorous bomb landing fifty metres from friendly troops, the enemy fire stopped for the first time and everybody was able to get their heads up properly and observe the ground to the north.

Since the beginning of the contact, Capt O'Connor had been reporting that there was suspicious activity taking place on the roof of a compound located in the desert eight hundred metres to the north. Two fighting age-males were positioned on the roof observing south and were speaking into two way radios. It was the assessment of Roshan Tower that they were commanding the enemy action. Battle Group Headquarters understood the situation quickly and, with enemy fire likely to cause casualties, authorised immediate engagement. The bold decision was made to utilise the direct fire 105mm Gun which had not been at the OP for long and to use it beyond the maximum normal range because the enemy commanders were a distant 2,900 metres north of Roshan Tower. We heard the scream of the high explosive round as it barrelled straight over the top of us and a couple of seconds later heard the concurrent thump of it being fired and the impact at the other end. The Company Command Net rang with the screams of Capt O'Connor, "direct hit, direct hit!". At extreme range the round had detonated on target and probably killed both commanders instantly. Later, intelligence confirmed that this had indeed been the case and that the main enemy commander of the action had begun to disengage at this stage.

5 Platoon was still being subjected to accurate fire from the east and the Platoon Commander requested permission to assault east across the canal in order to secure the Company's flank and force the enemy back to a safer distance. This aggressive suggestion was vetoed on the grounds that the primary casualty evacuation option would not be able to support the platoon. The position was therefore consolidated by the FSG pushing a significant element further north to the edge of a garden which was bordered by a one metre high mud wall. Using their

bayonets and kukris the troops dug observation and firing loopholes in the wall thus enabling them to dominate the area to the north. On further investigation, 5 Platoon also found a cache of IED components including several pressure pads. Some small components were kept as evidence and the bigger pieces were burnt to prevent their being used later.

By about 1100 hours the position was secure and well balanced, allowing the enemy virtually no opportunity to engage us effectively. It was anticipated that a further attack would be mounted, which was eagerly anticipated as it would have undoubtedly resulted in further enemy casualties. It transpired though that the loss of two commanders was too much of a blow and, despite continued 'dicking' and movement on the flanks throughout the day, there was no attack. There was information to suggest that the Taliban were planning to ambush the Company if we withdrew that night so ISTAR assets were tasked to secure the flanks. The move back began at 1930 hours and some movement was seen on the flanks by Roshan Tower and the UAV but our move south down the Wadi went

without incident apart from the obvious frustrations of moving a large group of men with heavy weapons down a wet wadi on a moonless night! There was much quiet cursing.

This operation was bold but risky. It required the Company to fight at the limit of the Battle Group's casualty evacuation capability and spend a prolonged period in close contact with the enemy with the normal early warning mechanisms discarded. Although it did not unfold as planned the operation resulted in the deaths of two enemy commanders, disrupted IED emplacing plans and created severe doubt in the minds of the enemy. The immediate and violent reaction that we experienced proved beyond doubt that we had penetrated an area that the insurgents believed to be safe. Following the operation, there was a noticeable reduction in the enemy's tempo further south in the Company's area of operations. We had bought some more time and space to deliver better security to the local nationals living around Patrol Base Woqab and to the south of it in the direction of the District Centre.

The Queen's Gurkha Engineers

Editor's Note

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

Queen's Gurkha Signals

Stafford-based Gurkha Signallers deploy on Op HERRICK 8/9

By Capt Kedar Rai, 248 Gurkha Signal Squadron

Introduction

248 Gurkha Signal Squadron moved its home from Colerne (21 Signal Regiment) to Stafford under 22 Signal Regiment in April 2007. 22 Signal Regiment itself was newly formed at Beacon Barracks, Stafford, as part of 1 Signal Brigade at the time. Just 16 months after its formation, 227 personnel from 22 Signal Regiment deployed under the command of Lt Col N C Fraser on Op HERRICK 8/9. The initial deployment was completed on 13 August 2008, for a six month tour.

With an eye to its roles within the theatre, the Regiment had deployed a command element, Information and Communications Services (ICS) Squadron, ICS Troops and a Support Unit, to be based at different locations, with the primary role not only of providing the ICS and Strategic communications, and communication infrastructures, linking back to UK, but also of providing administrative support to British Forces deployed around Kabul. With this deployment, a total of 38 Gurkhas from across the Regiment, mainly from 248 Gurkha Signal Squadron, and Gurkha soldiers serving with 217 Squadron and Support Squadron had an opportunity to deploy to serve in various parts of the theatre. Although the numbers look small, their deployment has been significant and larger than would be expected. They were scattered with their British counterparts all over theatre, with the exception of Capt Kedar Rai and AWO2 Somras Tamang who were part of Headquarters Joint Forces Communications Information System (HQ JFCIS), as SO3 Plans and RQMS respectively. The rest in small groups found themselves serving under different chains of command at different locations.

HELMAND ICS Signal Squadron

Helmand ICS Signal Squadron (HICSSS) was formed up from a majority of 222 Signal Squadron personnel and a few others. The Squadron was responsible to provide robust and resilient ICS to UK Force Elements in Helmand in order to enable effective C2 of Task Force Helmand (TFH). The Squadron was commanded by Major Roger, OC 222 Squadron, and his Ops team and they were based at Camp Bastion. The Squadron had 20 Gurkhas and they were scattered in different locations such as Bastion ICS Troop, Lashkar Gah (LKG) ICS Troop and various Forward Operating Bases. Some of the locations where QG SIGNALS Signallers were employed at were:

FOB Delhi. This ICS Detachment was situated at the southern-most part of Helmand in Garmsir District Centre (DC). This place was known as the hottest part of Helmand

Province. The Detachment was supporting Battle Group South which was commanded by 2nd Bn Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment initially and then by the Queen's Dragoon Guards.

FOB Nalay. This is a newly formed Forward Operating Base near to the Sangin valley. The detachment was responsible for providing the mission secret terminal as well as secure and insecure voice services for the Resident Infantry Company. The detachment was supporting X-Ray Company from 45 Commando Royal Marines.

Sangin. This Detachment was based in Sangin Valley to provide ICS support to Battle Group North, commanded by 45 Commando Royal Marines.

FOB Price. The ICS detachment was situated at Gereshk District Centre, providing ICS support to the Danish Battle Group.

Lashkar Gah

The main aim of Lashkar Gah (LKG) ICSTroop was to provide robust and resilient ICS as well as Strategic Communications for HQ Task Force Helmand (HQ TFH) mainly by the use of PROMINA, TALON and VSAT satellite communications assets. In order to achieve this, the Troop had two TALON and one VSAT detachments deployed as bearers to link back to UK and the outside World; additionally two Black and two Red PROMINA Nodes were connected to these bearers providing 170 Red (Secret) and 40 Black (Restricted) telephone services. In addition to these services, the staff officers in the HQ could also benefit from having access to various J1/J4 terminals mainly on the Joint Operation Command System (JOCS), Restricted LAN Inter-connect (RLI) and Defence Information Infrastructure (DII) including a Video Teleconference Call (VTC) facility. One of the systems widely used to communicate between controls (HQs) and the troops on the ground is Joint Chat (JChat), which has proved to be a life saving system for both commanders and the troops. It is a means by which the troops on the ground can send live reports direct to HQ.

The Troop has also been responsible for the manning of a CORMORANT radio detachment, used for feeding live pictures through the Tactical Unmanned Ariel Vehicle (TUAV) system back to HQ. Without doubt, LKG ICS Troop has put a lot of effort and dedication into providing a first-rate service to HQ TFH throughout their tenure.

Regional Command South HQ

The Regiment has also provided a troop of signallers, Regional Command (South) Deployable Troop, with the primary aim of providing System and Technical support to RC(S) HQ based at Kandahar Airfield (KAF), under command of a Canadian Signal Squadron at the beginning of their tour and, later, a Dutch Tank Company. Since they were already a Deployable Troop under the Dutch Support Squadron, the Troop was also responsible for providing second line support, repair and maintenance of all CIS/ICS capabilities for the two star General and his staff in HQ RC(S). Similarly, they also had a vital role to play in providing System Support Teams (SST) to NATO-established Forward Operating Bases mainly in Task Force Uruzan (TFU), Task Force Zabul (TFZ) and Task Force Helmand (TFH). Half of the troops spent their tour in those FOBs with various Battle Groups (BGs) - Dutch, Australian and Romanian. Apart from providing technical support at KAF, the Troop was responsible for the maintenance and repair of all welfare Television within the RC(S) HQ that included BFBS, Canadian, Kandahar and Supermax satellite TV. The deployment has been highly successful for all the members of the Deployable Troop.

Kabul

The Kabul Support Unit (KSU) includes the Quartermaster and Motor Transport department, and the ICS Troop mainly based at Camp SOUTER. However, the main ICS Troop for Kabul is based in HQ ISAF where all the communication projects for Kabul are scrutinized before they are forwarded to the HQ JFCIS for approval. Leaving communications aside, the primary role of KSU was to provide J1/J4 support to UK Force elements based around Kabul. In this respect, the MT department were heavily engaged in escorting convoys and transporting VIPs and troops within the Kabul operational area, driving CMV and Saxon vehicles throughout their tour. Like any other location, there has been a strong presence of Gurkha signallers working in all departments who have done a sterling job either providing

technical support in the communications forefront covering HQ ISAF, the British Embassy, Camp SOUTER and Camp ALAMO, or driving CMV and Saxons, or working tirelessly in the QM department to provide J4 support to deployed troops within the Kabul area.

Dashain

Despite an extremely busy schedule for all Gurkha Signallers deployed across Afghanistan, they were still able to celebrate Dashain 2008 in their own way, by the kind permission of CO, 22 Signal Regiment. Under the supervision of Capt Kedar, the major celebrations were planned to take place centrally in KAF, where all the available Gurkha soldiers from outside bases gathered to witness the Mar ceremony and to observe the day of Tika. Although the main events were conducted centrally, other celebrations were also held in Kabul and Lashkar Gah, slightly later than usual, but still thoroughly enjoyable with proper Gurkha curry prepared by our highly capable chef LCpl Bimal Rai.

Conclusion

Overall, the deployment on Op HERRICK 8/9 has been a huge success for the Regiment and for all the Gurkha signallers deployed, who showed great professionalism, aptitude and capacity for hard work. The Regiment, throughout its tenure, continually played a vital role in providing the required technical and communications support to commanders and the troops on the ground, making a huge contribution towards every operation conducted - particularly in Helmand Province. The troops always performed to the highest standards despite having to work on completely new equipment. The Regiment will hand over the reins to 7 Signal Regiment on 14 February 2009 before returning to the UK. It has been a great achievement for the Regiment in an extremely challenging, but rewarding, first operational tour since its birth not long ago. Jai QG SIGNALS!!

Sek Kong Troop, part of 246 Gurkha Signal Squadron, completed its staggered take over of the SBMA Rear HQ within the US CENTCOM in Tampa Florida. The eight-man team commanded by Lieutenant Tom Harrison provided the vital CIS for Maj Gen Thomas and his Staff Officers allowing them to liaise with the UK and the US military on a variety of systems.

MacDill Air Force Base, home of US CENTCOM, is tucked away in the Bay of Tampa, Florida. It is home to the largest multinational headquarters in the United States of America. Originally set up in 1983, US CENTCOM covers the central area of the globe located between the European and Pacific US Commands. The US CENTCOM AOR can be further broken down into the areas of the Arabian Peninsula, Central Arab States and Horn of Africa. Operations and activity within these areas



Cpl Kishan Gurung receiving his Sgt Rank slide from Maj Gen Thomas



SSgt Dev and team

are of direct interest to the British armed forces and warrant the imbedded presence of the current SBMA.

Currently there are 80 different nations represented at US CENTCOM. All are there to offer support, in one way or another, to the global war on terrorism. All the coalition member nations are collocated in a very large purpose-built headquarters that sits opposite the main US CENTCOM headquarters; it is known as the Coalition Village. The British have the largest footprint within the headquarters and as such have built important relationships, not only with our American hosts but also with a wide breadth of coalition members.

SBMA Headquarters is a fast-paced and extremely focused environment. There is a clear end product to be achieved and all members know what their part is in achieving it. From the very start the aim of the detachment was to focus upon their job whilst adding a little Queen's Gurkha Signals' flavour to the headquarters. This was undoubtedly achieved.

On the other hand if you are very lucky you may end up in Qatar as part of Op VERITAS. The aim of the Operation is to provide the ICS support to the SBMA in Qatar. SBMA and key members of his staff have an irregular recurring requirement to deploy forward to Central Command (CENTCOM) Fwd HQ (CFH) in Qatar. Some ICS/CIS assets for SBMA (Fwd) are permanently located in Qatar; other assets and supporting personnel are tasked to deploy as required, in support of each separate SBMA (Fwd) Staff activation or to conduct technical and engineering works.

The detachment consisting of seven personnel from Sek Kong Troop 246 Gurkha Signal Squadron led by SSgt Dev Megi

Ghotane deployed to Qatar on 16 August accompanied by three other personnel from 214 Signal Squadron. The main aim during the period was to conduct the handover takeover from 214 Signal Squadron, carry out specified technical and engineering works and establish complete strategic UK ICS/CIS support for the Staff. The first few days after arriving in Camp Al Udeid (CAD) Air Force Base, Qatar, was a very busy period. Acclimatisation and familiarisation was followed by going through Qatari Customs for clearance to the next camp, Camp As Sayliyah, the United States CENTCOM location. After getting used to the formidably hot weather, the handover takeover process took place. The Sigs Det was responsible for providing a wide variety of services like secure voice and data i.e. phones, Joint Operations Command Systems (JOCS), Multi Platform Terminal Emulator (MPTE), Video Teleconference, and Light Weight Recce Node etc. Another important achievement was installing MPTE terminals (a very useful secure messaging system used by all three Services) for the first time in the location. The services were engineered in no time and ready for the Staff Officers to use.

Op VERITAS has been a most rewarding tasking for 246 Gurkha Signal Squadron. In a high priority multinational headquarters the pressure was on to ensure that the image of the British armed forces was impeccable. True to form 246 Gurkha Signal Squadron did not disappoint. The standards both in and around the US CENTCOM were exceptional and the performance for the SBMA and his staff clinical. A lasting impression was forged not only in the minds of those 246 Gurkha Signal Squadron personnel deployed but, one would hope, also in the minds of those we served.

The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment

Editor's Note

The deployment of the Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment on Operation TOSCA in Cyprus, from October 2007 to April 2008, is covered in the articles by the Commander, the Gurkha Major and the individual squadrons in the QOGLR chapter later in this journal.

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

Preamble

Some sixty years after Indian independence, the UK based Associations of the six regiments of Gurkha Rifles which remained in the Indian Army after 1947 have all now decided that the time has come to disband – although of course the Regiments themselves continue to flourish in India and still maintain wonderfully close ties with their former British officers. The 4th Prince of Wales's Own Gurkha Rifles Officers' Association disbanded in 2007, and their magnificent final remembrance service and reunion at Stoke Poges (and the wonderful 1 GR and 4 GR reunions in India) were reported in The Kukri for that year. The 3rd Queen Alexandra's Own Gurkha Rifles Officers' Association, the 5th Royal Gurkha Rifles (Frontier Force) Regimental Association, the 8th Gurkha Rifles Regimental Association, and the 9th Gurkha Rifles Regimental Association disbanded in 2008 and their poignant last events are covered in the articles and speeches reproduced below. The 1st King George V's Own Gurkha Rifles (The Malaun Regiment) Regimental Association continues for a while longer but they are holding a final luncheon at the Gurkha Museum in May 2009, which will feature in the next Kukri.



3rd Queen Alexandra's Own Gurkha Rifles Officers' Association – Valedictory (What the President wished he had said at the last Luncheon.)

By Maj Gen RW L McAlister CB OBE

Thank you all for coming here today for our final Luncheon. We have a splendid turnout of 49. Our numbers are significantly swelled by fourteen members of the Edwardes family, long associated with the Third Gurkhas. They have been marshalled for the occasion by Jonathan Edwardes – a very special thank you to Jonathan, a member of our Association but a Tenth Gurkha like his father and cousin (adding breadth to the Edwardes 'Gurkha' involvement). The Edwardes connection goes back to the 1890s, a saga of active service, bravery, awards and sacrifice through many a frontier encounter and on through two world wars. A full saga of the Edwardes clan will appear in the 2009 Journal.

We miss Bruce Kinloch and Tony Taggart both now aged 90, the last of our pre-war regulars and both now too immobile to travel. We miss, too, Roy McConnell, who served in the 1st Battalion on the Frontier in 1940, attended our Luncheons until the age of 96 and died recently at 98. But how good of Monica

to come all the way from Cornwall to be with us today. We also lost Theo Wilkinson last year.

Welcome too to Mrs Moya de Quintero, daughter of pre-war regular, Lieutenant Colonel Arthur Greenway. Arthur, originally of the 2nd Battalion, survived Rommel's advance on El Alamein, was second in command of the 38th during 1943/44, commanded the 3rd/3rd from September 1944 to December 1945 in India and Java and wrote at least three chapters of the Regimental History Vol 2. Rodney (Turk) is to be congratulated for placing Moya beside Derek Norris at lunch, for Derek served under Arthur in 3rd/3rd.

How good to see Noreen Kind with us. Her late husband Noel (to us, but Lancaster to Noreen) was one of the decorated heroes of 1st Battalion in the thick of it from the Chin Hills in 1943, where he was severely wounded, through Imphal to Meiktila and on to Rangoon.

It is remarkable, and an enormous pleasure to see Vic Ashwell here today – he fought in the Sittang battle and suffered as a POW. Also Richard Ballinger whose father, commanding the 1st Battalion at the Sittang, was killed in action in most gallant circumstances going forward to contact his leading companies fighting to capture the two vital knolls close to the bridge. Richard's regular attendance at all our functions over so many years has been an outstanding example of devotion.

It is also a great pleasure to welcome, yet again, the Foster daughters, Annette Bearcroft and Sally Newman, born in the Regiment and probably the last of our attending number with memories of Almora.

So what was it like to join our Regiment in wartime? Some who joined as early as 1940 found an Indian army facing only west and, in spite of serious fighting and great deeds in the Middle East, still operating in India in pre-war fashion.

Noel Kind wrote about Lansdowne:

"I arrived in October 1940 from the exigencies of wartime England under threat of invasion to join the 3rd/3rd at Lansdowne. We wore mufti after lunch and dined in dinner jackets. Senior Officers' mess conversation was all about the pleasures of peacetime soldiering under the Raj – of shikar and long leaves. That all ended in late 1941".

Most of us survivors here today joined the Regiment as nineteen or twenty year old boys in the period 1942 to 1945. Proud as we all were to be commissioned into the 3rd Gurkhas, few of us, until our arrival at Ganghara, had any idea that we had joined a truly famous Regiment. We soon learned. There was that small medal case on the mess mantelpiece containing two replica VCs. The 3rd were the only Gurkha Regiment at that time in which Gurkha soldiers had won the coveted award. We joined a Regiment with a royal title, which five other Gurkha regiments then did not have. And we were among the three senior regiments, raised in 1815. We were, in 1942, 127 years old. And the Regimental History told us that, as at 1939, the 3rd Gurkhas had more Battle Honours - 27- than any other of the ten regiments in the Gurkha Brigade. Our Regiment was, indeed, pre-eminent – such was our good fortune.

Moreover, the Regimental Centre at Ghangora was certainly the smartest unit any of us had ever seen, a veritable hive of energy, enthusiasm and efficiency. And some will say they have never again seen its like.

What perhaps was so remarkable when I joined in October 1942 was that the Regiment had just suffered two major disasters. In February the 1st Battalion after the Sittang battle had come out of Burma – the longest successful retreat in military history - only 100 strong. The 2nd Battalion had been overrun by Rommel's tanks in front of El Alamein in July. If this affected the morale of more senior officers of the Regiment, British and Gurkha, it was never communicated to us new ones. The 1st and 3rd battalions were active on the Burma border, the 2nd Battalion rebuilding in the Middle East for further action, the 4th Battalion already making a name for itself on the Frontier. The Centre, humming with confidence and pride, was meeting every demand for reinforcements.

One young officer later wrote of his first impressions of the Centre:

"Groppi Bartrop, the Commandant, was a remote and awe-inspiring figure but a fine soldier, for the Centre produced recruits of high quality from a horde of jungly, cheerful, unwashed lads on the one hand and a bunch of extremely green and unmilitary young British officers on the other".

Of course, the truth was that the superb Gurkha officers did the real work. You will remember Subedar Major Deb Singh, and Subadars Amar Sing and the Limbu, Siribahadur - all impressive men with OBIs, First War and Frontier medals. We were in awe of them.

We would all agree when the same officer wrote again:

"The recruits were a joy to work with. They loved the military life – the PT and the drill. They laughed a lot but never at drill. They were fascinated by it. Everywhere you looked there were little squads of soldiery drilling like fury. And in the evening, after parades, they could be seen drilling themselves, a phenomenon unheard of in any other army".

And again:

"It was quite an experience for a 19-year-old to return from a day's parades to the ministrations of one's bearer. Whilst I sat, he would crouch at my feet and remove successively my puttees, boots, hosetops and socks and then massage my calves. A sybaritic existence never again to be enjoyed in later life".

But to join a Battalion was the ambition of each one of us. Whether we were fortunate enough to go to Burma, Italy, the Frontier or Java, or to serve in demanding Internal Security operations post-war, it is our Battalion connections which bring us the greatest pride. Joining was a humbling experience – boys joining men, for there at the sharp end, whatever we had learned up till then, we still had much to learn.

Douglas Martin recalled his austere welcome:

"When I joined the 1st/3rd at Imphal in early 1943, I was sent to C Company. I climbed the hill to meet the Company Commander, Shorty Finch MC, a formidable regular of some 7 or 8 years service. His welcome was 'If this was peace time I wouldn't be speaking to you for six months'".

My own experience at the hands of Willy Willstrop MC, in the 1st/3rd at Ranchi in December 1944, was humbling, but both down to earth and encouraging. He said:

"You may enjoy for a moment here the prestige of wearing those 17 Division Black Cat signs on your shoulders. But we are off to war again soon and war is not fun. But I guarantee you will enjoy comradeship from all ranks at a level you have never experienced before".

The Regiment's record in World War Two surpassed even that of our first 120 years. The 1st Battalion served in Burma with little respite from the first shots fired in 1942 to the final defeat of the Japanese in August 1945 earning eleven Battle Honours. A history of the current Indian Army, referring to all units now in that army, records that as regards the Burma campaigns:

"To the 1st/3rd Gurkhas goes the distinction of earning the most battle honours, eleven (including the theatre honour Burma 1942-45), followed by the 1st/11th Sikhs with nine".

But to be fair, 1st/3rd shares that 'eleven honours' figure with its 17th Division comrades and good friends, 1st/7th and 1st/10th Gurkhas.

3rd/3rd achieved fame fighting to extricate 17th Division to Imphal and then in the epic defence of Scraggy in 1944. Post-war operations in Java were no less demanding. The 2nd Battalion distinguished itself in Italy under an outstanding CO, Bill Somerville DSO, MC, and especially at Il Castello where kukris were blooded. And the 4th Battalion was kept over-long on the Frontier simply because it was outstanding there – never ambushed, never surprised, never off balance, because it was led by an outstanding Frontier soldier, Colonel Morris.

At war's end, the Regiment had earned a further 21 battle honours and stood second in the Gurkha Brigade to the 2nd Goorkhas in the tally of honours – 48 to 58. Here I must digress to point out the sort of inequalities which can arise in the award of honours. During 1st Battalion's operations in the Chin Hills from September to December 1943, the 1st Battalion fought many patrol encounters, one major two-company raid, and two all out battalion attacks on Milestone 52, that heavily defended Jap position where the CO, John Smith aged 35, was killed in action at the forefront of the battle. The Battalion suffered during this period over 200 casualties yet no battle honour was awarded. But in Malaya, the 2nd/2nd Goorkhas, withdrawing down the length of the peninsula, admittedly in the direst circumstances, earned eight battle honours in two months.

Suffice to say that in today's Indian Army, the 3rd Gorkhas still retain their pre-eminent position with the highest number of battle honours in the Gorkha Brigade.

When the Regiment was handed over to India, we can be proud that all battalions were transferred intact with all regimental property and mess silver, the men in a state of high morale. The Regiment now has five battalions, which have seen service in the defence of every border from Kashmir, Sind and the Punjab to the North East territories bordering China and Burma. Five more battle honours have been added.

When Colonel Chitnis, commanding the 1st Battalion in operations in Nagaland in 1953 was posthumously awarded the Ashok Chakra (the Indian George Cross), he would have earned instead the Param Vir Chakra had the fighting not been against 'Indian dissidents' rather than 'the enemy'.

Nor was a battle honour conferred for 3rd/3rd's splendid courage during the Chinese war of 1963 – the Indian Army does not honour a defeat, however courageous. At Walong in the North East Frontier Agency the 3rd/3rd held on against overwhelming force. Withdrawal orders were issued by Brigade but never reached them and so in spite of seeing a neighbouring unit pull back, the 3rd/3rd stood firm until overrun.

A 2nd Battalion officer, Captain G S Salaria, seconded to the 3rd/1st Gurkhas was awarded the Param Vir Chakra posthumously on operations with the UN in the Congo.

We have watched with pride and awe as a steady stream of officers of the Regiment has achieved, and continues to achieve, the highest ranks; a record never achieved in the more parochial British era. General Vir Vohra told me that when he commanded the 2nd Battalion (1959-61), three of his company commanders eventually became Lieutenant Generals!

Finally, we received the following from the Colonel Brigade of Gurkhas:

"On the poignant occasion of your final reunion at the Gurkha Museum on 4th October 2008, please convey to the members of the 3rd Queen Alexandra's Own Gurkha Rifles Officers' Association the warmest wishes of the Brigade of Gurkhas and the assurance of our high respect and regard.

During the years since 1947, the Association has embodied and honoured the special spirit of the 3rd Gurkhas. As one of the original Gurkha units raised in 1815, the Regiment has won unsurpassed fame on battlefields from the Indian Mutiny, the North West and North East Frontiers and the Afghan Wars, through France and Flanders, Mesopotamia and Palestine in the Great War, to North Africa, Italy and Burma in the Second World War. The first two Victoria Crosses won by Gurkhas are not the least of the Regiment's distinctions.

Although the time has sadly come for the Association to disband, you will be heartened by the knowledge that the Regiment itself flourishes in India, maintaining the fine traditions and high standards handed down by its British Officers. The courage, discipline and endurance for which the 3rd Gurkhas are renowned also continue to inspire the officers and men of Britain's Brigade of Gurkhas wherever they serve on operations across the globe".

I replied as follows:

"Dear David (Hayes), I shall have the greatest pleasure in reading out your most generous letter. Thank you for thinking of us.

However, the thrust of my valedictory address will not be of sadness, nor are any fanfares, ceremonial or last rites called for. We survivors and our Association are not that important. We are all immensely proud to have played a small part in the long history of a fine old Gurkha regiment, one of the first to be raised and later given a royal title. But the Regiment soldiers on, adding to its laurels in peace and war, producing, too, over recent years, a remarkable succession of senior officers at the top of the Indian Army.

We still have a challenge – that some of us may be privileged to live to see the Regiment achieve its bi-centenary in 2015".

I obviously got it wrong for I must also report that David took me to task, writing:

"I beg to take issue with you over your worth. You all remain exceptionally important to us, as we are your descendants. Your members set the foundation for the Brigade today in delivering exceptional military capacity in the deserts and mountains of Afghanistan and wherever the Army serves".

Let those be the last words.

The Edwardes Family and the 3rd Gurkhas

By Maj Gen R W L McAlister CB OBE

At the final luncheon of the 3rd Queen Alexandra's Own Gurkhas Association, the numbers were significantly swelled by the presence of 15 members of the Edwardes family. These had been contacted and marshalled for the occasion by Jonathan Edwardes, of the Tenth Gurkhas but a member of the Third Gurkha Association through his family history. We are most grateful to him for this splendid example of regimental pride. The Edwardes connection with India and the 3rd Gurkhas includes the names Hickley, Maxwell West, Edwardes, McKay Forbes, Franklin and Anderson and goes back into the 19th Century.

It all starts with three daughters of HW Gibson, a barrister and member of the Indian Civil Service. The daughters were born during the years 1869-72. Lucy married Lieutenant Alfred Charles Hickley who joined the 3rd Gurkhas in 1887 and saw action in the Hazara expedition of 1888, in Manipur in 1891, the Tirah campaign of 1897-98 and Waziristan 1901. Later he commanded the 1st Battalion at Almora during its recruiting and reinforcing role in World War I. Released from these duties, he took the Battalion to the Frontier in 1916 and handed over command in 1917 to Lieutenant Colonel J G Edwardes. Colonel Hickley served for 29 years almost entirely with the 1st Battalion. At the start of World War 2, V G G Hickley joined the 1st/3rd from Sandhurst, serving under the command of Lieutenant Colonel McKay Forbes on the Frontier in the Fakir of Ipi operations. All evidence suggests that V G G was the son or nephew of Alfred Charles. Later V G G went to the 3rd/3rd, serving in Manipur and Assam in 1942-43, before transferring to 153 Gurkha Parachute Battalion. Thereafter, contact has been lost.

A second daughter of HW Gibson, Kitty, married Lieutenant George Maxwell West who had also joined the Regiment in 1892. He moved to the Frontier with the Battalion from Almora in August 1897. Almost at once he was closely involved in that sharp fight on 11 September. On the orders of his Wing (Double Company) Commander, Captain Vin Ormsby, his company went to the assistance of the 2nd Goorkhas when their rearguard came under heavy pressure in a running fight in the dark. This action was later 'handsomely acknowledged by the 2nd'. George was then present at the Dargai battles in October. On 8 December he was appointed Adjutant - clearly an officer of promise. On 13 December when acting as rearguard, the Battalion was involved in another sharp action in which, in gathering gloom, the tribesmen boldly charged to within a few yards of the 3rd Gurkhas and the KOSB, but were repulsed with heavy loss. Here Lieutenant Maxwell West, in the forefront of the action, was shot in the chest and killed instantly. The 1st/3rd Digest of Services and the 2nd Goorkhas pay tribute to a gallant officer. On page 74 of the Regimental history we read 'Throughout the (Tirah) campaign he had been noted for his conspicuous gallantry and contempt for danger'. In the London Gazette of 20 May 1898 he was posthumously mentioned in despatches with the added annotation that 'had he survived he would have been recommended to Her Majesty for reward in recognition

of his services to the campaign'. This can only mean that, had he lived, he would have been recommended for the Victoria Cross (which at that time was not awarded posthumously).

George's son Edward Maxwell West (who can hardly have known his father) joined the 1st Battalion in 1919, later transferring to the 2nd Battalion in 1922. He was killed in action in 1927 when serving in the Burma Police. Although we have no details of this action, the Inspector General of Police sent a telegram to His Excellency the Governor of Burma which read: 'Please convey to relatives of Captain West my deep regret at the death of a very gallant officer, a great gentleman and a fine sportsman. I mourn his loss as a friend'.

The eldest of the Gibson daughters, Constance, married William Deane, an officer in the Indian Medical Service. Following the death of William Deane, Constance married Lieutenant John Grahame Edwardes (in Almora in 1899). JGE was born in 1869 and also joined the 3rd Gurkhas in 1892. John saw action in Chitral 1895, at Dargai and throughout the Tirah campaign and in Waziristan 1901. His India Service Medal boasts four clasps (and his medals were on view at the Luncheon). He then served with the 2nd Battalion in France in 1914 and 1915. Later, he commanded the 1st/3rd on the Frontier in 1917, took it to the final stages of the Mesopotamia campaign and then on to northern Iraq in 1919, winning a DSO in Kurdistan and being twice mentioned in despatches.

JGE's daughter Adelaide, born in 1900, married Lieutenant Leo McKay Forbes, who joined the 1st Battalion in 1916 and served with distinction in Mesopotamia and Kurdistan under the command of his future father-in-law. Later Leo commanded the 1st Battalion on the Frontier in the early part of World War 2. He retired as a Brigadier. Those of us who attended 3 GR reunions up to the eighties will remember Adelaide McKay Forbes, a remarkable personality who came to our luncheons regularly into old age and died aged 94 in 1994.

Colonel J G Edwardes' son John Stanley Maxwell (Jock) Edwardes joined the Regiment in 1927, resigned his commission during the thirties but rejoined in WW 2 when he served in Assam and Manipur with the 3rd/3rd and later, post war, with the 1st Battalion in Chittagong and Calcutta. Jock's stepson, Leslie Anderson, served with the 3rd/3rd in World War 2 and was killed in action at Imphal. The family believe that, mortally wounded, he died in the arms of his stepfather. There was a further sacrifice in World War 2 - Lieutenant David Franklin who was killed in action with the 3rd/3rd on the Tiddim Road after covering 17 Division's withdrawal to Imphal in 1944. He was a grandson of Constance Edwardes from her first marriage.

The Edwardes connection with the Gurkha Brigade extends also to the 10th. First, Lieutenant Colonel H G Edwardes (son of JGE) - he fought with the 3rd/10th alongside the 3rd/3rd on the Tiddim Road, at Scraggy and Imphal and later commanded

the 1st/10th in Malaya during the Emergency. Then Jonathan (son of HGE and grandson of JGE) who served in the 1st/10th in the Borneo Confrontation operations and in the 'Red Guard' ('Cultural Revolution') troubles in Hong Kong. Major John Edwardes GM, MBE, served with 1st/10th in Malaya and earned his GM for bravery in the Metropolitan Police. Yet another distant relative, Major C F Thomson, a splendidly brave soldier, served in 1st/10th in Malaya and Borneo and now lives in Australia.

To sum up and clarify, the 3rd Gurkhas' final luncheon was honoured by the company of the following:

- Jonathan Edwardes (grandson of JGE) and his wife Gilly.
- Colonel Johnny Edwardes (great grandson of JGE and grandson of JSME) with his wife, Charlotte.

Closure of the 5th Royal Gurkha Rifles (Frontier Force) Regimental Association

By Major Tim Buckley, latterly Chairman & Hon Secretary

With numbers reducing, it was decided that the final reunion and an AGM should be held in June 2007. Considerable efforts were put into promoting the event, and we were rewarded on the day with an attendance of 78 - filling the Gurkha Museum's McDonald Gallery to capacity - with more than one having to be turned away.

Our senior guest, General Sir Sam Cowan, spoke knowledgeably about Nepal and our Chairman, Major Mike Marshall, about the Regiment. An exchange of letters with the Palace was read out; toasts were drunk to Her Majesty, to the Regiment and to absent friends, and there we all thought the matter would rest - but not a bit of it.

2008 was the 150th anniversary of the Regiment and the 60th of this Association, and Lord Karan Bilimoria - son of Lt Gen Bilimoria the early Battalion Commander of 5th Gorkha Rifles

- The brothers, Ian and Robin Edwardes (grandsons of JGE and sons of JSME) with wives Lucy and Mary.
- Valerie Edwardes, widow of Shaun Edwardes (brother of Ian and Robin) and daughter-in-law of JSME.
- Dawn Dunne, daughter of Ian Edwardes, great granddaughter of JGE and granddaughter of JSME.
- Maya Arnold, granddaughter of JGE and daughter of Leo and Adelaide McKay Forbes.
- Gilly Palmer, Jane Lakin and Susie Lydden, daughters of Maya Arnold, great granddaughters of JGE and granddaughters of Leo and Adelaide McKay Forbes.

(Frontier Force) as the Regiment has been known post-Indian Independence - most generously offered to sponsor a further reunion at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in June 2008; not that he will thank me for revealing this publicly.

Attendance on this occasion was 116 - a truly remarkable figure for an Indian Army Regimental Association - even though of course veterans of the war years were a small minority.

As soon as we were seated, General Sam told me that Karan had three Generals lined up waiting to speak - two who had made the trip from India plus the Commandant of Sandhurst. Even then we had a Field Marshal, two Generals and a Brigadier in reserve, and I bowed to the inevitable and cancelled my own intended words of wisdom.

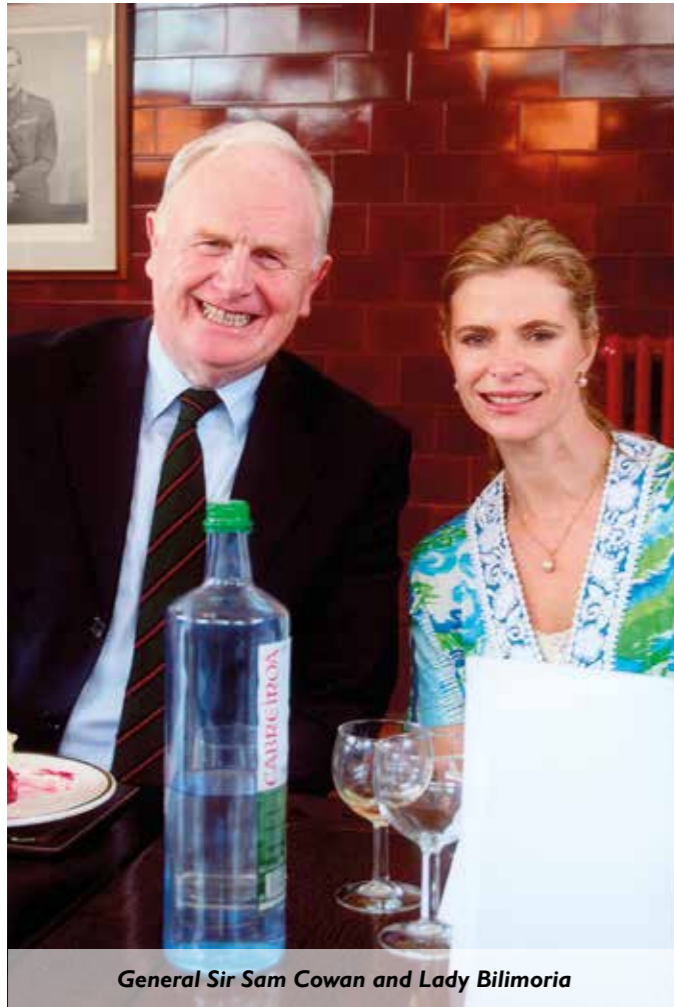
The exchange of letters with the Palace was read out and the same three toasts were drunk. We had been piped into the



Host of the day, Lord Karan Bilimoria listens as Maj Gen Ashok Mehta addresses the reunion



FM Sir John Chapple and 5th Gurkha Association Chairman, Major Tim Buckley



General Sir Sam Cowan and Lady Bilimoria



An overview of part of the gathering

Old College Dining Room by Lance Corporal Saraj Gurung, the weather had been more than kind and the location could not have been bettered. It had been an impressive day thoroughly enjoyed by everyone – but still we were not finished.

Our Constitution requires us to hold a special meeting to formalize the disbandment, and to agree disposal of Association memorabilia and of surplus funds.

This was a quite different occasion, held in a room at the Army & Navy Club in Central London. The business side had been prepared in advance and occupied only a few minutes; there was just one toast to the Regiment and, for the rest, 12 of us chatted, drank a glass or two and relaxed in each other's company. It was all hugely enjoyable.

I now have to produce a final Newsletter. There are still formal matters to set on record and reminiscences to publish plus some more general material. It has not yet felt as though the Association ceased to be active on 31 December 2008 – but I had to find something to do in 2009!

Speech by Lt Colonel ET Horsford MBE MC at the Final Reunion of the 8th Gurkha Rifles Regimental Association on 21 June 2008

I am very pleased to welcome our guests today Field Marshal Sir John and Lady Chapple, and I'm glad Sir John can be here for our 60th anniversary and to see us through our final reunion.

I know it's sad that we've come to our final reunion but I was thinking we ought to consider ourselves luckier than some. When our Association was formed, one of its objects was to stimulate interest in the Regiment, past, present and future. So we must be happy to know that our Regiment still flourishes in the Indian Army with its reputation as high as ever, unlike the four regiments who came over to the British Army who are now sadly part of history. So I am delighted to have with us two officers of the present Regiment, both recently retired, Colonel Sharma who commanded the 4th Battalion, and Dr Bannerji who was RMO in the same Battalion. I remember handing over the Regimental Centre to Brigadier Gupta in Dehra Dun in 1947. It was a rather depleted centre and had moved there from Quetta, which was now Pakistan, but we were still training recruits. Brigadier Gupta told me how honoured he was to be taking over our Regiment and that they were determined to keep up

our traditions and standards and they were making sure they chose the best officers to do just that. From all accounts I have heard they have succeeded in doing that and the Regiment's reputation is as high as ever.

Now as it is our 60th anniversary I thought it might bring back a few memories if I found out for you who was at our first reunion. When Tom Redgrove died – he had been Secretary for many years – his widow passed on to me a mass of old files, which I must confess have been sitting in one of our cupboards almost undisturbed. So I had a look at the earliest files and discovered a lot of well known names from the past. General Coleridge who had been Colonel of the Regiment for many years was the first President of the Association and was at the reunion, as was Brigadier Buckland, the Chairman. I think Colonel Willasey-Wilsey took over from him shortly after. I am sure some of you must have had the -er- pleasure of serving under him at the Centre! Others there were General Bruce Scott, CO 1/8th, Brigadier Langlands, also 1/8th, father of Alistair now in a nursing home in Camberley. My first CO of

2/8th when I joined in Shillong, Brigadier Hal Gordon, and my first Company Commander, Chris Yeates, were also there. He had the distinction of later commanding temporarily both the 2/8th in the Middle East and the 4/8th in Burma. Also there was Glaxo Duncan. He got his nickname from an advertisement for bonnie babies, I believe, because he was small and round. But he was a great chap and was the first CO of the 3/8th when it was formed in 1940. Others you may remember were Duggie Weymouth and Tony Dumas. I was hoping to find someone who had been with us more recently but the nearest I could find was Peter Wickham, too ill to be with us today I'm afraid. I wasn't there because I was still serving in the Far East, with the 2nd Gurkhas, as were several of us younger ones.

Of course there have been many others coming to our reunion since who have added to the reputation of our Regiment in their day, but surely none more so than General Walter Walker, who was our President for so long. He was a great soldier. And a great man. I am so glad his daughter, Venetia, is with us today. And may I also mention Venetia's godfather, my brother Derek, who died last year, and I am very glad his wife, Gilly, is also with us.

Now before I invite our guest to speak to us, I have an important message to read out to you, from the Queen no less. We sent our usual loyal message to the Palace mentioning that this was our final reunion and I have received the following reply:

Please convey my warm thanks to the Members, wives and guests of the 8th Gurkha Rifles Regimental Association for their kind message of loyal greetings, sent on the occasion of their final Annual Reunion which is being held today at the Gurkha Museum, Winchester.

9th Gurkha Rifles Regimental Association

By Bruce Roberts, latterly Chairman

In 2008, due to reduced numbers and the age of members, the members agreed the formalities of the Association could no longer be sustained and that it should close on 31 December. The funds of the Association would then be donated to the Gurkha Welfare Trust. Informal reunions will continue and relations with and interest in the Gurkha Brigade, the Regiment in India, and all the glorious history, will not change. As Major General Kishan Singh VSM, the recently appointed General Officer Commanding and Colonel of the Regiment 9th Gorkha Rifles writes, in a warm letter telling of his pleasure at his appointment, "Once the Regiment, always the Regiment".

The Association was formed in 1948 by some 250 British Officers who had served with the 9th Gurkha Rifles prior to the transfer of power in 1947 and with much encouragement from the Colonel of the Regiment, Major General Sir William Twiss KCIE CB CBE MC. The objects were to keep in touch with friends, to keep alive the spirit of the old Indian Army and Gurkha Brigade, to serve as a link with the Regiment in India and to support appeals which would benefit Members or



Lt Col ET Harsford, Chairman 8GRR and Mr BT Roberts, Chairman 9GRR at the Gurkha Statue, Nov 2008

I much appreciate your thoughtfulness in writing as you did and, in return, send my best wishes to all concerned for a most memorable and enjoyable meeting.

ELIZABETH R

Gurkha soldiers, past and present. These objects have been met, consistently, for 60 years. The 75th newsletter was distributed in November 2008 to all members of the Association, all other Gurkha Associations and the 9th Gorkha Rifles in India. The remaining funds have been distributed to the Gurkha Welfare Trust. In addition, provision has been made for a wreath to be laid annually, and in perpetuity, to all those of the Regiment who gave their lives in the course of so many conflicts over the 200 years of history since the Regiment was formed. They will not be forgotten.

Many members have played a part in the Association and all it has achieved. Lt Colonel Tony Mains and Pauline, George Challis CBE, Colonel Brian Mitchell MBE and Colonel Alan Watson, the latter as Secretary/Treasurer for the final 26 years, made outstanding and much appreciated contributions.

According to the published Regimental History, the Regiment's origins started from the Fatehghar Levy in 1817, as part of the development of the Indian Army, to counter

internal unrests. The Regiment became the 1st Battalion, 32nd Regiment Bengal Native Infantry in June 1823 and joined the regular army on this date. Subsequently, it was renamed the 63rd Bengal Native Infantry and under this title was engaged in the first Burmese war and in 1825 earned the battle honour "Bhurtapore" in the capture of an impregnable Fort, a centre of unrest; one of only eight Regiments in the Indian Army to carry this honour. In 1846, the 63rd earned the battle honour "Sobraon" and a campaign medal. The name was again changed in 1861 to the 9th Bengal Infantry with companies of mixed castes, only one of which was Gurkhas and Hillmen. The complement of British Officers was reduced from 24 to 6 at the same time. The Regiment took part in the Second Afghan War between 1879 and 1880 and received a further battle honour. Between 1888 and 1890 it was involved in the Chin-Lushai operations, in upper Burma, and all ranks received an Indian General Service medal with clasp.

A wide-spread reorganisation of the Indian Army in 1893 saw the conversion of sixteen Infantry Regiments to Class Units with a common composition. It was decided that the 9th would recruit the "Khas", Thakuri and Chettri Gurkhas. This class is said to have formed a large portion of Prithwi Narain's army of Nepal, in the mid 18th Century, which was when the Gurkhas' great soldiering and human qualities became apparent. The long and happy relations between the British and Nepalese stem from this time. It was also the time from when the term "Gurkha" came into general usage.

In 1901, the Regiment finally became the 9th Gurkha Rifles and, in 1902, moved to Dehra Dun and built the Regimental Centre on a bare stony plateau, two miles west of the old cantonment across the Tons Nullah. It has been described as the finest Regimental Centre of the Indian Army with extensive views of the lower Himalayas. In building and developing the Centre, there was much sickness and a few deaths from the conditions and particularly the water supply. After completion of the Centre in 1907, and up to World War I, there followed a period of consolidation; the foundations of discipline and esprit de corps of the Regiment were laid down. They were to be supremely tested, firstly in the following 40 years in two World Wars and other campaigns and then not diminished in the next 60 years as the 9th Gorkha Rifles of the Indian Army.

Within a few years, the First World War broke out in which the Regiment was to play a very large part earning many battle honours and a huge number of personal honours and medals; sadly at great cost with so very many paying the ultimate sacrifice. The 1/9th was swiftly mobilised and embarked for France in September 1914. The conditions of trench warfare in France were so different from anything the Gurkhas had ever experienced; it was remarkable that the Battalion performed so well receiving a total of eight battle honours. They occupied the forward trench line on twenty six occasions, sometimes for as long as two weeks. The History of the Regiment records that when billeted with French families it was quite usual to see a rifleman clad in serge trousers with a balaclava hat with his feet on the stove, smoking his pipe and drinking beer. He was deservedly popular, with cheerful spirits, good discipline and

cleanly habits. Many in the Battalion were disappointed not to visit England, when they embarked at Marseilles in November 1916 to land at Basra in January. They were immediately engaged in the next four months in an action to relieve Kut-al-Amara. In these four months, there were double the battle casualties as compared with sixteen months in France. They encountered extreme climate changes and suffered from poor supplies and food. The 1/9th was relieved by the 2/9th and sailed to India at the end of October 1916 with very few of those who originally embarked in India in September 1914.

The 2/9th, whilst having four months to settle in theatre, was then engaged in the crossing of the River Tigris at the Shumran Bend to overcome the Turks on the right bank and to drive on and capture Baghdad. In this action, Major G C Wheeler was awarded a Victoria Cross. The river at that point was three hundred and sixty yards wide and in flood and the crossing was the culmination of two and a half months determined fighting. Further intensive fighting took place against Turkish forces to the end of 1917. The next fourteen months was spent in building roads and railway construction. In March 1919, the Battalion returned to the Regimental Depot at Dehra Dun. The Regiment received four battle honours for the actions in Mesopotamia as the country was called then.

The 3/9th was raised with the additional battalions of other Gurkha Regiments in 1917 as part of a major expansion of the Indian Army, which was hugely engaged in operations overseas. The Battalion, after intensive training, and a spell at garrison duty and as part of the Viceroy's escort at Delhi, was posted to the Northwest Frontier. Shortly after, the third Afghan War broke out in April 1919. The 3/9th in due course returned to Dehra Dun and was disbanded in February 1921. At the same time, the 1/9th which returned to Dehra Dun at the end of 1916, was posted to Peshawar in 1919 and was involved on the Khyber Front. The 2nd Battalion was also involved with the 3/9th at Kohat. This period was very taxing for the war-weary Battalions of the Regiment who took prominent parts in all the actions characterised by the most bitter fighting and unprecedented casualties. The battle honour 'Afghanistan 1919' was awarded to the Regiment. The 1st and 2nd Battalions then became engaged in fierce operations in Waziristan where the tribes had taken advantage of the Afghan War to raid into British territory. It was not until 1924 that the two Battalions returned to Dehra Dun. All Battalions established a name and reputation for the Regiment worthy of that previously earned during World War I. This period is fully described in Volume I of the History of the Regiment.

The Regiment's glorious record in World War Two is an immense tale, far more accessible due to the establishment and enlargement of the Gurkha Museum at Winchester as well as contributions from the Regimental Association which has done so much to record personal memories in newsletters as well as donating memorabilia. Book 2 of the History of the Regiment, 1937 to 1947, covering only ten years, is as large as Book 1 covering 120 years. Book 2 records the enormous contribution the Regiment made to the War having been enlarged to five Battalions. The 1/9th, after a further posting to Waziristan, was

sent to Iraq in late 1941, not to return to India for four years and four months and then with very few of the original officers and men. The 1/9th was in almost continuous action in Iraq, Iran, Syria and Egypt, then famous battles in Tunisia, in Italy at Cassino, Central Italy and the Gothic Line. The Battalion was then sent to Greece in late 1944 to restore civil order in the 15 months before returning to India. The 1/9th earned ten battle honours for the Regiment over this period and a great many personal decorations for bravery, including the posthumous Victoria Cross awarded to Sherbahadur Thapa at San Marino.

The 2/9th sailed to Malaya in September 1941 and was based at Taiping. The Japanese landed in early December and then followed a long and bitter withdrawal ending with the fall of Singapore. The Japanese separated the British Officers from the Battalion and forced them into labouring on the Thai-Burma Road and other projects under brutal and revolting conditions and starvation. The Gurkha ranks were held together by the Gurkha Officers and resisted all efforts to subvert their loyalty. They remained faithful to the Regiment. Subadar-Major Chettrabhadur Thapa, later Subadar-Major and Honorary Lieutenant MBE, MC, OBI was caged, starved and given long periods of solitary confinement but remained firm in support of his men. Subadar-Major and Honorary Lieutenant Baikunth Khattri OBI, MC was subjected to similar pressure. Subadar-Major Hari Sing Bohra of the 2nd Goorkhas died as a result of brutal beatings of this kind. The Battalion returned to Dehra Dun after the War in 1945 as a disciplined and coherent force after three years of captivity, an inspiration to all. The Regiment were awarded the battle honour "Malaya 1941-42".

The 3/9th was raised in October 1940 with officers and men from other Battalions providing the nucleus and by the following May was in Waziristan. In 1942, following the Japanese invasion of Malaya, the Battalion was located in Bengal, a very uncomfortable posting in monsoon conditions. Then in early 1943 with the 4th Indian Brigade, the 3/9th became part of the Arakan campaign to counter-attack the Japanese in Burma. In January 1944, the 3/9th was withdrawn to mixed jungle country in the United Provinces in India to train for the role of the long range penetration Special Force or Chindits. At the same time, the 4/9th which had been raised just after the 3rd Battalion, and had spent three years in preparation mainly on the Northwest Frontier, began training for Chindit operations as Morris Force. In February 1944, the 3/9th was flown in gliders to create a fortress position behind Japanese held territory in Burma called 'Broadway'. The 4/9th was flown in to secure a similar fortress base called 'Chowringhee'. These intense operations behind Japanese lines, and the later difficulties in extricating and returning to India, are described in detail in the History of the Regiment but the title of 'Chindit' will forever recall this extraordinary and memorable campaign of a corps d'elite which demanded the utmost in endurance and courage. The enemy's communications were disrupted, heavy losses were inflicted and Japanese morale was dented. It proved possible to land troops in jungle conditions and supply by air. The Regiment gained the battle honour 'Chindits 1944'. Captain F G Blaker MC of 3/9th was awarded a Victoria Cross in these operations and died shortly after from wounds.

The Special Force was subsequently disbanded. The 4/9th after garrison duties at Lahore and Delhi was wound up after six years, in January 1947. The 3/9th was destined to take part in amphibious operations into Malaya but the war in the east finished in August 1945. The Battalion landed in Singapore and was involved in cleaning up operations. However, in October, they embarked for Sourabaya to be involved in an all out war with Indonesian Nationalists in which a great many members of the British Forces were killed or wounded. The 3/9th suffered 18 killed and 62 wounded in this "Forgotten War". The Battalion returned to central Malaya in October and was involved in maintaining civil order until returning to India in October 1947.

The 5/9th was raised in 1942 to replace the 2/9th lost in Malaya and was engaged on duties on the Northwest Frontier until the returned 2/9th was reconstituted on the 5/9th in June 1946. In 1947, before and after Partition, the Regiment played a very active part in trying to control the tragic events – in appalling conditions escorting thousands, to prevent bloodshed in the migration between countries, regardless of race or religion. The Regiment was renamed 9th Gorkha Rifles in the Indian Army and, since then, has continued to maintain all the great standards and traditions and to remain proud of all that has gone before.

This brief recital of the history of the Regiment, culled from the volumes of the Regimental History, does not attempt to do justice to the enormous events, immense bravery and qualities of such a great fighting force. Other Gurkha Regiments will all have similar tales; the Gurkha Regiments of today display all the same qualities. Members of the 9th Gurkha Rifles Regimental Association, which include wives, sons and daughters of those who served, would all wish to join this tribute.

Much has been written by Members of the Association about their experiences, adding to the historical record, as have all who have served with Gurkha Regiments. Many are the tributes paid to the Gurkha soldier. British Officers were always conscious of the need to live up to the high standards of Gurkha bravery, courage, loyalty and fortitude as well as their great sense of fun. As Lieutenant General Sir Francis Tiker remarked, those of us who served with the Gurkhas are better men for the experience.

The last year of the Association closed on a high note. The action of the Republic of San Marino, reported separately, in creating an elegant road-side memorial to Rifleman Sherbahadur Thapa, posthumously awarded the VC for his great act of bravery and humanity in September 1944, is a remarkable tribute, not only to Sherbahadur but to the 9th Gurkha Rifles and indeed to all Gurkhas. *Jai Gurkha!*



Headquarters Brigade Of Gurkhas

Staff List

Military Staff

Col D G Hayes CBE late RGR
Maj C M Morton RLC
Maj Bijayant Sherchan RGR
Maj Hemchandra Rai BEM RGR
Capt Rojbahadur Gurung RGR
Capt Yamkumar Gurung QG SIGNALS
Capt Khusiman Gurung RGR
Capt Yambahadur Rana RGR
WO1 Suryakumar Rai RGR
WO2 Bijayhang Subba RGR
WO2 Nokbahadur Rai RGR
CSgt Khadakbahadur Chhetri RGR
CSgt Bikram Ghale RGR
CSgt Lalit Dewan RGR
Sgt Rajip Rai RGR
Sgt Santoshkumar Gurung
Cpl Ram Thapa
Cpl Santosh Thapa Magar
Cpl Yogbahadur Gurung RGR
Cpl Ajay Dewan RGR
LCpl Binaya Limbu QOGLR
LCpl Ganesh Gurung QOGLR

Col BG
COS
DCOS (up to Dec 08)
DCOS/SO2 GTACOS Imp (Des)
SO3 G1/MS
SO3 G3 O&D Plans (up to Mar 08)
QGOO (up to Jul 08)
QGOO/SO3 G3 O & D Plans (wef Jul 08)
Supt Clerk (up to Dec 08)
Supt Clerk (wef Dec 08)
ABWO (up to May 08)
Chief Clk G3/Estb/Bud
Project SNCO (up to Jan 08)
Project SNCO (wef Feb 08)
Chief Clk G1/G4 (up to Sep 08)
Chief Clk G1/G4 (wef Dec 08)
G1/G4 Clk (up to Jul 08)
G1/G4 Clk (wef Jul 08)
Asst Ed Parbate (up to Jun 08)
Asst Ed Parbate (wef Jun 08)
Col BG's Driver (up to May 08)
Col BG's Driver (wef May 08)

Civilian Staff

Col (Retd) R F Willsher late QG SIGNALS
Maj (Retd) P H Gay late RGR
Mr S L Lord ED
Capt Mahendrakumar Limbu late QG SIGNALS
Hon Lt(QGO) Tulbahadur Gurung late RGR
Mrs J Patterson
Mrs S Hewer
Mr J Hughes

SO2 G1 Fin (up to Mar 08)
Regtl Sec
Bde Sec
BWO
ABWO
EO Bde Sect
PS
AO

Newsletter

2008 began - as 2007 had finished - at pace with a myriad of important tasks to complete to implement GTACOS. Although the Implementation Phase will extend to 2012, HQBG has quickly moved forward key workstrands whilst championing the Five Principles.

HQBG continues to bid farewell to and welcome new members of the team, starting in January when we welcomed WO1 Suryakumar Rai on promotion as Superintendent Clerk. With the serving Gurkha Offer To Transfer (GOTT) completed, attention turned to carrying out the Retired GOTT in February

2008 - no mean feat for a catchment of about 2200 post 1 July 1997 pensioners who literally lived worldwide. The Chief of Staff completed the GTACOS Transfer Roadshows in Nepal in February and managed to fit in a quick trek from Gorkha to Lamjung (a definite highlight). Captain Yambahadur Gurung departed in March on promotion with an IRC to become Gurkha Major of QG SIGNALS – his PowerPoint prowess will be greatly missed.

We bade farewell to CSgt Bikram who departed in Acting Rank to be WO2 Chief Clerk UKLTT – and we were delighted

to hear in February that he had been selected for substantive promotion. CSgt Lalit Dewan joined the team in February 2008 and took up the reins of GTACOS SNCO. CSgt Khadak escaped for two weeks in March and threw himself out of a perfectly serviceable aircraft in the USA - clearly this was preferable to more analysis of the BG liability figures.

In April came the most momentous of the year's farewells - to Col Roger Willsher - which is the subject of a separate article.

As spring gave way to summer the programme intensified as the Brigade Conference was held in the prestigious setting of the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in May. A highly successful programme was rounded-off with a dinner night in Old College with Colonel Commandant as the principal guest.

The Nepal Cup Final was expertly hosted by QOGLR in Aldershot in mid July and I RGR clinched victory in the dying minutes of the second half to deny the QOGLR a second successive victory, on their 50th Anniversary. The crescendo of Brigade events was aptly finished with a well-supported Brigade Bhela which saw old and new friends enjoying a few kuras and some bhat whilst being entertained superbly by the Brigade Band – well done to all concerned!

COS's blues arrived just in time (as did the funding!) for the QGOO Medal Ceremony in June which saw Captains Khusiman Gurung and Sovitbahadur Hamal Thakuri receive MVOs from HM The Queen, with their families looking on. The customary QGOO handover followed, and the HQ said farewell to Captain Khusiman on promotion to become Gurkha Major of I RGR. Captain Yambahadur Rana I RGR the new QGOO HQBG, fresh from Afghanistan, assumed the appointment of SO3 Plans in addition to his QGOO duties (as Captain Khusiman had for several months) which makes a full schedule, to say the least. Captain Yam's confrere as QGOO was Captain Prembahadur Ale QGE, who remained at Maidstone to enable him to conduct RCMO duties.

We also bade farewell to Cpl Ram who left the HQ in July on posting to RMAS; Cpl Ram was replaced by Cpl Santosh who arrived from Brunei having done a tour with Mov Con there. Likewise, Hon Lt(QGO) Tulbahadur Gurung joined the Gurkha Welfare Support Office in Aldershot to take over from WO2 Nokbahadur Rai who left on pension after more than 22 years excellent service in the Army, culminating in playing a pivotal

role in establishing the GWSO to assist in the coordination of welfare for retired Gurkhas in the UK.

Back to GTACOS Implementation, the Army Policy and Resources Committee endorsed the creation of up to three extra Gurkha Reinforcement Companies, with an extension of GRC I until 2012. Work on the introduction of Female Gurkhas also became more complicated. Meanwhile the pace of Gurkha Transfers quickened as many Gurkhas transferred out of the Brigade and into the wider Army and RAF - we wish them all well and trust that they remain proud of their Gurkha heritage.

Before summer leave HQBG found time to conduct a BG Manning Audit, and to enter a team in Trailwalker, led by WO1 Surya, which completed the gruelling course in a very creditable time. August leave finally came but all too soon it was Autumn. We bade farewell to Sgt Rajip in September on transfer to REME. DCOS represented Col BG at the Gurkha Welfare Scheme Conference in September and managed to sneak home for a week before celebrating Dashain - this year HQBG (including GWSO) celebrated in the Sergeants' Mess at Netheravon, thanks to the organization of CSgt Lalit. Sgt Santosh joined the HQ in December to take over as Chief Clerk G1/G4 – the post had been vacant since his predecessor's departure in September.

As winter set in the pace of GTACOS Implementation continued and it was a sprint finish towards Christmas with a flurry of APCR and Executive Committee of the Army Board activity to consider the way forward for Female Gurkhas and Excess Manpower. The HQ bade a fond farewell to Major Bijayant Sherchan after three years. He was posted to Nepal to become the Assistant Military Attaché - the first Gurkha in this important post.

Maj Bijayant was replaced by Maj Hemchandra Rai who arrived from Glasgow, after a successful tour with both Director Manning (Army) and the Army Personnel Centre, as DCOS/SO2 GTACOS Implementation. WO2 Bijayhang also joined the team before Christmas, having done a short stint with 10 QOGLR, and took up the reins of Superintendent Clerk following his predecessor's commissioning – WO1 Surya was commissioned by the Colonel Commandant at Wilton on 18 December 2008. After a quick Christmas lunch, leave finally came and the Headquarters paused for breath and reflected on a year of intense activity, taking forward key Brigade issues. Job done. *Jai HQBG, Jai BG!*



Col Willsher with HQBG Colleagues

Havildar Bhanbhagta Gurung VC, 2nd KEO Gurkha Rifles

All members of the Brigade of Gurkhas were deeply saddened by the news of the death of Havildar Bhanbhagta Gurung VC, at the age of 87, at his home in Gorkha on 1 March 2008.

Havildar Bhanbhagta Gurung VC, 2nd King Edward VII's Own Goorkhas (The Sirmoor Rifles), was awarded the Victoria Cross, Britain's highest award for gallantry, after he single-handedly cleared enemy trenches as his company assaulted a Japanese-held hill near the village of Tamandu in Burma, during the Second World War. His citation in the London Gazette read as follows:

"In Burma, on 5 March 1945, a Company of the 2nd Gurkha Rifles attacked an enemy position known as Snowden East. On approaching the objective, one of the sections was forced to ground by very heavy Light Machine Gun, grenade and mortar fire, and owing to the severity of this fire was unable to move in any direction. While thus pinned, the section came under accurate fire from a tree sniper some 75 yards to the South. As this sniper was inflicting casualties on the section, Rifleman Bhanbhagta Gurung, being unable to fire from the lying position stood up fully exposed to the heavy fire and calmly killed the enemy sniper with his rifle, thus saving his section from suffering further casualties.

The section then advanced again, but when within 20 yards of the objective was again attacked by very heavy fire. Rifleman Bhanbhagta Gurung, without waiting for any orders, dashed forward alone and attacked the first enemy fox-hole. Throwing two grenades, he killed the two occupants and without any hesitation rushed on to the next enemy fox-hole and killed the Japanese in it with his bayonet.

Two further enemy fox-holes were still bringing fire to bear on the section and again Rifleman Bhanbhagta Gurung dashed forward alone and cleared these with bayonet and grenade. During his single-handed attacks on these four enemy foxholes, Rifleman Bhanbhagta Gurung was subjected to almost continuous and point-blank Light Machine Gun fire from a bunker on the North tip of the objective. Realising that this Light Machine Gun would hold up not only his own platoon which was now behind him, but also another platoon which was advancing from the West, Rifleman Bhanbhagta Gurung, for the fifth time, went forward alone in the face of heavy enemy fire to knock out this position. He doubled forward and leapt on to the roof of the bunker from where, his hand grenades being finished, he flung two No.77 smoke grenades into the bunker slit. Two Japanese rushed out of the bunker partially blinded by the smoke. Rifleman Bhanbhagta Gurung promptly killed them both with his kukri. A remaining Japanese inside the bunker was still firing the Light Machine Gun and holding up the advance of No.4 Platoon; Rifleman Bhanbhagta Gurung crawled inside the bunker, killed the Japanese gunner and captured the Light Machine Gun.

Most of the objective had now been cleared by the men behind and the enemy that had been driven off were collecting for a counter-attack beneath the North end of the objective. Rifleman Bhanbhagta Gurung ordered the nearest Bren gunner and



two riflemen to take up positions in the captured bunker. The enemy counter-attack followed soon after, but under Rifleman Bhanbhagta Gurung's command the small party inside the bunker repelled it with heavy loss to the enemy.

Rifleman Bhanbhagta Gurung showed outstanding bravery and a complete disregard for his own safety. His courageous clearing of five enemy positions, single-handed was in itself decisive in capturing the objective, and his inspiring example to the rest of the Company contributed to the speedy consolidation of this success."

In accordance with his wishes, Havildar Bhanbhagta VC's body was taken to Dev Ghat, Chitwan, for the final funeral ceremonies. A farewell lament was played by a piper and representatives from British Gurkhas Nepal and the Sirmoor Club were in attendance.

Havildar Bhanbhagta Gurung VC is survived by three sons, a daughter and his grand children. In expressing condolences to the family on behalf of all ranks of the Brigade of Gurkhas, the Colonel Commandant, General Sir David Richards, KCB, CBE, DSO, ADC Gen wrote: "Bhanbhagta VC was a hero among heroes and a glorious personification of the highest qualities of the Gurkha soldier.....We have lost one of the bravest men in the long history of the Brigade of Gurkhas. His name will not be forgotten for as long as the people of Britain and Nepal revere the valorous deeds of their sons."

[A full obituary follows later in the journal.]

The Victoria Cross and George Cross Association President's Party, St James's Palace - 9th September 2008



Back Row (left to right)

Henry Flintoff GC, Awang anak Raweng GC, Keith Payne VC, Dick Butson GC, Willie Apiata, Chris Finney GC, Kevin Walton GC, Derek Kinne GC, Jack Bamford GC, Johnson Beharry VC

Middle Row

Barry Johnson GC, Michael Pratt GC, Henry Stevens GC, Alf Lowe GC, John Gregson GC, Charles Henry Walker GC, Jim MacDonald (RUC GC), Margaret Purves GC

Front Row

Stuart Archer GC, H.E. Dr. Michael Refalo (Malta GC), John Cruickshank VC, Jim Beaton GC, Their Royal Highnesses The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall, Tony Gledhill GC, Rambahadur Limbu VC, Peter Norton GC, Tulbahadur Pun VC (Absent sick: Lachhiman Gurung VC)

This photograph appears by kind permission of the Imperial War Museum.

The Retirement of 'Paisa Saheb' - Col R F Willsher

A unique dinner was held in the Officers' Mess of the Royal School of Signals on 24 April 2008 to bid farewell to Colonel Roger Willsher - SO2 Finance in HQBG and universally known as 'Paisa Saheb' - on his retirement after extraordinarily devoted and distinguished service to the Brigade spanning 42 years.

The Colonel Commandant, General Sir David Richards, the President of the Gurkha Brigade Association (and former Colonel Commandant) General Sir Sam Cowan, Colonel Queen's Gurkha Signals, Brigadier Nick Pope and other senior officers attended. Colonel BG, Colonel David Hayes, spoke for the Brigade when he addressed the gathering:

"Colonel Commandant, ex Colonel Commandant General Sir Sam, Colonel Queen's Gurkha Signals, thank you for joining us on this exceptional evening in order to mark the retirement, or I should say semi-retirement, of an exceptional officer and stalwart of the Brigade - Colonel Roger Willsher. And there are many more who wished they could have been here... Roger's career, from 1966 and his initial tour with 17 Gurkha Signal Regiment in Malaya to his retirement from HQBG after 14 years in post, has provided him with a phenomenally fulfilling and cherished service with Gurkhas - he would be the first to admit that.

Many a Gurkha officer, myself included, often states their conviction that service with Gurkhas gives them far more than they can give to the Gurkha. I am not convinced that necessarily applies to Roger - but he would not admit that. Roger's service has had a trademark of utter dedication. Not necessarily rewarded by high honour, and certainly not by high financial reward. But it has been a service of supreme commitment and singular intent - to improve the financial lot of our Gurkhas and of course that of their families. And what phenomenal success he has achieved. Every milestone of financial enhancement to Gurkha service over the last 14 years has been designed by him:

- The introduction in 1997 of the Gurkha Universal Addition - placing all serving Gurkha soldiers on the same financial footing as their British counterparts.
- In 2000 the announcement of a 100% increase in Gurkha pensions.
- 2006 - the financial structure in support of 100% Gurkha Married Accompanied Service.
- 2007 - the GTACOS Review with its uniqueness as the foundation for Gurkha service in the 21st Century.

And that was not achieved just by his endeavours in HQBG. His reputation is ubiquitous throughout the Brigade, recognized by the serving and retired and particularly those in Nepal. And why, because he never lost sight of the Gurkha soldier and the impact his work would have upon him, his family and his children's education.

His personal commitment to that has been unrelenting to the very end. During this year's Gurkha Offer to Transfer briefing processes - in all too often draughty and inhospitable chilly Army briefing locations - late winter - late evenings - late travel - a Gurkha ex-serviceman with a concern - "Stand back and talk with me afterwards", Roger would stay. Out came the notebooks and they sat down together - Roger's bellowing but thoughtful Gurkhali - and then you would witness the Gurkha's smile of understanding pass over his face. Any confusion dispelled and in age-old tradition the British officer's duty done by Roger.

I have outlined the headline achievements of Roger. But they would be incomplete if I did not mention his secretaryship of the Brigade's Education and Welfare Fund and Bunker Trust. Alongside the GWT it is a vastly much smaller Gurkha charity. Nonetheless, it does provide significant benefit in terms of education scholarships to budding Nepalese medical students to study in Russia and India or elsewhere. It also provides relief to a not inconsiderable number of families of ex-servicemen with handicapped children in Nepal.

I know that charity is very dear to Roger and it is indicative of his commitment to it that he has agreed to serve on as my secretary for a further year - so you see he is not quite retired yet.

The Brigade is blessed with the deeds of many British officers who have brought praise and credit to the Brigade, and many of you around this table are included within that. Roger sits high among those good men. I judge many of us would be pressed to find any one officer who has had such a profound impact on the lives of so many individual Gurkhas and those of their families. That has been achieved by Roger's meticulous dedication toward establishing for them a legally, morally and just financial foundation upon which to serve and retire.

Last year, on the announcement of the GTACOS Review, the Assistant Chief of the General Staff, the Chairman of the Review Board, observed that the Brigade of Gurkhas has a sound future on a sound footing, with the Gurkha commitment, past, present and future, amply acknowledged, with no diminution in its military effectiveness. Without Roger, that position for the Brigade, both past and present, would never have been achieved. Roger, from all of us around this table - representing many thousands of those Gurkhas past and present, whose lives you have improved - we bid to you our most respected and warmest salaams on your retirement. Jai Hos."

The Colonel Commandant then presented Colonel Willsher with a silver replica of the Gurkha Statue in Whitehall, as a memento of his unique contribution to the Brigade.

A Brief Update on the Gurkha Welfare Support Office

By Capt (Retd) Mahendra Limbu, Brigade Welfare Officer

I think the majority of readers will know of the establishment of the Gurkha Welfare Support Office (GWSO) at New Normandy Barracks, Aldershot, in April 2007, as a welfare 'Forward Operating Base' of HQBG. Since then the GWSO has been actively dealing with a wide range of complex welfare cases for retired Gurkhas in the UK and has fostered close working relations with the service charities, a number of government departments and other agencies.

The salient facts about the GWSO are:

Mission

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

Role & Responsibilities

The role of the GWSO is to provide advice and assistance both direct to retired Gurkhas and to the service charities and other agencies helping them. In particular, it is responsible for:

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

Many devoted case-workers from SSAFA-Forces Help, The Royal British Legion (TRBL), the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), the Veterans Agency (VA), and other organizations are operating on the ground dealing with various Gurkha cases in exactly the same way as they support British ex-Servicemen - if anything they give even more help to Gurkhas, and nothing is too much trouble for them. The GWSO plays an important coordinating and advisory role, and the volume and complexity of the cases it has handled have certainly proved that its establishment was an essential step - and not a moment too soon - in terms of providing the necessary welfare support, advice and guidance for those retired Gurkhas who have found themselves in difficulties in this country or are simply struggling to find their bearings.

The great majority of cases have been thoroughly deserving. The current breakdown is as follows:

- Category 1: Very serious cases - eg. involving major illness, bereavement or homelessness - 60.
- Category 2: Serious cases - eg. involving illness or other unforeseeable difficulties such as suddenly job loss - 38.
- Category 3: Less serious but still deserving general welfare cases involving Gurkhas striving hard to establish a footing in UK but in need of a short term 'hand-up' - 43.
- Category 4: Cases with some doubtful features - eg. lack of common financial prudence, fundamental long-term problems making ends meet in UK, or indications of undue readiness to rely on 'hand-outs' - 38.
- Mixed category or Unclassified cases - 80.
- Total = 259 cases.

As you may be aware, the GWSO has no welfare funds of its own. The Army Benevolent Fund (ABF) is our main source of immediate financial grants and its staff have been tremendously helpful to us. In recognition of the growing need for funding for Gurkha cases in this country, the Gurkha Welfare Trust made a grant of £50,000 to the ABF in 2006/07, another of the same amount for 2007/08 and a grant of £60,000 in 2008/09. The Trust will review the amount annually in the light of demand.

The arrangement whereby SSAFA and TRBL tackle cases on the ground, in consultation with the GWSO, and then apply direct to the ABF for funding (with a copy to GWSO) is working well. TRBL has also made substantial grants from its own funds, as well as providing food vouchers and household items including furniture and electrical goods. The majority of retired Gurkhas in need have been very grateful for the support provided by the various service charities and without the charities' help, and GWSO's coordination, many of them might have found life in the UK far more difficult.

The number of Gurkhas needing welfare support in the UK remains a relatively small proportion of the total number of retired Gurkhas living and working here (we have no precise figure, but we believe that there are more than 5,000). Overall there is strong evidence of self-help and mutual support in the various Gurkha communities, large and small, which have grown up around the country, from Doncaster to Greenwich and from Swansea to Shorncliffe. However, there are areas of concern which will require careful monitoring and there is certainly no room for complacency on our part. For some Gurkhas - particularly the elderly - life in Britain can be hard and bleak, and sadly some retired Gurkhas come here with a completely mistaken impression of the availability of state benefits, council houses and so on, not understanding the criteria or the waiting time involved.

To conclude, the system for providing benevolence and welfare support for retired Gurkhas in the UK, worked out in discussions between HQBG, the service charities and other organisations in 2005, is performing well thanks, in large part,

to the dedication and expertise of the staff of the charities and agencies and their great willingness to do everything in their power to assist Gurkhas in need. The GWSO is now fully immersed in its role and is continuously providing advice, guidance and assistance to retired Gurkhas as well as expanding its excellent working relations with the service charities and many other organisations.

Gurkha Welfare Support Office Contact Details:

Capt (Retd) Mahendra Limbu
Brigade Welfare Officer
Tel: 01252 355127 or 94222 8127 (Mil)
Hon Lt (QGO) Tulbahadur Gurung
Asst Brigade Welfare Officer
Tel/Fax: 01252 355128 or 94222 8128 (Mil)
Postal address:
Gurkha Welfare Support Office
New Normandy Barracks, Evelyn Woods Road, Aldershot
Hampshire GU11 2LZ
E-mail: gurkhwelfare@hotmail.co.uk

The Sherbahadur Thapa VC Memorial

By George Challis CBE, President 9th Gurkha Rifles Regimental Association

On 20 September 2008, the Republic of San Marino, in the person of its Foreign Secretary, unveiled an elegant roadside memorial dedicated to the memory of Rifleman Sherbahadur Thapa VC of 1/9th Gurkha Rifles. The memorial stands close to where Sherbahadur died whilst trying to save two fellow Riflemen who had been badly wounded in the attack on Monte Pulito (Point 366 in the histories).

This remarkable tribute some 64 years after the event was the idea of a group of local historians who wished to remind present and future generations that their liberation in 1944 had been secured by soldiers from many lands including India and Nepal. The proposal was enthusiastically backed by the Government of San Marino, the Mayor and Council of the town of Faetano and many local organisations.

The President of the 9th Gurkha Rifles Association and its Chairman (George Challis and Bruce Roberts) and their wives attended the unveiling together with David and Ruth Harding. David, who served in 10 GR and is a writer and historian with considerable knowledge of the country and the battles of 1944, had greatly helped the organisers in San Marino and 9 GRRRA, in particular, is very grateful for his help and advice.

As one of the few 1/9 GR survivors, it was a great honour to be invited by the Government of San Marino to the unveiling of the monument to Sherbahadur Thapa VC and all those who fell in the Battle of Monte Pulito on 18/19 September 1944.

Despite the strongest representations by our CO (George Bolton) the attack was ordered before our Gunners (1 Field

Regt RA) could reach their supporting positions. The result was inevitable, a bitter battle with 16 killed and 40 wounded.

My own feelings, after all these years, are that this memorial not only honours brave men (our Liberators the local people call them) but reminds present and future generations of their debt to the past.



Rifleman Sherbahadur Thapa VC memorial
at San Marino, Pulito

Rifleman Sherbahadur Thapa VC 9th Gurkha Rifles

[From 'The Story of Gurkha VCs' published by the Gurkha Museum]

Rifleman Sherbahadur was born at Ghalechap in the Tanhu district of Nepal in 1921 and was a Thapa of the Chettri tribe, one of the tribes enlisted by the 9th Gurkhas. He enlisted on the 20 November 1942 and after completing his training at the Regimental Centre was sent to the 1st Battalion 9th Gurkha Rifles in Italy with a draft to replace heavy casualties suffered during the second assault on Monte Cassino.

In September 1944 the Germans were holding a defensive position stretching east to west in northern Italy and known as the Gothic Line. This was regarded as the final defensive position for the protection of the "under belly of Europe". The 1/9th Gurkhas were part of the 5th Indian Infantry Brigade of 4th Indian Division engaged in battle close to the town of San Marino in the small principality of the same name.

On the night of 17/18 September 1944, 1/9 GR was ordered to seize three commanding positions, the last of which was not captured until the early hours of 19 September. By that time the forward company of the battalion had run out of ammunition and it was then that Rifleman Sherbahadur and his section commander stormed an enemy strongpoint killing the machine gunner and putting the remainder of the post to flight. Sherbahadur was awarded the Victoria Cross for his valour in this action.

The official announcement in the London Gazette of 28 December 1944 read as follows:

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

No. 70690 Rifleman Sher Bahadur Thapa, 9th Gurkha Rifles, Indian Army.

"In Italy on the night of 18th/19th September, 1944, a Battalion of the 9th Gurkha Rifles was fighting its way forward into the state of San Marino against bitter opposition from German prepared positions dominating the river valley and held in considerable strength in depth.

Rifleman Sher Bahadur Thapa was a number one Bren gunner in a rifle Company, which just before dawn came under heavy enemy observed small arms and mortar fire. He and his section commander charged an enemy post, killing the machine gunner

and putting the rest of the post to flight. Almost immediately another party of Germans attacked the two men and the section commander was badly wounded by a grenade, but, without hesitation, this Rifleman, in spite of intense fire, rushed at the attackers and reaching the crest of the ridge brought his Bren gun into action against the main body of the enemy who were counterattacking our troops.

Disregarding suggestions that he should withdraw to the cover of a slit trench, Rifleman Sher Bahadur Thapa lay in the open under a hail of bullets, firing his Bren gun which he knew he could only bring to bear on the German emplacements from his exposed position on the crest of the hill, as they would not have been visible from the slit trench.

By the intensity and accuracy of the fire which he could bring to bear only from the crest, this isolated Gurkha Bren gunner silenced several enemy machine guns and checked a number of Germans who were trying to infiltrate on to the ridge.

At the end of two hours both forward Companies had exhausted their ammunition and, as they were by then practically surrounded, they were ordered to withdraw. Rifleman Sher Bahadur Thapa covered their withdrawal as they crossed the open ground to positions in the rear and himself remained alone at his post until his ammunition ran out. He then dashed forward under accurate small arms and mortar fire and rescued two wounded men, who were lying between him and the advancing Germans.

While returning the second time he paid the price of his heroism and fell riddled by machine gun bullets fired at point blank range.

The great bravery of this Gurkha soldier was instrumental in saving the lives of many of his companions and his outstanding devotion to duty contributed largely to the severe reverse which the enemy eventually suffered when our troops counter-attacked. His name will live in the history of his Regiment as a very gallant soldier".

On 7 March 1945 at a ceremony outside the Red Fort in Delhi, His Excellency the Viceroy, Field Marshal Lord Wavell, presented her son's Victoria Cross to Sherbahadur's mother, Lachuwa Kumari who had travelled from Nepal especially for the occasion.

Attestation Ceremonies of Gurkha Regiments in British Service

By Colonel Richard Cawthorne

As most readers of The Kukri will know, Gurkha recruits, upon enlistment into The British Army, are attested at British Gurkhas Pokhara, where they swear an oath of allegiance to the Crown, before commencement of their training in the United Kingdom. On completion of their recruit training and on joining

their respective regiments, the newly trained soldiers, except those of The Queen's Gurkha Engineers, reaffirm their oath of allegiance to the Crown and to uphold the traditions of their new regiment at a Kasam Khane (oath taking) ceremony. The origin of these combined ceremonies dates back to the Army of the

Honourable East Indian Company (HEIC) in the late eighteenth century, when recruits swore an oath of allegiance on parade in front of their company and colours. Similar ceremonies are known to have been conducted by Gurkha regiments from the second half of the nineteenth century and by the outbreak of the Second World War nearly all Gurkha regiments held attestation ceremonies, although the details are sparse. This article describes the origins of the attestation ceremony in the HEIC and outlines those ceremonies conducted by Gurkha regiments in British service.

The earliest known regulation concerning the oath of allegiance to be taken by sepoy of the HEIC is contained in the Orders, Rules and Regulations for the Madras Army published in 1766. According to these regulations, the enlisted sepoy took an oath, which was administered by a person of his religion or caste, in front of his company, under arms, with its officers and colours at the front. The colours were then waved three times over the recruit's head, he was given his arms and accoutrements and he joined his company. It is probable that a ceremony of a kind had been used before and this merely regularised an existing custom.

Although the histories of Gurkha regiments make reference to recruits being attested or sworn-in, there is very little evidence as to when the attestation ceremony began within Gurkha regiments and how it evolved. The history of 1st King George V's Own Gurkha Rifles (The Malaun Regiment) records that:

... up to a few years ago it had been the practice of the 1st Battalion to swear recruits on the Colours, which were actually touched in the ceremony by the recruit. When recruits were to be sworn in, a Guard with two Gurkha Officers proceeded to the Mess and carried the Colours up to the parade ground for the ceremony, which was very imposing. However, it was obvious that the Colours must eventually be worn out by this use and, at the request of the 2nd Battalion, the 1st consented to abandon the custom in order to preserve them.

The history does not record when this ceremony was first introduced or abandoned and what replaced it.

The 6th and 8th Gurkha Rifles also used colours to attest their recruits. The history of 6th Gurkha Rifles records that:

Although there are no records to authenticate the statement, Colours were presented to the 42nd Assam Light Infantry about the period 1870-80. In March 1891, the Regiment became a rifle regiment, and, in accordance with the custom, the Colours ceased to be brought on ceremonial parades. All recruits, however, continue to be attested on the King's Colour, for which purpose the Colours are brought on parade. They are treated with great reverence by all ranks, and on the occasion of the Dussera they are allowed to be carried uncased by two Gurkha officers, escorted by the usual Colour escort, the whole party being in uniform.

The history has two photographs of recruits being attested at Abbottabad in India in 1914. The regimental history goes on to relate that in 1927:

... the old Regimental Colours, originally presented to the Battalion when it was the XLII Assam Light Infantry in about 1870, became too fragile for use. They were therefore placed in a frame and, after a petition to the King by the men, replicas were presented by the Colonel of the Regiment. Although as a rifle regiment the 6th Gurkhas normally would not carry Colours, His Majesty was graciously pleased to allow the old custom of swearing-in recruits on the Colours to be continued.

In 1960, the replica colours also became too fragile to be unfurled and were placed in frames in order that recruits could continue to be attested on them until 1994, when 6th Gurkha Rifles was amalgamated into The Royal Gurkha Rifles.

The history of 8th Gurkha Rifles records that:

The Colours have always been treated with great reverence by all ranks, and although on their becoming Rifle regiments the Colours no longer formed part of the ceremonial equipment of our battalions, they were always used to attest recruits on. Escorted by band and Colour escort of one hundred rank and file, the Colours were received by their battalion with the traditional Royal Salute. The Colours were kept in the Officers' Mess, being uncased on Guest Nights or other special occasions.

The history goes on to state that in later years the colours of the 2nd Battalion had become so frail that a silver kukri was used to attest recruits.

The 2nd, 3rd and 9th Gurkha Rifles also carried colours before being designated rifle regiments, but their histories do not record the use of colours to attest recruits. In 1863, 2nd Gurkha Rifles was presented with the Truncheon to commemorate the Regiment's services at Delhi during the Indian Mutiny. The regimental history records that on the 14th September 1907, the 50th anniversary of the capture of Delhi, both battalions paraded and:

... forming three sides of a square the recruits, some 200 in number, were advanced into the centre facing the saluting flag, in front of which stood Captain and late Subahdar-Major Judhbir Thapa with the Queen's Truncheon, supported behind by a large gathering of Mutiny veterans, British and native. The recruits were then sworn in, and each, stepping forward, touched and saluted the Truncheon...

This was the first occasion that recruits of 2nd Gurkha Rifles were attested on the Truncheon and the tradition continued until 1994 when the Regiment was amalgamated into The Royal Gurkha Rifles.

Although the histories of 3rd and 9th Gurkha Rifles do not make any reference to the attestation of recruits, former officers of both regiments recall recruits being sworn-in at their respective regimental centres during the Second World

War. The oath to the King Emperor was administered to the recruits, either by the Bhawan or a senior Gurkha officer, at a simple ceremony and usually in the presence of the regimental centre commander and his staff.

The 5th Gurkha Rifles was one of four Gurkha rifle regiments that never carried colours. Its ceremony for swearing-in recruits, prior to the First World War, has been described as follows:

In a Gurkha battalion the ceremony of 'swearing in' recruits at the end of their training is very short, though solemn. As there are no 'Colours' in a Rifle Regiment there is nothing to 'worship', so to speak, or to salute - except the battalion! So the recruits parade for the last time under their instructors on their own parade ground. For the first time they are wearing a complete rifleman's uniform. The battalion parades 'every person present'. When the Colonel gives the sign the recruits are marched down to the inner flank of the battalion, and halted. The battalion turns to a flank to face them. The recruits are ordered to shoulder their arms and then, sentence by sentence, the oath of allegiance is read out by the assistant adjutant [Jemadar Adjutant], the recruits repeating this word by word. At the end the recruits are ordered to 'Present Arms' to their Battalion, the Battalion Presents Arms in return, and then the final order is given by a sign: 'Recruits will join their companies' - and in a moment they are gone.

In some regiments of course a tremendous business is made of it. But as the 5th is a Frontier Regiment, and there are no complications of being somewhere else before they became rifleman, the ceremony is kept very simple, as are all matters in that sort of regiment.

In 1924, 5th Gurkha Rifles was granted the 'Royal' title and the regimental history records:

... the introduction, by command of His Majesty, of a 'Royal' cord, red in the case of regiments whose uniform is green, and worn on the right shoulder. No unattested recruit may don it; he receives it on the day he is 'sworn in', personally from the hand of the Commanding Officer. A rifleman is deprived of his Royal Cord for such unrifleman-like behaviour as letting off a round through carelessness; and naturally, no man undergoing a sentence on account of a military crime is allowed to wear it.

The histories of 4th, 7th and 10th Gurkha Rifles make little or no mention of the attestation of their recruits in the pre-1947 Indian Army. The history of 4th Gurkha Rifles has a photograph of its 2nd Battalion's recruits' swearing-in ceremony in front of their war memorial at Razmak in the 1920-30s, while the history of 7th Gurkha Rifles refers to its 2nd Battalion purchasing a silk Nepalese flag in the 1930s to be used for the ceremony of swearing in recruits.

Following the transfer of 2nd, 6th, 7th and 10th Gurkha Rifles to The British Army in 1948, all recruits enlisted into The British Army were attested at recruiting depots, in India and later in Nepal, before the start of their training. Initially, this was a low-key ceremony at which the recruits swore their allegiance to the Crown. Only later did it develop into a formal Recruits'

Induction Parade at British Gurkhas Pokhara. Notwithstanding recruits being sworn-in at the recruiting depots, 2nd, 6th, 7th and 10th Gurkha Rifles conducted their own attestation or Kasam Khane ceremonies. The newly joined riflemen of 2nd and 6th Gurkha Rifles continued to make their oath on the Truncheon and colours respectively, while 7th Gurkha Rifles used their drums bearing the Regiment's Battle Honours and 10th Gurkha Rifles used piled drums draped with the Regimental and Mahabir Swami flags.

The Gurkha Army Service Corps, which subsequently became The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment, was the first Gurkha corps regiment to introduce the ceremony of Kasam Khane in 1962. The format of the ceremony adopted was similar to that of 6th Gurkha Rifles, with recruits touching the regimental flag whilst marching underneath it. The Queen's Gurkha Signals, although raised in 1948, only introduced Kasam Khane in 1986, at which their soldiers are attested by touching the Union flag. The Queen's Gurkha Engineers has, however, never conducted Kasam Khane, on the basis that their soldiers were attested on enlistment at the recruiting depot.

The Royal Gurkha Rifles, on its formation in 1994, initially used piled drums to attest their new soldiers. In 1997, the Truncheon of 2nd Gurkha Rifles, which had been lodged in the Indian Army Room of the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst in 1994 prior to the amalgamation of the four Gurkha infantry regiments, was handed over by HRH The Prince of Wales Colonel-in-Chief The Royal Gurkha Rifles and is now used once again to attest newly joined riflemen.

Today, under the guidance of the Gurkha Major or Bhawan, newly joined soldiers of The Royal Gurkha Rifles, Queen's Gurkha Signals and The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment swear...

... by Almighty God, that [they] will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Second, Her Heirs and Successors and that [they] will, as in duty bound, honestly and faithfully defend Her Majesty, Her Heirs and Successors, in person, Crown and dignity against all enemies and will observe and obey all orders of Her Majesty, Her Heirs and Successors, and of the Generals and Officers set over [them]. [They] further swear, [they] will be loyal and uphold the tradition of their [Regiment].

The ceremony of Kasam Khane, with its origins dating back to the HEIC over two centuries ago, is unique to the Gurkha regiments of The British Army. It is an imposing ceremony, orientated to the regimental family, but is not widely known about outside The Brigade of Gurkhas. For the newly joined Gurkha soldier, it is a proud moment as he takes his oath of allegiance in the presence of his officers and comrades and is formally admitted into the ranks of his regiment as a trained soldier. Kasam Khane is therefore a custom that is cherished by Gurkha regiments and jealously guarded for future generations of Gurkha soldiers



'Manner of Swearing in Recruits in our Indian Native Army'
The Illustrated London News, June 22 1878

On 14 September 1907, was celebrated an event of deepest interest to the Corps, viz., the 50th Anniversary of the capture of Delhi. Both battalions paraded, under Brigadier-General Hall (late of the 2nd Goorkhas), and forming three sides of a square the recruits, some 200 in number, were advanced into the centre facing the saluting flag, in front of which stood Captain and late Subahdar-Major Judhbir Thapa with the Queen's Truncheon, supported behind by a large gathering of mutiny veterans, British and native.

The recruits were then sworn in, and each, stepping forward, touched and saluted the Truncheon. A short stirring speech by General Hall and a march past brought the ceremony to an end.



Recruits of 6th Gurkha Rifles in the 1930s and 1940s marched under the unfurled replica Colours to rejoin their companies as full members of the Regiment.



Newly joined soldiers of 7th Gurkha Rifles are attested by touching the drums bearing the Regiment's battle honours as they are marched through their ranks – Hong Kong 1989.



QOGLR Kasam Khane Parade in the presence of The Colonel Commandant Brigade of Gurkhas and former Colonel of the Regiment Lieutenant General Sir Philip Trousdell KBE CB commanded by Lieutenant (QGO) Shobhaman Golay QOGLR New Normandy Barracks, Aldershot, September 2004.

An Unlikely Encounter

By Lt Gen Sir Peter Duffell KCB CBE MC

Part 1 - Starling Inlet 1976

In the mid-seventies I was commanding B Company of I/2 GR on a border tour in the New Territories chasing Illegal Immigrants from China seeking sanctuary in Hong Kong. We were stationed on the isolated shoreline of Starling Inlet across the bay from the divided village of Sha Tau Kok. I had my modest Tac HQ set up in an old and deserted fisherman's cottage. Across the border duck farms and paddy fields stretched back into unknown China as far as the eye could see. Chairman Mao's disastrous Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution continued to ravage the country.

The standard illegal immigrants, or IIs as they were known, were, in most cases, illiterate, bare-footed Cantonese peasants - latter day Dick Whittington's - seeking the gold off Hong Kong pavements - and a better life than that offered in the farming villages of Guangdong Province. If they managed to reach the border, scale the border fence, avoid our patrols and make it to the safe haven of Kowloon they were then allowed to stay - if captured they faced the ignominy of the daily 4 pm return across the Man Kam To Bridge, into the hands of the Chinese authorities and back to an uncertain future. Many of them were in the hands of the notorious "snake heads" offering unwarranted guarantees of safe passage across the border in return for high prices.

In my area the majority of IIs were swimmers testing the dangerous waters at night to escape from the Chinese militia patrols north of the border and the evasion of our patrols to the south. Drowned and mutilated bodies occasionally washed up on the shore were testament to the dangers and challenges of this route. Our early dawn clearance patrols checked the shoreline for those that might have successfully made the crossing overnight.

One morning I received a radio message that a Gurkha patrol had picked up a swimmer and were bringing him back to Tac HQ. I told my signaller to summon a Police Patrol boat to come and pick him up for passage to the mainland and the Immigration Handling Centre and awaited his arrival.

Soon I saw Corporal Ganga walking up the beach towards me accompanied by a Chinese man who immediately looked different from the average II. He was middle-aged, grey haired and thin but with refined features and he walked with a slight stoop. He wore only faded blue shorts. What surprised me was that he and Ganga were clearly engaged in deep conversation. I knew that the Gurkha's knowledge of Cantonese was non-existent and I could only imagine they were talking English. But an II who spoke English was a rare commodity. They entered my small headquarters and the II spoke immediately to me:

"Have you read Thackeray's Vanity Fair - what a marvellous character is Becky Sharp."

Somewhat taken aback I said that I was familiar with the book.

"My name is Wang - I am a Professor of English Literature at the Sun Yat Sen University."

Gently I began to probe his background and the journey he had made to reach the shoreline. It was clear that as an intellectual he had suffered under the Cultural Revolution.

"Years ago I tried to come to Hong Kong. I was captured by the militia and sentenced to five years on a National Farm. I found farming uncongenial, Major."

Other members of my company gathered round us fascinated as the Professor continued his story. He wept as he recounted the disaster of the Tangshan earthquake which had just killed an estimated quarter of a million Chinese. News of this catastrophe had barely reached the outside world. He had watched trainloads of casualties coming off trains in Beijing's railway station. He told us of his early upbringing in Canton, of his constant disagreements with the authorities which had led him to early internment in the countryside and how everyone was sick of the "damned revolution". He recounted his adventures in reaching the Chinese shoreline; of brushes and chases with the Militia; of his night swim across the Inlet; that he had come with a student friend but when the rubber ring they used to help support them had drifted away he had lost touch with his companion. On reaching the shore he decided to hide amongst some bushes with the intention of waiting to see if his friend arrived so that they could continue their journey together. It was here that the patrol had found him. Ganga told me that when he spotted Wang the Professor had adopted a menacing Kung Fu posture as if to strike him. Ganga had brought his bamboo baton down on the Professor's raised and threatening hand. I could see that it was bruised and swollen. We had all warmed to this interesting man who was giving us an insight into a China about which we knew little. He spoke for an hour with charm and distinction. Down on the shoreline I could see the Police launch closing in on our small quay. Part of me wanted to tell the Professor to move off up the hill at the back of the old fishing village and head south to the sanctuary of Kowloon. But that was clearly impossible. The discussion was drawing to its close.

"I am hoping to join my brother - he is a merchant on the Queen's Road. When I reach him you must come and have dinner with me."

"I don't think that will be possible"

The Marine Police came bounding into the Headquarters and without ceremony snapped their handcuffs around the Professor's wrists. Wang gave me a surprised and hurt look as he was led away clearly horrified at the apparent and seemingly treacherous end to his odyssey. In many ways I was sad to see him go. I reported my encounter to Battalion Headquarters and asked them to ensure that the Immigration Centre was made aware of the Professor's background and how useful he might be to the authorities with his familiarity with China and Mao's

revolutionary ways. I also suggested that his hand be examined in case it was broken. I knew that IIs who were injured during capture were not returned to China. Three days hospitalisation or incapacity was normally the criterion.

For the next three days I made daily enquiries about the Professor. For a couple of days he was being interviewed and medically examined. Then on the third day I heard that his hand was only bruised and that he would be returning to China across the Man Kam To Bridge that afternoon and would be thrust back into the maelstrom that was China. It seemed to be the end of the matter and Wang simply became another immigration statistic. Later on in my career when I occupied more senior positions in the Territory I learnt that things were not always as they seemed when dealing with illegal immigrants but discreet enquiries about Professor Wang led only up cul-de-sacs.

Part 2 - The Travellers Club 2006

Thirty years have passed and I am having lunch in the Travellers Club in London with my good friend Charles Cumming. He has begun to make a name for himself as a writer of political spy thrillers. Some reviewers call him the new John Le Carré.

Almost to Kohima

By Lt Col Adrian Griffith RGR

"If your Restricted Area Passes do not arrive by one o'clock tomorrow", stated the Superintendent of Nagaland Police in a tone that did not encourage argument, "you will be deported".

Ushered from his office we were driven to a dingy hotel nearby on the Kohima road and awaited our fate, over which we seemed to have little control and which would be decided at the Ministry of Home Affairs in Delhi.

It was a rude check to our bullish enthusiasm which had enabled us to reach Dimapur, the entry point to Nagaland and the first step on our trip to pay homage to those who had held and defeated the Japanese at Kohima in 1944. Dimapur had been the Rear Supply Area for the 14th Army as it was the railhead nearest the front. From here a narrow road wound its way up to Kohima, 40 km away, and then down to Imphal. It was here, early in 1944, that General, later Field Marshal, William Slim, the Army Commander, intended to defeat the Japanese on ground of his own choosing where his supply lines were short and those of the Japanese long. Imphal boasted six airfields, two of them all weather and vital for re-supply if cut-off. It was here on the Imphal plain that Slim stockpiled combat supplies in anticipation of the battle ahead.

Slim's plan almost went awry as the Japanese advance pre-empted him. The timing of the withdrawal of his forward troops, 17th Indian Division, the famous Black Cats, to Imphal was only just in time and by the time the withdrawal was effected the main British Reserve had already been deployed. But while the main Japanese offensive was mounted against Imphal, a whole

He is picking my brains about Hong Kong and China where he is setting his fourth novel. He plans a story surrounding the Muslim Uigars of North West China combined with some murky activities by the CIA and MI6. Among other benign tales I relate to him the story of Professor Wang and our meeting at Starling Inlet all those years ago. He asks if he can use the story. Together we build up a possible involvement. A year later and I am reading Charles's draft manuscript suitably enough in Hong Kong where I am opening an office for my firm. Wang is firmly in the novel. In the book he remains in Hong Kong after arrest; he is handled by the western intelligence agencies, turned to their uses yet his loyalties are constantly suspect as a possible Chinese plant. He is central to the book's theme and in the author's generous acknowledgement Charles writes how I related to him the story of Wang's capture and how I had sent him straight back to China! And that must have been what happened to the interesting Professor back in 1976!

You can read about the fictional Wang in "Typhoon" by Charles Cumming. Now out in hardback or, if you can wait, shortly in paperback.

PS. For various reasons I have changed the Professor's name.

Japanese division, the 31st commanded by General Sato, was sent to capture Kohima to the north. This had not been envisaged.

Kohima, at 5,000 feet, is the highest point on the Manipur Road between Imphal and Dimapur. It was the administrative centre for Nagaland and the key to the defence of the rear area. If Kohima fell then so would Dimapur and the Japanese would have captured much of the combat supplies their plan relied on. Kohima was not well defended and when the Japanese attacked there was less than a battalion of troops dug in to meet them.

The genesis of the trip which found Lt Col Guy Harnby and myself pondering the ignominy of deportation was that one of the formations involved in the relief of Kohima was the 2nd British Infantry Division. Guy, currently operating as an arms control monitor with the UN in Nepal, was officially Commander Staff and Personnel Support on the staff of 2 Div in UK. With military logic it was noted that he was relatively, compared with Edinburgh, quite close to Kohima and was asked to go and lay a wreath in memory of 2 Div's fallen. He had laboriously picked his way through the Byzantine labyrinth of Indian bureaucracy for the two of us to be issued with a permit to enter Nagaland to enable us to carry out this role.

In anticipation both of us had read all we could about the battle. Guy concentrated on 2 Div's involvement in the battle, and as a Gurkha I was more focused on the role of the Indian Army, Nepal Army, Burma Regiment and Assam Rifles units who were involved, both in the defence of Kohima and the defeat of the Japanese leading up to the link up with the forces in Imphal.

By the time we left Kathmandu we were assured the passes would be awaiting us in Dimapur. After a pleasant night at the Tolly Gunge Club in Kolkata (Calcutta) we had arrived in Dimapur on time. Walking across the tarmac to the terminal building we could see through the heat haze the hills among which Kohima nestled – our sprits were high.

By one o'clock the following day our passes had not been issued and with genuine regret the Superintendent of Police signed the deportation papers. With little ceremony we were escorted to the railway station and put on the next train out of Nagaland, the 4.10 'Down train'. It did not matter where it was going provided it was out of Nagaland and we were travelling 3rd class and despite being deported had to pay for our tickets, although being 3rd class this was not much – every cloud....

It was a rude shock and one we were able to ponder at our leisure on the 4 ½ hour train journey to Gauhati, the administrative capital of Assam on the River Brahmaputra. After a night in a hotel which was surprisingly comfortable and thanks to the best efforts of the staff there who were all Nepali, we arranged a flight to Kolkata. The following day we arrived back at the Tolly Gunge Club with a distinct sense of our tails being between our legs.

Checked by Delhi's parochialism and the Naga's adherence to the letter of the law we were hugely disappointed to have failed in our quest to honour those who had fought and died and who are buried at Kohima. We were unable to see where the 4th Royal West Kents, the Assam Rifles and the Burma Regiment had fought the Japanese to a standstill in fighting which witnesses to both said was worse than anything in the Great War. To have seen where 1/1st Punjabis finally raised the siege and where the British Battalions of 2 Div fought so valiantly to clear the ridge. To have stood on Norfolk Ridge and tried, as an infantryman,

to envisage the hardship of their approach with the Royal Scots through the jungle to the west in an effort to outflank the Japs. And finally to have walked the ground where 4/1st Gurkhas under their 27 year old 8 GR CO, Derek Horsford, finally broke the log jam of the battle when they captured the area dominating Naga Village and Gun Spur. This allowed 2 Div, with some difficulty, to clear east of the road, outflanking the Japanese who, at the end of their strength, were finally forced to withdraw allowing the link-up with troops fighting north from Imphal.

Both sides in the battle suffered enormously. The difficulties of casualty evacuation and re-supply and the ferocity of the fighting and the fact that the battle went on so long is testimony to the raw courage and will of both sides. The British Cemetery is a place of pilgrimage where on the 2 Div Memorial are inscribed the well known words:

*When you go home
Tell them of us and say
For your tomorrow
We gave our today*

No words capture the tragedy of conflict so evocatively as these.

It is a privilege to even have been allowed to try and visit the battlefield. Somehow our failure to reach it makes the appreciation of how much suffering was endured even more poignant, frustrated and disappointed though we were. It has hardened the determination in both of us to try again so that at some stage we can pay homage to our military forebears who gave their today for us in such a dynamic manner that has meant that we, as soldiers, have not had to emulate them in a world war thanks to the peace that they ensured.



British Gurkhas Nepal

Staff List

Headquarters British Gurkhas Nepal

Col R J J Ellis BSc (Hons) CEng MIEE MBCS CITP
CDipAF sq(w) tem jsdc Late QG SIGNALS
Lt Col M D Vickers QOGLR
Maj R C Griffiths AGC (SPS)
Maj Nirmalkumar Bhattachan QG SIGNALS
Capt Samraj Gurung RGR
Capt P A Hodgkinson R SIGNALS
Capt A R Lyman RLC
Capt W Fielding RLC
Capt Surje Gurung QG SIGNALS
Mrs J Simonot
Hon Maj Karnasher Tamang MBE Ex QG SIGNALS
Dr K Baker
Mrs J Maynard

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

Defence Section British Embassy Kathmandu

Maj S L L Marshall RLC
Capt Tulasiprasad Paudel RGR

AMA/MLO
SO Admin

British Gurkhas Kathmandu

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

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

British Gurkhas Pokhara

Maj R G J Beven RGR
Capt Dilkumar Rai 2 RGR
Capt A G Clark RGR
Capt P M O'Nions AGC (SPS)
Capt Tulbahadur Ale MBE QGE
Hon Maj Prembahadur Thapa Ex RGR
Capt (QGO) (Retd) Gangabahadur Gurung Ex RGR
Hon Capt Mansing Gurung Ex QG SIGNALS
Capt (QGO) (Retd) Bhojraj Gurung Ex 2 RGR
Capt (QGO) (Retd) Aitabahadur Limbu Ex 2 RGR

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

Defence Estate Overseas Division (Nepal)

Capt C B Smith RE

Head of Delivery

British Gurkhas Itahari

Capt Rambahadur Gurung Ex 2 RGR

OC

Headquarters Gurkha Welfare Scheme

Lt Col A P M Griffith RGR

Hon Maj Krishnabhadur Gurung MVO MBE Ex QOGLR

Capt R D Grant RE

Capt (QGO) (Retd) Bhaktabhadur Rai Ex QGE

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

Hon Maj Govinde Gurung MVO MBE Ex QG SIGNALS

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

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

Hon Capt Narbahadur Gurung MVO BEM Ex 1 RGR

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

Hon Lt (QGO) Thakursing Gurung Ex 2 RGR

Fd Dir

Dep Fd Dir

Proj Engr

Prog Dir RWSP

SO Coord

SO Med

SO Ops

SO IA

SO Log

SO RH

Asst SO Ops

Area Welfare Centres

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

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

Hon Maj Chandrabhadur Gurung MVO Ex 1 RGR

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

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

Maj (Retd) Krishna Gurung BEM Ex QG SIGNALS

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

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

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

Hon Maj Lalitbahadur Gurung Ex RGR

Insp II (Retd) Subharaj Thamsuhang Ex GCSPF

Lt (QGO) (Retd) Yambahadur Limbu Ex QOGLR

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

Hon Lt (QGO) Tikaram Rai Ex 10 GR

Hon Lt (QGO) Bhimprasad Rai Ex 10 GR

Hon Lt (QGO) Punendraprasad Limbu Ex 2 RGR

Hon Lt (QGO) Chhatrabhadur Rai Ex QG SIGNALS

Hon Maj Chandraprasad Limbu MBE Ex 3 RGR

Hon Lt (QGO) Premkumar Tamang Ex QG SIGNALS

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

AWO Bheri

AWO Gulmi

SAWO Kaski

AWO Lamjung

AWO Gorkha

AWO Syangja

AWO Tanahun

AWO Chitwan

SAWO Butwal

SAWO Bagmati

AWO Rumjatar

AWO Diktel

AWO Bhojpur

AWO Khandbari

AWO Tehrathum

AWO Taplejung

AWO Phidim

SAWO Dharan

AWO Damak

AWO Darjeeling

Area Welfare Officers (Medical)

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

Hon Lt (QGO) Deobahadur Rana Ex QOGLR

Hon Lt (QGO) Tirthabahadur Thapa Ex 2 RGR

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

AWO (Med) Kaski

AWO (Med) Butwal

AWO (Med) Bagmati

AWO (Med) Dharan

Honorary Area Welfare Officer

WO2 (Retd) Satyasagar Ghale Ex 6 GR

HAWO Dehradun/ Dharmasala

Headquarters British Gurkhas Nepal – Newsletter

2008 has continued to be a challenging year for British Gurkhas Nepal, with political uncertainties, on-going disruptions and power, fuel and water shortages, and a considerable changeover of staff. Nevertheless, morale remains high and many members of the BGN staff have been able to undertake some very enviable sporting, trekking, and adventurous training activities. With the high turnover of staff, however, there has been a clear focusing on primary outputs, especially in the second half of the year.

Commander BGN has remained at the helm, not least in a continuity role. A new COS, GM and DCOS all arrived within a couple of months of each other, and this pattern of change has been reflected throughout all ranks. All the newcomers have brought with them widely varying experience, but the “new team” quickly gelled into an effective and efficient unit, very much focused on BGN’s key outputs of recruiting, pension paying, welfare, transit, and discharge. Discharge is now very much small business for BGN, but it nevertheless remains as a specified task.

Politically there have been considerable changes during the year, with the Maoist party receiving more votes than any other party and consequently, albeit after a long period of negotiation, heading up the new coalition Government. At the time of writing, what this means for the future as far as the Brigade is concerned is unclear. The new Government are currently grappling with many key issues. One such is what to do with the former People’s Liberation Army fighters who at present are still being held in cantonments. The debate is whether they should be fully integrated into the National Army or some other employment found. More fundamentally important for the country as a whole is the issue of the model of constitution and political system that Nepal will follow. The more extreme elements are calling for a single party “pure” communist state, whilst the more moderate are wishing for something less extreme. As far as BGN is concerned the more critical questions over the future are left firmly in the hands of the Embassy’s Defence Section whilst the rest of BGN continue with business as usual, albeit keeping a low profile.

This year’s recruiting season has been another great success and BGN is confident that another party of high grade recruits is being passed into the hands of Gurkha Company. Initial registration numbers were broadly similar to last year, and even though fewer were called to Central Selection, a greater percentage of these reached the final interview. We are sure that this latest intake will continue to serve the Brigade well, on and off operations, continuing to maintain the best traditions of the Gurkha soldier. OC BGN has written an article on recruiting which gives more information. SO3 Transport and Movements has written about this year’s peculiar logistical challenges which exercised his staff and our systems. Thankfully all passed the test!

Needless to say, pension paying continues to be another primary output. The move towards bank payment has continued, and as the last days of 2008 rapidly approach approximately 70% are now bank paid. This has to make sense, especially for those living near a main town and a good bank. It reduces the amount of cash being handled and makes for a more modern approach. This having been said, it is interesting to note the considerable regional variation in percentages of pensioners who have moved to bank payment. 70% is less than the original self-imposed target, but perhaps this is the right level for now. In some areas pensioners are requesting a move back to cash payment, whereas in others the percentage content to use the bank continues to edge upwards. Clearly we must be sensitive to local circumstances and individuals’ needs, and must make every attempt not to lose the human touch, whilst still trying to modernise our systems.

BGN is pleased to continue to provide welfare support for the Brigade, and this is always a very busy section of BGN. Hon Maj Hitman Gurung and his team continually work long hours, always on-call, and always in the most dedicated and selfless fashion imaginable. They have had to deal with some very unfortunate and sad cases this year, including the tragic death of one of our own soldiers, Cpl Dhanbahadur Thada.

It would be remiss not to mention our civilian staff, many of whom have loyally served BGN, and hence the Brigade, for many years. The Re-employed Gurkha Officer (RGO) ‘commission’ now no longer exists, and quite in-line with UK they have been brought on to new terms and conditions of service and now serve as “Gurkha Support Function”. SAROs and the AROs and their teams of course play a vital role, bringing their experience and keen eyes to irreplaceable use in this primary output of recruiting. But then we have all those in the PPOs in sometimes difficult but always essential roles, the clerical staff, the MT, and those in the kitchens who support those in transit as well as the plethora of visitors and of course our own BGN staff. The transit, medical and movements staffs are also essential to our operations, including the singleton post in Kolkata (Calcutta). But also we mustn’t forget those in the Messes, those that keep our own BGN accommodation in order, and those that keep our camps such pleasant places to be.

The number of visitors hasn’t diminished, nearly all wishing their visits to coincide with our busiest time for recruiting. For many of these it is an ideal time, allowing them to see our recruiting processes first-hand, and therefore to understand quite how different the Brigade’s position is compared to the rest of the British Army. There have been times when BGN’s staff effort has been stretched, and efforts will therefore be made next year to move some of the other external inspections to earlier in the calendar whenever possible. Discussions have taken place between HQBG, HQ 4th Division, and BGN as to the correct staffing clearance for visitors, and it is hoped that some changes early in 2009 will create a clearer process. Visitors are important

however and BGN can assist in providing an understanding of Nepal and the background of our soldiers which cannot be gained through theoretical reading alone. This must continue.

All in all therefore it has been another busy year. A high turnover of staff, a changing political situation, and natural

Nepal Political Update 2008

After years of turmoil, Nepal entered 2008 as a country in disarray, a kingdom with a powerless King and under control of a barely-democratic interim government, struggling to recover from a ten-year civil war. Much has changed.

The Constituent Assembly (CA) elections were postponed from June 2007 due to lack of preparation by the Electoral Commission and the parties, and failure by the parties to agree on the system to be used. Eventually, it was agreed that 335 seats would be elected by Proportional Representation and 240 seats by the First-past-the-Post system with 26 seats being nominated by the council of ministers, making a total of 601 seats. The elections finally went ahead on 10 April 2008 and, although international and domestic observers were unwilling to commit to declaring them to have been 'free and fair', the observers were, 'generally positive about the conduct and credibility of the elections.' As expected, the outcome was a hung parliament with no party able to claim a majority and form a government. What did come as a surprise to most observers, including the Maoists themselves, was that the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) (Maoist) managed to secure the largest minority with 229 seats – double that of the next party, the Nepali Congress (NC) with 115 seats. The CPN (Unified Marxist-Leninist (UML)) came next with 108 followed by the Madhesi People's Rights Forum (MPRF) with 54. The remaining seats were shared among 21 smaller parties. The election of the CA was the first step in the long process of establishing the new Nepal.

In the final days of 2007, the interim parliament had passed a bill to abolish the monarchy and Nepal's status as the world's only Hindu kingdom, and establish Nepal as a secular federal republic. On 28 May 2008, this bill was ratified by the CA ending 239 years of royal sovereignty and creating the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal (FDRN). However, the early days of the CA

disasters have brought new challenges, but all have been met and BGN continues to meet its targets with high morale and high standards. It remains a fascinating place to work and live. Firmly focused on outputs all the staff in BGN work hard, but they also have some wonderful opportunities for other activities too.

were plagued by party and personal differences with no parties able to find sufficient common-ground to form a coalition and constitute a government.

The first hurdle was to elect a President, Vice-President and Speaker/Chair of the CA. In July, after a great deal of wrangling between the four major parties, a temporary alliance was formed between the NC, CPN (UML) and MPRF who agreed on the very morning of the election to support each other's candidates, electing Dr Ram Baran Yadav (NC) President, Parmananda Jha (MPRF) Vice-President and Subash Chandra Nemwang (CPN (UML)) Speaker of the CA. This alliance caused much consternation for the CPN (Maoist). The next step was to elect a Prime Minister (PM). It was generally agreed by most parties that the CPN (Maoist) were entitled to hold the PM position by virtue of having the larger proportion of seats. The NC were, however, vehemently against this, arguing that their own leader, Girija Koirala who had been the PM of the interim government should retain the position. On 15 August, the CPN (Maoist) leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal was elected PM and a coalition was formed between CPN (Maoist), CPN (UML) and the MPRF with the NC refusing to join the government and declaring that it will sit in constructive opposition. The formation of a cabinet came next on 31 August. The cabinet consisted of 24 members with a fair distribution of portfolios among the coalition partners: the CPN (Maoist) have 11 portfolios including PM, Defence and Finance; CPN (UML) have six, including Home (also Deputy PM) and Industry and Local Development; and the MPRF have four including Foreign Affairs and Agriculture, with a further three portfolios being allocated to the Sadbhavana Party, CPN (United) and Janamorcha Nepal.

Finally, the FDRN government was starting to take shape, but it had taken nearly five months of the CA's two year tenure, with

a great deal needing to be accomplished before the country's first full government elections. The main purpose of the CA is to write a constitution for the new Nepal. This process is only just beginning at the end of 2008 with a schedule for completion by the end of May 2010. The majority of the work will be carried out by ten thematic sub-committees, overseen by a Constitutional Committee and supported by three procedural sub-committees. There will be consultation with experts and the public in general before the final draft is approved by the CA and the constitution becomes law.

Other major challenges facing the CA are: integration and rehabilitation of the Maoist People's Liberation Army - nearly 20,000 former combatants are still living in UN-supervised cantonment camps; establishing the rule of law and combating insurgency, particularly the Terai/Madhesi separatist groups; land reform – reconciling the pledge to return land seized during

the insurrection, with the pledge to end feudal land ownership; curtailing the illegal activities of the political parties' youth wings – the Maoist Young Communist League and the CPN (UML)-affiliated Youth Force; and the implementation of economic and social development schemes promised in election manifestos. The government has made some headway in some areas – a special committee is being formed to resolve the PLA issue and a government negotiation team has initiated preliminary discussion with some of the Terai/Madhesi insurgent groups. However, virtually all progress on these issues is painfully slow, being hampered by party and personal disagreements within the CA. All that said, there are definite signs of improvement in the country and the prospects for peace and stability, and economic growth and prosperity, in Nepal are very good.

British Gurkhas Pokhara

By Major R G J Beven RGR

British Gurkhas Pokhara (BGP) occupies an important position in the Brigade. All Gurkhas recruited into the British Army are selected and recruited at BGP. Gurkha recruits undergo their first two weeks of induction training at BGP. Most Gurkha Officers visit BGP at some stage in their lives, either on their language course, on a duty trek or to assist with recruiting. No one is immune to the charm and beauty of the camp, with its splendid backdrop of the Annapurna Himal. It occupies a special place in the hearts of all Gurkhas – Nepalese and British – much as the old Regimental Centres in the hills of India did in the past.

BGP has continued to carry out its key tasks of recruiting, pension paying and welfare during 2008. In addition, BGP supported two annual SLP Nepali language courses and a number of important training courses for the Gurkha Welfare Scheme (GWS) and the Kadoorie Agricultural Aid Association (KAAA). In April BGP hosted a very successful Commander's Cup competition, although sadly we failed to defeat BGK. As usual in September, BGP hosted the BGN and GWS Conference. BGP wives supported the SSAFA Big Brew by organising breakfast for the conference and raising 66,144 Nepalese Rupees.

There have been a number of changes in personalities during the year. In April, Major Rick Beven took over from Major Toby Jackman as Officer Commanding BGP and SO2 Recruiting. Major Beven returned to the Brigade on Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS) for two years. He was followed in May by the new Ops Coord, Captain Adam Clark, who arrived from Op HERRICK 7 in Helmand to take over from Capt Rupert Anderson on route to Op HERRICK 9. In July, Captain Tulbahadur Ale MBE took over as Quartermaster from Captain Krishnabhadur Gurung and WO2 Deokumar Gurung took over as Chief Clerk from WO2 Indrasingh Gurung.

BGP has hosted a large number of visitors and VIPs during the year. Major General P F Everson OBE, General Officer Commanding 4th Division, and Major General A R Gregory, Director General Personnel (DG Pers), visited BGP on the first day of Regional Selection (West) on 14 September. In November, Lt General D Bill CB, Col QGE, visited with members of the QGE Regimental Association, as part of the QGE 60th Birthday celebrations. The Chief of the General Staff, General Sir Richard Dannatt KCB CBE MC ADC Gen and Lady Dannatt arrived by helicopter for a quick visit on 1 December. Field Marshal Sir John Chapple GCB CBE DL visited with 19 members of the Chapple family on 21 December just after the results for Eastern selection had been announced. Finally, Major General S Mayall, Assistant Chief of the General Staff, arrived on New Years Day 2009 to take the Attestation Parade on 3 January 2009. All of the visitors went away impressed with the work that BGP was doing and the quality of the recruits that were being recruited.

The central activity of BGP remains recruiting, conducted by the SO2 Recruiting, the Senior Area Recruiting Officer, Honorary Captain Mansing Gurung, and the two Area Recruiting Officers, Captain (QGO) (Retd) Bhojraj Gurung (ARO (West)) and Captain Aitabhadur Limbu (ARO (East)). The Recruiting Cell is ably supported by two recruiting clerks, Mr Bhupal Darlami and Mr Suraj Khaling.

The format of recruiting remained broadly the same in 2008 as in the previous two years but was carried out against a background of great political change in Nepal. In April 2008 the Communist Party Nepal (Maoist) won the most seats in the Constituent Assembly, effectively bringing the Maoists into the centre of power. Although the political changes have not directly affected BGP and its activities, it is important to realise that we do not operate in isolation from events that are taking place in wider Nepalese politics and society.



Maoist election campaign posters in Kathmandu



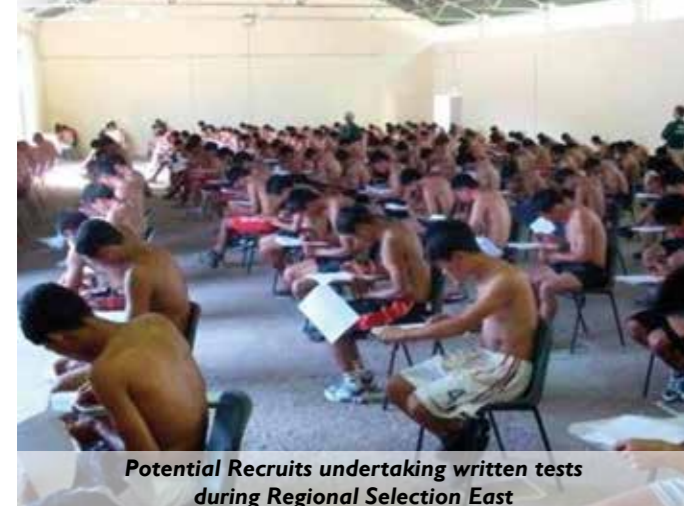
President Dr Ram Baran Yadav and Vice President Parmananda Jha

The first phase of recruiting for Recruit Intake 09 (RI 09) was registration. The Recruiting Cell established three temporary Army Careers Information Offices (ACIOs) in BGP, British Gurkhas Kathmandu (BGK) and British Gurkhas Dharan (BGD). The ACIOs were manned by the AROs and the Senior Recruit Assistants (galla wallahs) for a period of six weeks between 2 June and 15 July 2008. Potential recruits (PR) came and registered their intent to try for selection for the British Army or the Gurkha Contingent Singapore Police Force (GCSPF). A total of 17,222 came to register, of whom 15,507 met the basic criteria for height, weight and physique. PRs from 73 of Nepal's 75 districts registered, the two exceptions being Doti and Bhaktapur Districts.

The second phase of recruiting was Regional Selection, which was conducted sequentially in BGP and BGD in September and October with Dashain in the middle. PRs were called forward by Districts to attend the one day Regional Selection tests that included documentation, physical and medical checks, education and fitness tests and an interview. The physical tests included running 800 metres in less than 2 minutes 45 seconds, and doing a minimum of 14 heaves and 70 or more sit-ups in two minutes. As usual the main hurdle was education; approximately 90% of those attending Regional Selection failed the Maths or English exams. A total of 12,423 PRs reported for Regional Selection. From these a total of 592 PRs were called forward to Central Selection in BGP; this included 291 from the East and 291 from the West to maintain the East West balance in the Brigade. The GCSPF called forward an additional 196 PR for their Central Selection, also equally balanced between the East and West.

Regional Selection is always the busiest time of the year for the Recruiting Cell as this is when the tempo of selection is at its highest. The problem was exacerbated this year by the flooding caused by the breach of the Koshi Barrage in East Nepal which cut the road links between the West and the East. This meant that stores for Regional Selection East had to be sent by road via Bihar and West Bengal, a journey of four days. All recruiting personnel, approximately 100 strong, had to fly.

The third and final phase of recruiting is Central Selection which runs for a month in November and December. PRs have to pass further medicals, education tests, and run the Personal



Potential Recruits undertaking written tests during Regional Selection East

Fitness Test in less than 9:40 minutes. They also have to complete the Stamina Assessment Test or "doko" race carrying 25 kilos weight 5 kilometres uphill in less than 48 minutes. At the end of this process they also have to pass a tough interview board. At the conclusion of Central Selection a total of 230 recruits were selected: 115 from the East and 115 from the West. The GCSPF selected 80 recruits: 40 from the East and 40 from the West.

Over the last decade significant changes have taken place in Nepalese society that are mirrored in our recruits' backgrounds. Very few PR that pass selection have lived in the hills all their lives because the quality of education available there is so poor. A typical PR now is likely to have been sent to school or will live in Kathmandu, Pokhara, Dharan or another of Nepal's main cities or towns. Of the 230 PR who were selected 28 had fathers in the British Army, five in the GCSPF and 47 in the Indian Army.

The future holds many changes for Gurkha recruiting, especially if the decision is taken in 2009 to start recruiting female Gurkhas. The feasibility trial conducted in August 2007 proved that, with additional resources, the Brigade can select female recruits for the Corps units. Decisions on whether selection should be "gender free" or "gender fair" still have to be taken, as do decisions on how they should be trained back in the UK. There is great interest in Nepal about female Gurkha recruiting and most of the population are keen for it to happen. There will be a need to manage expectations if and when it does.

The Pension Paying and Records Office continued to provide vital welfare support to ex-servicemen, their widows and families. The Pension Paying Office in BGP is responsible for providing pensions for 11,500 service pensioners in Pokhara and West Nepal. There has been a major drive in 2008 to encourage pensioners to use the bank and approximately 8,000 of them are now bank paid. However, many pensioners enjoy coming to collect their pensions from the Pension Office in BGP because they can chat with their numberis and enjoy the facilities of the compound. Fortunately a decision to make the pensioners move to a bank in New Road, Pokhara, from a perfectly serviceable bank inside the Pension Paying Compound in BGP was changed.

The BGP Records Office holds 36,500 records for all the Gurkhas who have served in the British Army, including those who transferred from the pre-1947 Indian Gurkhas into the British Brigade. The Records Officer, Honorary Major Prembahadur Thapa, and his staff have been busy checking the eligibility of ex-servicemen applying for Indefinite Leave to Enter the UK (ILE) during the year. During 2008 they checked more than 2,000 applications. The follow-up to the court ruling in September on immigration criteria for pre-1997 Gurkhas is awaited, and clearly may have implications for the workload of the Records Office in 2009.

BGP supported two SLP (Nepali) courses during the year. The courses are run by staff from Gurkha Language Wing in the Infantry Training Centre Catterick over a period of three months. For part of this time students are attached to Area Welfare Centres (AWCs) to consolidate their language skills.

At the end of the course they do their Duty Directed Trek to further consolidate their Nepali. In addition, all the students have to do the doko race - a challenge many are keen to do. Sadly, the tempo of operations means that it is not easy for the Brigade to send officers to attend the long language course at the start of their careers. It is also very noticeable that young officers cannot speak Nepali as well as they used to when the Brigade was based in the Far East. BGP has just started a prize for each course, The J P Cross Award for the Best SLP (Nepali) Student, in an effort to highlight the continuing importance of British Officers being able to speak Nepali.

In summary, I can report that RI 09 was conducted in a free, fair and transparent manner. Recruits from all 75 Districts and from all of Nepal's ethnic groups are eligible to apply to join the British Army and many are doing so, although approximately 80% still continue to come from the Gurung, Magar, Rai and Limbu

jats. (The slight exception continues to be the three Districts of the Kathmandu Valley where - for historical reasons - only sons of British Army or GCSPF personnel are eligible to apply for selection.) The success of Brigade units on recent operations, particularly in Afghanistan, and the feedback we have received from units, suggests that we are selecting the right quality of recruits with the combination of intelligence, robustness, honesty and discipline to continue to meet the changing demands of the modern British Army. The 230 recruits of RI 09 were attested at their Attestation Parade on 3 January 2009. The parade is the culmination of a year's work by BGP military and civilian staff as well as staff from BGN, Gurkha Company and the wider Brigade. Under the proud eyes of their parents and their families - and in the shadow of Machhepuchhre - the recruits swear an oath of allegiance to the Queen. The next step of their journey is their training at ITC Catterick where they are transformed from young Nepalese men into Gurkhas. Jai BGP! Jai RI 09!

Pension Paying Offices Update

By Maj R C Griffiths

Pension paying is one of BGN's core outputs and as at 30 September 2008 we were paying 25,171 Service pensioners (Gurkha Pension Scheme (GPS) Serviceman, GPS family or GCSPF) either in cash or to their bank accounts. This number will only decrease as almost all of serving Gurkhas have opted to change pension scheme to AFPS 75 or 05. The pensioners are all on the GPS and are living in a variety of places in Nepal, UK, India, Bhutan, the Arab states and beyond. Just because the Service pensioner is living outside Nepal does not necessarily mean his pension is being paid into a bank account; it may be being drawn by his spouse in cash.

There are three Pension Paying Offices (PPOs), located in Dharan, Kathmandu (both co-located with the Standard Chartered Bank (SCB)) and Pokhara (co-located with the British Camp), Butwal having closed in 2008. For those pensioners who are cash paid and live a long way from a PPO they are able to receive their pension every three months from certain AWCs courtesy of the Gurkha Welfare Scheme (GWS). Every pensioner comes under one of the PPOs and therefore has a Pension Payment Information Officer (PPIO) who is responsible for ensuring the pensioner is paid his entitlement and for liaising with the various agencies in the UK such as the Service Personnel Veterans Agency (both for Veteran's issues in Norcross and for pension issues in Glasgow) over queries by the pensioner. All the PPOs are now on e-mail so pensioners who have access to the internet can contact the PPIO via ppoktm@bgn.com.np; ppodharan@wlink.np; or pio@bgp.com.np; or they can phone or visit. To assist those pensioners who are paid quarterly in the AWCs, from January 2009 a member of the PPO staff will visit each AWC once a year whilst the Service Pensions are being paid to answer queries. The pensioners in India and Bhutan are all bank paid but the PPIO from Kathmandu will visit AWC Darjeeling and some of the RANs in India twice a year

to provide the support to the pensioners. The Pension Office staffs also carry out investigations (within a day's travel radius of the PPO) to ensure that the recipients are receiving the correct pensions whilst the GWS carry out those investigations over a day's travel time on their behalf.

In line with modern practises and the increase in banking facilities in Nepal, pensioners (between 16 and 65 years old) are being encouraged to have their pensions paid direct into a bank account. This has many advantages for the pensioner including receiving their pension before the first of the month which is the earliest they can collect it in cash and no queuing at the PPO which can be very long. For instance at Dharan they paid over 1200 pensioners on 1 October 2008 and pensioners started queuing at 0200hrs and the last pensioners had not finished being paid until after 1800hrs. 67% of all pensioners are now bank paid, and it is hoped that this number will continue to rise in the future as pensioners gain more confidence in the Nepalese banking system.



A 93 year old pensioner collects his money at Jiri Patrol Base

In July 2008 SPVA introduced a new accounting system for the PPOs called Far East Nepal Accounting System (FENAS) which, although it has had a few teething problems, is providing an improved system to the PPO and in turn the pensioners. The system is used by both SPVA and the PPOs to ensure

the pensioners are being paid the correct rate of pension, and generates the Life Certificates that all pensioners who either receive a pension outside the UK or reside outside the UK are required to complete annually to certify that they are still alive.

The Brigade and Unit Welfare Office

By Hon Maj Hirman Gurung

The Brigade and Unit Welfare Office is based in British Gurkhas Nepal (BGN) and is manned by Hon Maj Hitman Gurung BUWO and WO2 Shailendra Shrestha A/BUWO.

The office is directly responsible for one of the key tasks of BGN - the investigation and resolution of the serving soldier's welfare issues in Nepal for the Brigade of Gurkhas, including British Nationals Overseas and soldiers transferred to the wider Army.

The Brigade and Unit Welfare Officer/Asst Brigade and Unit Welfare Officer and Area Welfare Officers also act as Casualty Notification Officers (CNO) and Casualty Visiting Officers (CVO). All the welfare issues are dealt with by the Gurkha Welfare Scheme (GWS) and Area Welfare Centre (AWCs). There are 20 Area Welfare Centres in Nepal (and India). The AWC contact numbers are as follows:

Bheri	083 520396	Gulmi	079 520107
Butwal	071 540880	Syanga	063 420208
Gorkha	064 420272	Chitwan	056 521592
Kaski -	061 521075	Tanahun	065 560185
Lamjung	066 520185	Bagmati	014 371599
Rumjatar	037 540113	Diktel	036 420117
Bhojpur -	029 420101	Khandbari	029 560101
Dharan	025 520796	Tehrathum	026 460009
Teplejung	024 460107	Phidim	024 520101
Damak	023 580175	Darjeeling	0091 354 2254965

So far this year BUWO office has dealt the following compassionate cases: Cat Alpha () – 45, Cat Bravo () – 112 and Cat Charlie (Leave at Private Expense) - 53.

During the period September 2007 to December 2008, the BUWO office has had to deal with 34 Notifiable Casualties (NOTICAS) cases. Individuals were notified as follows: 11 cases

by BGN/GWS, seven cases by respective units and 16 cases by family members.

This office has also had to handle eight Dangerously Ill Forwarding of Relatives (DILFOR) cases during the period September 2007 to December 2008 and four repatriations for deceased personnel. There are a total of 38 ongoing marital dispute cases being assisted by BGN.

In addition to standard welfare tasks the BUWO also has the following responsibilities:

- Processing requests for annual leave extension.
- Financial advice and guidance to widows.
- Giving accurate advice on TACOS and JSP 751.
- Close liaison with AWOs.
- Making arrangements for family maintenance.

Over the past year there have been a number of individuals requesting compassionate leave. The procedure for granting compassionate leave is as follows:

- Requests for compassionate cases are made by a serviceman's family in Nepal and are reported to the nearest Area Welfare Centre.
- The Area Welfare Officer investigates the matter and forwards the recommendations to BUWO.
- Recommendations are given to the CMP BGN for medical categorisation or to the DCOS/GM BGN for the welfare cases.
- A signal is prepared and forwarded to the respective units/ Joint Casualty and Compassionate Cell Innsworth via the Kathmandu COMMCEN.
- JCCC Innsworth authorises the Compassionate Case.
- The unit forwards the movement details of the individuals/ dependants.
- The Movements Control Centre collects the individuals/ dependants from the Airport.
- The return flight is coordinated by units/MCC/Transit.

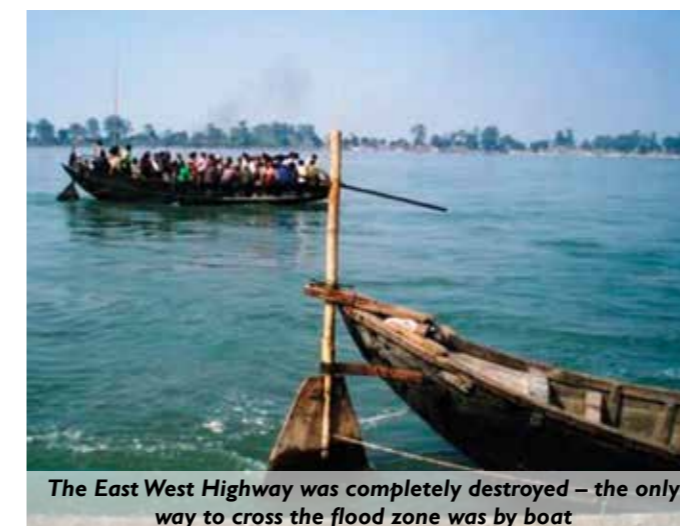
BGN Movement Control Centre – the impact of the Koshi Flood on Regional Selection

The plan was set, vehicles booked, passengers and freight poised ready to go, everyone was happy. The Movement Control Centre HQ BGN had had almost a year to prepare and plan for Regional Selection 2009. Everything was going to plan and things were looking good.

Then on 18 August 2008, the waters rose in the state of Bihar after the Koshi River, swollen by monsoon rains, burst an upstream dam. The waterway reverted to a heavily-populated course it had last flowed along 250 years ago. At least 55 people were killed, 250,000 homes destroyed, thousands of acres submerged and a section of the only east – west highway obliterated.

The impact on Regional Selection East could not have been worse. All plans were void. Initially the full extent of the damage was not known and reports were sketchy at best. Movement Detachment BGD was deployed to the scene to ascertain the facts. Immediately the situation became clear. The road was gone and would not be repaired for many months. Rumours started and stories of alternative routes around the floods were told. Again, Movement Detachment BGD was despatched to investigate. No such route existed within Nepal.

It was now clear there was only one option left - transit the vehicles and freight through India and fly the passengers from Kathmandu to Biratnagar. The MCC Domestic Air Booking Clerk (Miss Kabita Shrestha) was given a baptism of fire having only been in the post for about three weeks. She had to deal with the largest recorded domestic air move from BGN with no less than 131 personnel bookings and approx 1,500kgs of freight. The plan had to remain extremely fluid with requirements changing hourly. The credit for the successful movement of all passengers by air can be directly attributed to Miss Shrestha.



The East West Highway was completely destroyed – the only way to cross the flood zone was by boat

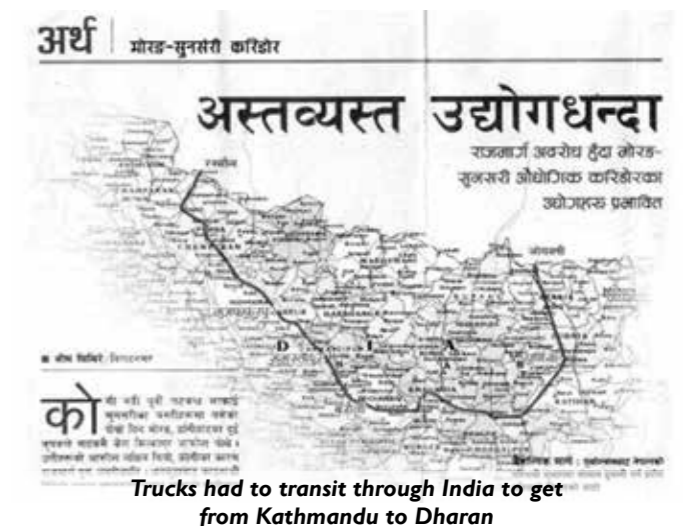
The surface movement required a lot of hard work from almost the entire MCC team. Mr Badal Lama, being stuck in the thick of it, was responsible for ensuring assets were booked and, more importantly, the transit permits for India were issued and all customs aspects were satisfied. The British Embassy did an excellent job, providing the permits often within a few days when the normal notification time should be weeks.

All appeared to be going well with the surface movement with two 20 foot containers en route to India and the BGN TATA truck tasked to collect the remaining stores upon completion of Regional Selection West.

The time came to load the final TATA truck and allow all to breathe a sigh of relief, but unforeseeably the requirement changed at the eleventh hour. All possibilities but one were investigated and ultimately disregarded. It was two days from Dashain. All foreign embassies would soon close, with zero possibility of a transit permit through India for additional vehicles.

The only possibility left was for the TATA truck now en route to Dharan to be re-tasked. The plan was to unload as soon as it got to Dharan and send it straight back to Pokhara. Members of BGD worked late into the small hours during their festival to meet stringent deadlines. The plan was a resounding success and time could not have been any tighter - with in some cases only a matter of hours to spare before border crossings closed for the religious festivals.

The total distance travelled by the TATA truck was approximately 2,865km using no less than 1,117 litres of fuel. The drivers did a sterling job and made it to Dharan with the second load in time for selection to go ahead unimpeded. A true credit to HQ BGN MT's going "the extra mile" when needed.



Trucks had to transit through India to get from Kathmandu to Dharan

Exercises PURBA and PASCHIM SIGNAL KHUKURI

By Cpl Pham Pun, Nepal Signal Troop

“When the going gets tough, the tough get going” – this saying was a perfect match for Nepal Signal Troop while conducting the annual inspection of nineteen Area Welfare Centres throughout the country. As the title suggests, the purpose of Exercise PURBA SIGNAL KHUKURI was to conduct the annual inspection of the eastern AWCs and PASCHIM SIGNAL KHUKURI was for the Western AWCs making a combined name “Exercise PURBA AND PASCHIM SIGNAL KHUKURI”. The aim of the exercise was to maintain Communication Information System infrastructure of the Area Welfare Centres by providing Subject Matter Expert (SME) support, conduct annual inspection, and trialling the Iridium Satellite Phone which will eventually replace the existing Thuraya Satellite Phones. The exercise was conducted over the period September 2008 to January 2009. It was divided into four phases and the team consisted of four Nepal Signal Troop personnel. OC NST Saheb designed the exercise in such a way that every QG Signals serving soldier at NST would get the opportunity to deploy in order to enhance and develop technical skill.

We started the inspection from the Western region of Nepal purely because they were due for an annual inspection. During first phase, AWCs Gorkha, Lamjung, Tanahun, Kaski and Chitwan were covered while Syangja, Gulmi, Butwal and Bheri were visited during the second phase. Similarly, visits to AWCs Rumjatar, Diktel, Bhojpur and Khandbari were conducted during the third phase while Dharan, Tehrathum, Taplejung, Phidim and Damak comprised the fourth phase. AWCs in the western region are connected by road, whereas most in the eastern region are not. Therefore, we had to trek continuously to reach one AWC from the previous one. We used to walk during the day and reach the AWCs in the evening. We had to start working on the faults and inspection overnight otherwise we wouldn't achieve our aim within the projected timeline. We had to get up

early in the morning to finish the remaining tasks and prepare the reports. Then we had to set off early in the morning to catch up on lost time. This was the normal day-to-day routine throughout the exercise.

Talking about the CIS equipment used by Area Welfare Centres, they have NTC telephone lines, faxes, desktop computers, PA systems, solar charging batteries, generators, HF radios and two Thuraya Satellite Phones. We, being the single point of contact, are responsible for installation, inspection and maintenance of all this equipment. Codan Radio is arguably the best means of communication that the AWCs have. This HF radio technology provides our Area Welfare Officers not only voice communication on the HF radio net but also access to email and internet where access to Nepal Telecom is non-existent, prone to noise or very limited. For instance, during the aftermath of the massacre of the Nepalese Royal Family, telephones and television stations were shut but thanks to our Codan Radio, AWCs had solid uninterrupted round-the-clock communications with HQ GWS at Pokhara. For this reason, we have always insisted on keeping this older system although faster and newer technology is available.

Each of our teams consisted of OC NST or Senior Tech, one Technician, two Area Systems Operators (ASOP) and six porters. Porters were very important as without their service and support we could not have continued our journey. They had to carry huge amounts of technical equipment and also cooking sets and food. We were absolutely stunned by their dedication and determination. I believe we had a family environment and we bonded so easily that it was very hard when we left them. This was a hard fought exercise in an arduous environment and of course a life time opportunity to serve the ex-servicemen and their dependants in the foothills of the Himalayas.



The inspection team takes a break in between AWCs



The inspection team at AWC Diktel

Exercise EVEREST TIGER – Mount Everest Base Camp

By SSgt L Roberts

On Saturday 20 September 2008, a mixed group of British and Gurkha Soldiers from Headquarters British Gurkhas Nepal, led by Officer Commanding British Gurkha Kathmandu Major Steve Greenwood, met in camp for an early breakfast ahead of a 13 day trek to reach Mount Everest Base Camp.

On completion of breakfast we mounted the transport for the short journey to Kathmandu airport. As we entered the Yeti Airlines “Sky Caravan” it became clear that the FSA was not the most confident of flyers and the 40 minute trip might seem like a life time. The flight gave us great views from the Kathmandu Valley to the hill ranges around the airport at Lukla. The bumpy “left-a-bit right-a-bit” approach to the airport took its toll on the FSA and getting his feet on “terra firma” could not come quick enough.

After meeting a guide and porters, and the traditional cup of tea, we left Lukla on our journey to Base Camp. Our first day was to be a bit of a shake out to Phakding which was to take approximately four hours. As is normal on a military expedition, after about two hours the OC could be heard discussing with the RQMS that we'd walk for about another 30 minutes and then stop to make ourselves a cup of tea with the kettle we'd brought with us. The look on RQMS' face told a thousand words, as the OC spoke to the guide to find out which porter had the kettle and it soon became apparent that the porters had left the kettle and large cooking pot at Lukla. This news was taken very well and the guide was told very politely by the OC, who was day one of trying to give up smoking, to send someone back to Lukla to collect them. As we continued one of the porters disappeared into the distance on the trail of the missing utensils.

On day two we had our first encounter with the legendary Himalayan steel wire rope bridges over deep crevasses en route to Namchebazar. Even though we were well acclimatised by living

in Kathmandu, the climb to Namchebazar was very strenuous for the group as this was the first real incline on the trek. At dinner time the first real difference between the Gurkha lads and the British was seen - we ordered our pizza and chips whilst Cpl Phambahadur Pun and Cpl Durgaprasad Gurung were dispatched by the CQMS to purchase a chicken for a more traditional Nepali meal. After settling into a tea house in Namchebazar in good British fashion we managed to find a small tavern showing Man Utd v Chelsea at 3450m above sea level.

A couple of days into the trek we reached Tengboche which is home to one of the highest Buddhist monasteries in the world. After a brief walk round the village we entered the monastery to have a look round. The interior of the main prayer hall was remarkable, with all walls and ceilings covered with brightly covered paintings of all aspects of the Buddhist faith. As we were talking to one of the monks the rest of the occupants started to enter the hall to start their evening prayer routine. We were invited to stay and watch which we duly did to experience the ceremony. As the prayers started a number of other trekkers arrived. During the ceremony a number of the viewing public started taking photos and videos, FSA included. As he was filming “Provost Monk” as we named him raced across the room and gave a man a stern rebuke for filming and then had him removed. As covertly as possible, the FSA slowly lowered his camera and continued to watch the ceremony with one eye on the monk.

After ascending to Dughla (Thokla), it became apparent that the altitude was now becoming more and more of an issue as many of the group were getting minor headaches, finding it difficult to sleep properly and losing their appetite, amongst other symptoms of Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS). At Dughla (Thokla) we had to split the group as one of the teams and the guides' AMS symptoms increased and so it was decided they would descend to see if this cured the problem and then they



Tengboche Buddhist Monastery



View from Kala Patthar with Everest in the background



would catch us up later in the trek. This was bought home even more when we found out that an Indian woman had died further along our route while trying to reach Base Camp. On a lighter note this was our first real sight of the mountains with great views of the Ama Dhablam Mountain first thing in the morning.

The following morning we started our final ascent to Gorakshep, the small village/enclave of tea houses closest to Base Camp. Initially we were going to have lunch at the tea house and then on to Base Camp, but as the weather was so clear it was decided that it would be better to climb to Kala Pattar to get the view of Everest in case the weather was to turn. At first glance from the window of the tea house Kala Pattar looked a bit of a challenge but nothing arduous. Oh how wrong we were! A number of false peaks and a winding rocky path made it an extremely physical climb to the 5545 m peak. After getting our breath back, we realised that the decision to come to the view point had been spot on as we had perfect views across the Everest glacier with the tip of Mount Everest completely clear across the open expanse.

This is where our day became a bit emotional. After a conversation with a guide who was sat at the top of Kala Pattar, it was decided that we could reach Base Camp without a full descent and back to Gorakshep before we started losing light. Well, let's just say that if the Special Forces were to do Himalayan mountain training, they would have followed our route! The next few hours we really put the adventurous in AT. We scrambled, we climbed, we slid, we jumped, oh yes and we walked and walked and walked until finally it was agreed that actually the guide's estimate of about an hour to Base Camp from Kala Pattar was

a bit optimistic to say the least and so we returned to our tea house to wait for the morning.

The following morning we set off again across the glacier towards Base Camp. This also proved to be quite a strenuous trek as we needed to cross the Everest glacier to achieve our goal. Base Camp could be seen in the distance as there were a number of tents pitched there. At one point it felt like no matter how far we walked they never got any closer. To reach Base Camp finally was a massive relief. The tents belonged to an Italian medical expedition of which a number were summoned to take our memento photographs to record our journey. To stand at Base Camp at a height of 5364 m having a photograph taken with people climbing to camps one and two on the mountain behind you really brought home that it was quite an achievement.

On returning to Gorakshep we met up with the member of our party who had caught us up and it was decided that half the group would start the descent and the rest would take our colleague back to Base Camp after lunch. Myself and WO ES managed to convince Sgt Shubash QGE that we would do this if he agreed to go back up to Kala Pattar with him the next morning. He agreed and so off we went again. Obviously the route seemed a lot longer second time round with tiredness setting in, but en route we were lucky (if that's the right phrase) to witness two large avalanches which were impressive in their noise and power as they descended down the sides of the mountain. We reached Base Camp for the second time, quick photo shoot and back to Gorakshep.

The trek back to Lukla was obviously quicker in duration due to not having to worry about the altitude, but I must admit it was no less tiring. You forget how many times you go down hill on the way to Base Camp, which obviously means that the hills had to be climbed to get back to your start point. This was highlighted when as before on the incline up to Lukla it just seemed to go on and on till we reached the welcome archway at Lukla. The evening was spent in a tea house next to the airport, reminiscing about how easy or hard the trek was depending on who you spoke to, and having a couple of cold beers and a lovely big meal.

For both the Nepali and the British contingent, the trek was a once in a lifetime opportunity to visit an awesome part of the world. The group was a fantastic mix which allowed us to learn more about Nepal, whilst giving the local lads a chance to enjoy a spectacular area of their country. A big thank-you to Major Greenwood for all his efforts in organising the trip, to Yeti Airlines, Adventure Tazen Trek, Ahashan Tailors and the LEC Canteen for the support they gave us.

British Gurkhas Kathmandu SSAFA Big Brew 2008

By SSgt L Roberts

The Big Brew at BGK was held on Friday 5 September 2008. The event kicked off with tea, cakes and Nepali food being served in the Viceroy bar at 10am. Serving members and LEC's were very generous this year and a total of Rs 11,111.00 was raised.

Col Ellis, Commander BGN, officially opened the event at 1500hrs by expertly cutting the SSAFA ribbon with a Kukri. Simultaneously the front gates were thrown open and a stampede of bargain hunters sprinted for the table stalls and within an hour the majority of the stalls were stripped of their wares (only one box of stuff was left over). The ever popular Tombola was emptied within half an hour and was very successful thanks to all ladies who helped on the day.

Other attractions included the coconut shy, trap the rat, trampolining, and face painting, mendhi (henna) designs and the welcome return of the Gajemaje Bike. The Commander eventually showed his cycling expertise by lying on the bike and gliding to the end of the course to claim the bottle of wine.

The Chief of Staff's wife, Estella, won the 'Big Brew' cake, kindly donated by Tracy, in the 'Guess the Weight of the Cake'. The colouring competition was won by five children - Nigel Rana, Lucy Mae, Kate, Frank and Jess. The very big Teddy who was kindly donated by Louise was won by Mrs Khim Lama who correctly guessed the name of the bear! The stocks, wet sponges and gallons of gritty water were next up and Maj Sarah Marshall, the 'diplomatic' MC, did not have to try too hard to drum up interest in soaking various serving members. Capt Wayne Fielding, Capt

Visitors to HQ BGN

By SSgt Maryan MBE

Since January 2008 HQ BGN has had over 254 visitors ranging from those on their first visits, personnel on duty treks and those carrying out annual inspections.

During this period we have had Gen Sir David Richards KBE CBE DSO Colonel Commandant Brigade of Gurkhas, Lady Richards and Capt Chris Hancock (ADC). This was the new Colonel Commandant's first visit to Nepal and he was asked to take the passing off parade for this year's successful recruits.

The Gurkha Offer to Transfer team was out as well, briefing all pensioners about the change over from the Gurkha Pension Scheme to the Armed Forces Pension Scheme 1975/2005. The Staff Personnel Support branch conducted our annual GI inspection. Mr Steve Sartian, Mrs Barbara Bishop and Major Robson also came out to conduct our Main Station LOA review.



Ross Lyman and WO1 Mick Green took the initial pastings and then the stakes were raised for the COS, Lt Col Mark Vickers, who seemed to have upset the British School children judging by the amount of them eagerly throwing sponges. The Commander was the last in the stocks and emerged completely sodden thanks to Fiona throwing sponges from two feet away!

The COS and Maj Steve Greenwood kindly offered to have their heads shaved if sufficient funds could be raised. This was a mere formality and they even managed to organise an auction for who should wield the clippers that raised an extra Rs 5500. Capt Lyman shaved Maj Steve Greenwood's head on the day and due to prior commitments the COS's head was shaved during Tea and Toast by Tracy the following Monday. The event was rounded off with the ever popular Raffle where everybody crowded round eagerly awaiting their number to be called. Over 50 prizes were on offer this year and a special mention must go to Diane for trawling most of the Thamel haunts and to Diana for acquiring the gold and diamond ring star prize.

In total, a record amount of Rs 176060.00 (£1323.76) was raised this year!

Headquarters Brigade of Gurkhas came out in February to brief all Gurkhas on the options to transfer at the Gurkha Transfer Fairs. February also saw the Logistical Support Inspection team from HQ 4 Div conducting their annual inspection. The Nepali long language course also began in February, running all the way through till May 2008.

At the beginning of March Col D G Hayes Colonel BG and Mr John Pitt Brooke came out for an update on BGN current issues. During April most of BGN's visits had to be cancelled due to the ongoing fuel crisis. However, when supply was re-established those visitors that were cancelled then rescheduled their visits for later in the year. The Assistant Divisional Commander HQ 4 Div Brigadier Hood and the Civil Secretary Mr Mike Smith came out for a familiarisation visit.

GOC HQ 4 Div came out for his final visit as the GOC, received all his update briefs and carried out a short trek



Colonel Commandant Brigade of Gurkhas receives a warm welcome



CGS inspects the Guard of Honour

arranged by the GWS. During this period Director General Personnel, Maj Gen A R Gregory also came out to view the Regional Selection process and to receive briefings from both BGN and GWS.

A team of Engineers from 521 STRE came out in the autumn and worked hard to attempt to complete the water bore hole project, so that now BGN can have its own water supply, once final checks are completed.

There is still a high number of duty treks and a lot of visitors coming to Nepal to assist/watch Regional Selection West and East and then to assist with Central selection.

Comd 2(SE) Bde also came out in November 2008 for a familiarisation visit and to conduct a GWS Duty Trek.

The Nepal Army High Altitude Mountain Warfare Course

By Capt P Hodgkinson

Prior to my posting in Nepal I had heard of a mountaineering course organised and run by the Nepal Army in the deep, dark, depths of the Himalayas. After assuming my SO3 appointment in Kathmandu, I made some initial enquiries and as luck would have it was selected to represent the British Army on the six-week course.

The course was held in a remote mountain village called Jomsom, 50km NW of Pokhara. Fortunately for the 17 international students who attended the course transport was laid on from Kathmandu to Jomsom, in the form of a Nepal Army Helicopter. It's fair to say that the over-laden, ex Russian military helicopter had seen better days. However, we all arrived safely.

The first few days of the course enabled personnel to acclimatise to the increase in altitude and trade different "Army Stories." Officers from Special Forces units from the following countries attended the course: South Korea, China, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, Canada and the USA. Within the first few hours of the course the Indian and Pakistani Officers had agreed that they would not discuss Kashmir – after working

CGS, Gen Sir Richard Dannatt, also briefly visited BGN recently, although this visit was co-ordinated by the British Embassy.

ACGS, Maj Gen SV Mayall was the final visitor to HQ BGN for 2008. During his visit to Nepal he trekked in the East from AWC Dharan all the way to Jiri Gabilla. En route he visited the KAAA Bridge Project over Yangtang Khola at Naulagaon Village, Chhinamakhu and a major School Project at Chandeswari High School, Pirti Village. ACGS also took the salute at this year's passing off parade held on 3 January 2009 at British Gurkhas Pokhara.

out that they had been in a fire fight with each other only a few weeks earlier.

Despite being run by the Nepal Army, the course was taught completely in English. An extremely physically demanding course, activities included; weighted endurance marches, running, rock climbing, ice climbing and of course high altitude mountaineering. As a keen runner I had set my sights on winning the individual endurance race, 10km with 13kg in antique Nepal Army rucksacks. After a tough race over the first 5km neck and neck with the South Korean Special Forces, I gradually pulled away and secured first place for the British Army, winning the prestigious 'Best Runner' award.

As the training continued, our experience, knowledge and confidence grew. The culmination of the course was a mountain climbing expedition to the summit of a 6200m Himalayan Peak.

The mountaineering course is without doubt one of the best experiences I have ever had. Living in the Himalayas, running and climbing every day and sharing experiences with the other

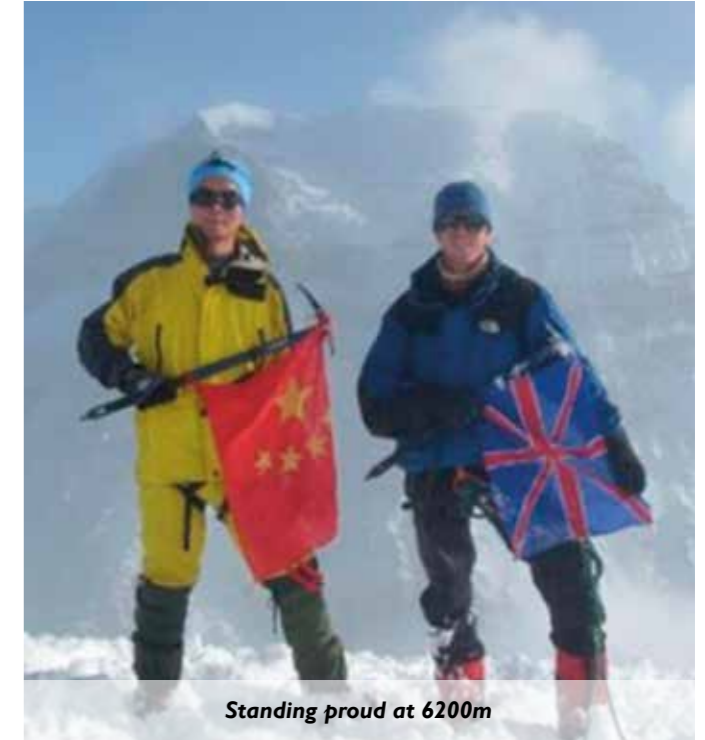


Nepal Army MI 17



Endurance Race

course members will be a memory I shall treasure forever. The Nepal Army does not have a great deal of money, sophisticated equipment or even reliable logistics, but the soldiers and officers who serve with the Mountain Warfare Unit are some of the most hard-working, competent and enthusiastic people I have ever worked with.



Standing proud at 6200m

Exercise INDIA KUKRI TIGER - Battlefield Tour to India

Exercise Indian Kukri Tiger was a battlefield tour to India organised by Maj Steve Marsh (former RAO BGK). Four officers and eight SNCO's volunteered to participate in the exercise. Prior to departure individuals were given the responsibility of researching specific topics on the Indian Mutiny (1857-58) then preparing and delivering a presentation. With the initial phase completed the Battlefield Tour commenced with a deployment to various historical sites in India before finally analysing and evaluating the Indian Mutiny in comparison to current tactics, techniques and procedures.

The Indian Mutiny

The Indian Mutiny began as a mutiny of sepoys of the British East India Company's army on 10 May 1857, in the town of Meerut. It soon erupted into other mutinies and civilian rebellions largely in the upper and central plains of India. Major hostilities were confined to present-day Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, northern Madhya Pradesh, and the Delhi region.

The rebellion posed a considerable threat to Company power in that region, and it was ended only with the fall of Gwalior on 20 June 1858. The rebels quickly captured large parts of the North Western Provinces and Oudh, including Delhi, where they installed the Mughal ruler, Bahadur Shah Zafar, as Emperor of Hindustan.

The British East India Company's response came rapidly. By September 1857, with help from fresh reinforcements, Delhi had been retaken. Nevertheless, it then took the better part of 1858 for the rebellion to be completely suppressed in Oudh.

In some regions, especially in Oudh, the rebellion took on the attributes of a patriotic revolt against the European presence. However, although the rebel leaders, especially the Rani of Jhansi, became folk heroes in the growing nationalist movement in India half a century later, they had made no significant progress for the country.

The rebellion proved to be an important turning point in Indian history. It led to the dissolution of the East India Company in 1858, and forced the British to reorganize the army, the financial system, and the administration in India.



BGN - Battlefield tour team.

Elephant Polo

By Capt A R Lyman

The World Elephant Polo Association (WEPA) Championships were held in Chitwan National Park from 30 November to 6 December 2008. British Gurkhas Nepal was one of eight teams to enter, and our team included personnel from both Kathmandu and Pokhara. The entry of a British Gurkha Team enjoys a long and happy tradition with Mr Jim Edwards, President of WEPA.

This year, the team enjoyed an upset of a victory in one match. However, despite the most valiant and determined efforts we were unable to win the other four matches that were played. In order for as many personnel to enjoy playing elephant polo as possible, the team was changed midway through the week, allowing only one experienced player to be available for the second round of matches, namely Maj Sarah Marshall.

The second team enjoyed – or rather endured – a baptism of fire in the form of a penalty shootout, which saw the team play



off two matches in the Olympic Plate. The afternoons were spent enjoying the surrounds of Tiger Tops, via river, elephant or jeep safari and experiencing this beautiful part of Nepal. The WEPA Championships are indeed a unique and thoroughly enjoyable experience and I would recommend that anyone who is given the opportunity to play elephant polo should take it.

The Gurkha Ball 2008

By Maj S Greenwood

This year the Gurkha Ball took place on Friday, 29 February at a new venue, the Yak and Yeti Hotel. The theme was Around the World in Eighty Days, a fantastic journey with Mr Phileas Fogg on his adventures amid the extravagant and opulent lifestyles of many countries around the world. On behalf of Commander British Gurkhas Nepal I am delighted to announce the Ball was a great success. A very big thank you goes to all the Committee members who worked for five months to put on an excellent evening of entertainment, and not forgetting the most important people who were the guests from the many locations around Nepal, UK and other countries.

In keeping with the theme, the Ball began at 1900hrs with a champagne reception. After an hour Mr Phileas Fogg announced his departure on his journey. Then the Gurkha piper escorted all the guests into the magnificent ballroom.

The evening continued with panache and flamboyance as our 200 guests were treated to the most splendid of cuisines from around the world accompanied by wine. Traditional music and much pampering by the dancing girls accompanied the meal. Just prior to the end of the meal, there was a short prize-draw in aid of the Gurkha Welfare Trust, with over £8000 worth of prizes from a number of kind sponsors, which alone raised over £870. The evening's entertainment then shifted into a higher gear with an excellent live band and disco, before the fantasy culminated in the small hours with a traditional English champagne breakfast.

The event was an amazing experience. Congratulations to the Americans who managed to walk away with 30% of the prizes. Many thanks to my enthusiastic committee and guests - without you, the evening would not have been such a great success.



The Gurkha Welfare Scheme

Introduction

FY 2007/08 has been a busy, rewarding and productive year for the Gurkha Welfare Scheme (GWS) which continues to expand to meet its increasing commitments in providing welfare to the ex-Servicemen community. The GWS is widely respected across Nepal largely due to the impact of the community aid

projects, particularly water, that have been completed. For many the only tangible evidence of the British Gurkha link are the schools, water projects and bridges which have been built across the hills.

Developments

Pension Increase

This year there have been many important developments affecting welfare support to ex-Servicemen. The increase of the Welfare Pension from NCR 3,700 to 3,800 from July 2008 is a clear demonstration of the Trust's commitment towards the well-being of the Welfare Pensioners (WPs).

Medical Review

In order to provide better medical support to remote Area Welfare Centres, the number of mobile doctors has been increased from three to four and the number may well increase in the future if deemed necessary. This will enhance the ability to deliver primary care to those ex-Servicemen living in more remote areas some distance from their AWC. A large number of patients are female but there are no female doctors or medics

working at AWCs. A weekly clinic by a gynaecologist and the employment of a female nurse/medical assistant at Key AWCs has been introduced. In addition, full-time doctors for key AWCs have been recruited. The GWS Medical Review also included the development of a health education programme.

Reports and Returns

A review of GWS Reports and Returns was carried out with the help of Ms Fenella Crane to establish effective management information systems and recommend how the current report system could be simplified. Fenella Crane's contribution has been excellent and she must be commended for her hard work. The review is being further developed by HQ GWS to include costed future IT solutions to speed up reporting time and reduce double entry of data between AWCs and HQ GWS.

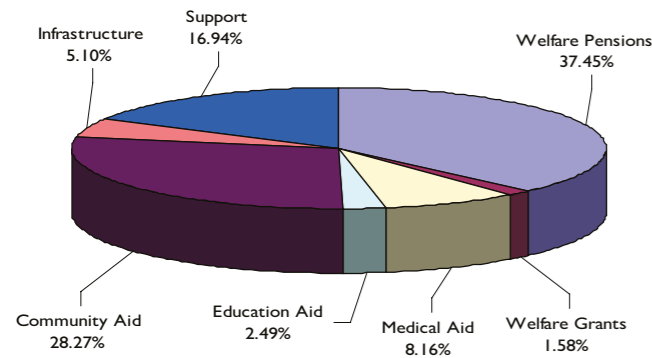
Infrastructure

Area Welfare Centre Enhancement

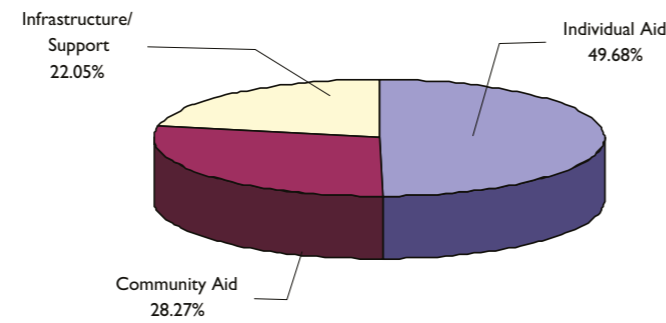
The new Area Welfare Centre Butwal building was completed and inaugurated by Chairman GWT, General Sir David Richards KCB CBE DSO, on 9 January 2008. The GWS is embarking on a four-year Rolling Enhancement Programme (REP), led by the GWS Project Cell, which aims to carry out essential refurbishment works at all AWCs to guarantee they can see out their predicted lifespan. The REP has been structured in collaboration with personnel changes in the Project Cell leading to the recruitment of a new Project Supervisor (Maintenance) [PS (M)]. PS (M) will supervise the REP at each AWC and will then become a dedicated maintenance officer for the GWS, ensuring the Estate is correctly maintained in the future.

Residential Home

The construction of a Residential Home in Pokhara started in December 2008 and should be complete by the end of 2009. The intention is to construct a functional home for up to 25 residents, adjacent to the Key AWC Kaski. Residents will be provided with their own room and en suite bathroom facilities. There will be communal messing and recreation areas as well as medical care facilities provided through the AWC. The architectural concept design for the new home in Kaski has been provided by UK architects, Michaelis Boyd Associates. The detailed design of the building will take into account local architectural style and will make maximum use of appropriate environmentally friendly technologies. Construction of the home will be overseen by a Nepali construction company, John Sanday Associates. Their work will be carefully supervised by HQ GWS and the Residential Homes Working Group. There are plans to build a second home in Dharan.



GWS Expenditure | July 2007 - 30 June 2008



Distribution of GWS Funds 2007 - 2008

Expenditure

A summary of all GWS expenditure from July 2007 – June 2008 is shown above. It incorporates not only GWTC (UK), but MOD who provide a Grant in Aid, Kadoorie Agricultural Aid Association and the DFID.

The general distribution of GWS Funds is shown above. The GWS' main effort remains the provision of Individual Aid to ex-Servicemen and their dependants, followed by Community Aid. The MOD Grant in Aid (MOD GIA) covered all GWTC (UK) support costs in Nepal, while KAAA and DFID continue to cover their own support costs.

Individual Aid

Welfare Pensions

The number of Welfare Pensioners (WPs) decreased from FY 06/07 by 148 from 10,600 to 10,452. 763 ex-Servicemen deaths have been recorded, of which 220 pensions have been transferred to their entitled widows. 395 new pensions have also been granted. There are 6,821 WPs from the pre-1947 Indian Army who represent 65.26 % of the total number. The number of widows receiving a pension now represents 49.16%.

The GWTC (UK) Sponsored Widows Pension Scheme (SWP) continues to grow. The total number this year reached 4,929. The scheme now represents an impressive 47.16 % of the total number of WPs. The importance of the scheme cannot be underestimated as it represents a reassuring and ongoing commitment by British corporations and the general public to ex-Servicemen discharged without a Service Pension.

Welfare Grants (Hardship)

FY07/08 saw a large increase in Welfare Grants from 433 to 664 cases reflecting the heavy Monsoon last year. All Welfare Grants continue to be assessed on a need-basis and, where necessary, interim grants are awarded to those undergoing investigation. This means that those in need continue to receive appropriate and timely grants with which to rebuild their lives. More money was spent on fire, flood, destitution and landslide cases this year with a year-on-year increase of £20,558 compared to FY06/07.

Winter Allowance

All WPs received a winter allowance to help keep them warm and well-protected from the harsh winter. This shows the Trust's ongoing commitment to improve our WPs' standard of living.



An 81 yrs old WP, Sukmati Rai, widow of late IA 82213 Rfn Bhimbdr Rai ex II GR



Medical Aid

Medical and Key Hospital Schemes

The Medical and Key Hospital Schemes continue to flourish, providing excellent medical care to all ex-Servicemen. A total of NCR 102,088,980 (£795,402) was spent on the Medical Scheme this year, providing treatment for 130,664 patients. As far as the ex-Servicemen not in receipt of a welfare pension are concerned, Medical Aid is, without doubt, the most important type of Individual Aid available to them.

SSAFA/Forces Help

The SSAFA Nurse continues to provide SSAFA advice to GWS. Her role in British Gurkhas Nepal is to provide information and assistance to the disabled and long term sick of both Serving Personnel and ex-Servicemen and their families in Nepal. With SSAFA support we now have information covering special care needs and are in a far better position to provide advice and welfare assistance to those who need it.

General Medical, Eye, Gynaecological and Dental Camps

The GWS funded by KAAA (BGN) held a total of eight General Medical, Eye, Gynaecological and Dental Camps at



AWCs and Patrol Bases this year. These are unique as they are not exclusively for the ex-service community, although they are run concurrently with welfare pension payment, but for anyone and are hugely well received. A total of 16,894 patients benefited from these camps. A total of NCR 5,116,784 (£39,900) was spent running the camps, which includes the cost of medicines, intra-ocular lenses and administrative costs. A total of NCR 4,946,056 (£38,536) was spent by KAAA (BGN). The GWS remains most grateful to the volunteer doctors and dentists who were supported by the GWS Education Scheme.

Veta Bailey Charitable Trust - Medical Training

This year, the training concentrated on "Pharmacy and Pharmacology with Interpretation of Common Laboratory Results in Common Diseases". The training was held at AWC Bagmati, Kathmandu over the period 4 - 15 February 2008. This was the first time that refresher training has been conducted at an Area Welfare Centre.

Education Scheme

Education Grants

The GWS, with the support of all UK Gurkha Regimental Trusts and GWT (UK), continued to support deserving ex-Servicemen's children's education. Priority is given, in order, to orphans and handicapped children, the children of WPs or Non Pensioners, ordinary Family Pension widows and finally Service Pensioner's children. Tertiary education grants are also provided based on academic performance. A total of 2,016 students benefited this year.

Community Aid - GWS Schools Programme

The GWS Project Cell continues to provide support to government schools that serve the more remote ex-Servicemen communities and the traditional recruitment areas. This year, the GWS has constructed four new schools throughout Nepal, some in very remote areas, making a total of 118 schools constructed since 1989. The projects have been constructed to a high standard, with modern designs and adhere to strict rules and regulations including the Nepali Building Code. With the continuing political tensions in Nepal and lack of maintenance and materials, the lifespan of our schools is reducing. Therefore, school refurbishments are undertaken wherever possible. Our schools continue to incorporate earthquake resistant designs and safe building practices. Furniture and an incinerator block are normally provided. Some schools, depending on location, also have electric lighting installed. The total expenditure on Major

Vocational Training

This year the GWS conducted Sewing & Cutting Courses at AWCs Dharan, AWC Lamjung and AWC Tanahun with 35 students attending the courses. There were prizes for the best student on each AWC course sponsored by Maj B G Thomson RAEC and family (Fiona and Celia Thomson). It is planned that this training will cease this coming year as there is no longer the demand for it.

Schools was £148,926 for FY07/08. With a change of emphasis within the GWS the number of Major School Projects has been decreased to two each year.

Minor School Projects continue to provide funds to selected government schools which are attended by ex-Servicemen's dependants. These funds provide various facilities within the schools ranging from roof repairs to new latrines. These projects also provide an excellent, quick and efficient method of helping our ex-Servicemen's dependants and they also raise the profile of the GWS. A total of 185 projects were authorised and completed in FY07/08, including four refurbishment projects. The total expenditure on Minor School Projects was £220,578 and £10,718 for refurbishment projects.

Rural Water and Sanitation Programme (RWSP)

Overview

RWSP is one of the most critical aspects of the GWS work. Jointly funded by DFID and GWT it is significant at three levels:

- **Strategic/International.** Linking with the development goals of the Government of Nepal (GoN), UN Millennium Development Goals and supporting the British agenda in respect of Gurkhas.
- **Operational/National.** Creating the conditions which enable the work of GWS, facilitate recruiting for the Brigade and cement GWS's position with the GoN.
- **Tactical/District.** Supporting the Welfare Pension community.

It is therefore essential that this work continues at a level which the Government of Nepal respect to cement the position of the GWS and the Brigade of Gurkhas as this is vital to influencing the perception on whether to continue allowing recruiting. There are currently doubts about whether DFID will continue funding which is a challenge which will be addressed this year.

During FY 07/08, a total of 86 schemes (72 new and 14 repair) were constructed in 19 districts with a total expenditure of £1,550,000 including GWT (UK) funding of £709,000. These projects benefited 2,098 households and 14,962 people with a total of 1,171 tap-stands (including 244 house connection taps). Latrines for 20 schools and health posts were also constructed.

Simple Drip Irrigation

During this year, seven Simple Drip Irrigation (SDI) schemes have been implemented in Syangja, Tanahun, Kaski, Ramechhap and Solukhumbu districts, benefiting 184 households and 1,192 people. The impact of SDI is hugely positive in terms of family health and nutrition, as well as an opportunity for some income generation. 12 schemes in Okhaldunga and Myagdi Districts have been targeted for SDI implementation in the forthcoming season.

Horizontal Drilling

RWSP initiated horizontal drilling (HD) as a Research and Development project in early 2005. To date, the RWSP Drilling Team has carried out eight Horizontal Drilling trials.



New building of Shyambal Sec School at Maimajhuwa, Ilam



A RSWP water project

Vertical Drilling

Vertical Drilling (VD) has proven to be another very useful technique to expand the scope of drilling projects, particularly benefiting the populations of the Terai (plain region) and

inner-Terai (Boulder Zone). This year, the Kerabari scheme has been a success, benefiting 123 household and 697 people. The future of the drilling team is in the balance as the funding for it in future is not confirmed.

Kadoorie Agricultural Aid Association (British Gurkhas Nepal)

Overview

This year KAAA BGN operated broadly in Myagdi, Baglung, Kaski, Tanahun, Lamjung, Gorkha and Dhading in the West and Taplejung, Panchthar, Khotang, Okhaldhunga, Bhojpur, Sankhuwasabha and Ramechhap in the East. Among the major completed projects this year are 16 drinking water schemes including six maintenance, five school latrines, 19 new foot bridges, 84 foot bridges routine repairs, five micro hydro, six micro hydro repairs, three cliff tracks, 1417 Solar Home Lighting Scheme, 761 smokeless stoves and one Tar-pul.

Integrated Development Programme (Gorkha / Dhading)

In Gorkha district slate roofing continued in Keraunja VDC and the Health Post continued to be managed by our CMA Trained Staff. In Dhading district micro tile production and roofing was carried out at 22 houses and six latrines in four separate villages. 82 participants were trained in vegetable cultivation and were supplied with drip irrigation sets and vegetable seeds. Five other centres ran adult health education.

Employment Training

Employment Training continues to be very popular and demand for both long and short courses is high. So far, 1,557 people have been trained, 432 are employed and a further 137 are currently in training.



RSWP Water project with a two room latrine



A suspended bridge (64.5m) over Urimpar Khola between Sertung and Lapa VDCs of Dhading

Administrative Support

Manning

FY 07/08 has seen the departure of 11 staff for a variety of reasons, mainly retirement. Fortunately, the GWS has been able to recruit well-motivated and professional replacements, a testament to the employment package offered and the quality of the GWS's reputation. Outgoing staff by rank were: AWO x 2, AAWO x 4, EO (L) x 1, Clerk x 1, Project Supervisor x 1, Med Asst x 1, and Peon x 1.

GWS Support to MOD

There is no change to the ongoing GWS support to the MOD by providing a welfare link to Servicemen's families in Nepal. The GWS currently pays 2,750 Service Pensioners from 15 AWCs. This represents 20.83% of all pensions paid from

AWCs, or 10.3% of the total Service Pensioners in Nepal as at 30 June 2008.

Visitors

The GWS has hosted a large number of visitors, both at the Headquarters in Pokhara and at AWCs. These included the former GWT Chairman Lt Gen Sir Philip Trousdell, Chairman GWT, Gen Sir David Richards, GWT Trustees and RHWG members Mr GP McNaught and Mrs Diana Donovan, Vice Patron Field Marshal Sir John Chapple, Dir GWT Col William Shuttlewood, GWT Deputy Director Miss Katherine Ayres, GWT Accountant Mr Graham Hall and GWT Photographer Mr Robert Hollingsworth.



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, Tavoleto, Coriano**, Poggio San Giovanni, Montebello-Scorticata Ridge, **Santarcangelo**, Monte Reggiano, **Monte Chicco**, Lamone Crossing, Senio Floodbank, **Bologna**, Sillaro Crossing, **Medicina**, Gaiana Crossing, **Italy 1944-45**, Greece 1944-45, North Malaya, **Jitra**, Central Malaya, **Kampar, Slim River**, Johore, Singapore Island, Malaya 1941-42, **Sittang 1942, 1945**, Pegu 1942, 1945, **Kyaukse 1942, 1945**, Monywa 1942, Shwegyin, **North Arakan, Imphal, Tuitum**, Tamu Road, Shenam Pass, Litan, **Bishenpur, Tengnoupal**, Shwebo, **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
Double March
Slow March (Band)
Slow March (Pipes)

Bravest of the Brave
The Keel Row
God Bless the Prince of Wales
The Garb of Old Gaul

Affiliated Regiments

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

Colonel in Chief

HRH The Prince of Wales KG KT GCB AK QSO ADC

Colonel

Lt Gen PT C Pearson CBE

Regimental Secretary

Maj (Retd) P H Gay

Staff List

Serving Late RGR Officers

Lt Gen	PT C Pearson CBE psc hcsc(j)	Late RGR	Dep Comd, AJFC Naples
Brig	S D Crane OBE MA psc+	Late RGR	HQ LAND
Brig	J C Lawrence MBE MSc FRGS psc+	Late RGR	Comd 52 Bde
Col	D G Hayes CBE jsdc sq	Late RGR	Col BG
Col	M W L Theobald psc (GE)	Late RGR	Comd BMAT Team (West Africa)
Col	N D J Rowe psc	Late RGR	DA Jakarta
Col	G A C Hughes OBE psc	Late RGR	COS Comd Brit Contingent UN Forces Cyprus

Col	I A Rigden OBE MA psc	Late RGR	Chief Campaign Plans, MNF Iraq
Col	I N A Thomas OBE MA (Oxon) psc+	Late RGR	COS DGIC London
Officers of the Regiment			
Lt Col	M P H Gouldstone MBE sq	RGR	CO ATG(G)
Lt Col	B P Clesham MBE odc (lt) sq	RGR	SO1 CBRN HQ DRAC
Lt Col	LA Holley MBE sq	RGR	SO1 Ops Shooting LWC
Lt Col	J C Palmer psc	RGR	SO1 COORD, DAPS
Lt Col	A P M Griffith psc	RGR	Fd Dir GWS BG Pokhara
Lt Col	Bijaykumar Rawat psc	RGR	SO1 SBLSO Brunei
Lt Col	S J M Dewing psc	RGR	NATO JWC, Norway
Lt Col	S R Nias MA psc(j)	RGR	SO1 DCBM Expt 1, DG Info
Lt Col	J G Robinson psc(j)+	RGR	CO 4Bn ITC Catterick
Lt Col	G M O'Keeffe MA BSc psc(j)	RGR	COS HQ BGN
Lt Col	C D Wombell MA MBA psc(j)	RGR	HQ ISAF
Lt Col	I St C Logan MA BSc(Hons) psc(j)	RGR	SO1 Plans&Doc ADLOG Validation
Lt Col	C B Darby MA psc(j)	RGR	CO 2 RGR
Lt Col	A J P Bourne OBE MA, MPhil (Cantab) psc j (j)+	RGR	CO 1 RGR
Lt Col	F M Lawrence BA(Hons) MBA	RGR	SO1 ORG, HQ Land Command
Lt Col	G M Strickland MBE BA(Hons) psc(j)	RGR	MA to CAMARRC
Lt Col	S J P Gilderson MBE MA psc (j)	RGR	MAI, CGS
Maj	Manikumar Rai MBE aic sq(W)	RGR	SO2 (G3 MGT Plans) HQ 145 (HC) Bde
Maj	G R J Glanville MBE sq	RGR	SO2Trg Dev, LWC
Maj	SA Archer sq(w)+	RGR	OC GC(Sittang)
Maj	A W A Forbes BA(Hons) osc (FR) (sq)	RGR	DI P&R SEM, MOD MB
Maj	A G Jones sq	RGR	Liaison Officer MILO A
Maj	RGJ Bevan	RGR	DRO BG Pokhara (FTRS)
Maj	M S Blackford MA psc(lt) sq	RGR	COS/2IC, 1 RGR
Maj	D J Robinson MA psc(j)	RGR	2IC 2 RGR
Maj	T C M-K Jackman	RGR	OC Sp Coy, 2 RGR
Maj	R J Daines ph	RGR	OC B Coy, 2 RGR
Maj	F J Rea LLB	RGR	OC B Coy, 1 RGR
Maj	J P Davies MA(Cantab)	RGR	OC D Coy, 2 RGR
Maj	J N B Birch MA MDA psc (j)	RGR	SO2 Spec CT & UK Ops
Maj	D M Rex BA(Hons)	RGR	MILO
Maj	S C Marcandonatos BEng	RGR	OC GC, Catterick
Maj	P R G Pitchfork BA(Hons) MA psc (j)	RGR	A Coy Comd, 1 RGR
Maj	Bishnukumar Pun MVO	RGR	SO2 Man Plans HQ 19 Bde
Maj	M H Reedman BEng(Hons)	RGR	SO2 FUTA OPTAG (Ops)
Maj	Dilkumar Rai	RGR	2IC 3rd Bn ITC Catterick
Maj	A G Alexander-Cooper BA ph	RGR	SO2 Plans, PJHQ
Maj	Padambahadur Limbu MVO	RGR	Cy 2IC, 2 R ANGLIAN
Maj	W R Kefford	RGR	OC C Coy, 1 RGR
Maj	Guptaman Gurung MVO MBE	RGR	OC GC (Mandalay)
Maj	Hemchandra Rai BEM	RGR Clerk	DCOS HQBG
Maj	Shivakumar Limbu MVO MBE	RGR	GM 2 RGR
Maj	T W Pike BEng(Hons)	RGR	SO2 Land, Air Warfare Centre
Maj	C R Boryer MBE BA(Hons)	RGR	OCA Coy 2 RGR
Maj	J C Murray BLE(Hons)	RGR	DI SA
Maj	Kushiman Gurung MVO	RGR	GM 1 RGR
Maj	N J Aucott BA(Hons)	RGR	ICSC(L)
Maj	C N A Crowe BA(Hons)	RGR	SO2 G5 Plans, HQ ARRC
Maj	B P Gifford	RGR	OC Brunei Trg Team
Maj	Hitman Gurung	RGR	CTC Frimley Park
Maj	Surendra Gurung	RGR	OC HQ Coy, 1 RGR
Maj	Samundra Gurung	RGR Clerk	SO2 MS (Gurkha)
Maj	E P Oldfield	RGR	OC MOG, 2 RGR

Maj	Bijayant Sherrchan	RGR Clerk	DCOS, HQBG
Maj	G Chaganis BSc (Hons)	RGR	OC Sp Coy, 1 RGR
Maj	C P L Conroy BSc(Hons)	RGR	OC C Coy, 2 RGR
Maj	L M Roberts BSc(Hons)	RGR	Casualty
Capt	Yambahadur Rana MVO	RGR	QGOO, HQBG
Capt	Ashokkumar Rai	RGR	OC RSJ, Warminster
Capt	Bhupjit Rai	RGR	2IC GC Catterick
Capt	E M Brandler MA	RGR	DHU
Capt	Umeshkumar Pun MVO	RGR	SIMIC
Capt	S J Garside	RGR	IO, 2 RGR
Capt	DT Pack	RGR	Adj, 1 RGR
Capt	Yubaraj Tamang	RGR	HS, CSS Coy, 2 RGR
Capt	SW M Chandler	RGR	British Army Rep West Point
Capt	Yambahadur Khatri MBE	RGR	SO3 O&D HQ 2 Bde
Capt	M J James	RGR	GCSPF
Capt	Dammarbahadur Shahi	RGR	RCMO, 1 RGR
Capt	Dilkumar Rai (553994)	RGR	2IC BGP
Capt	Balaram Ghale	RGR	HS, CSS Coy, 2 RGR
Capt	Gyanbahadur Limbu	RGR	MTO, IRGR
Capt	H P S Stanford-Tuck	RGR	RSO 2 RGR
Capt	A M S Hellier BA(Hons)	RGR	Ops Offr 2 RGR
Capt	Angphula Sherpa	RGR	2IC, 4 RIFLES
Capt	B R Marshall BSc(Hons)	RGR	RGR Rep, RMAS
Capt	Padambahadur Gurung	RGR	Coy 2IC, 1 RIFLES
Capt	Gamarsing Gurung	RGR	GLW
Capt	Suryaprakash Gurung	RGR	2IC HQ Coy, 1 RGR
Capt	Bhuwaniprasad Rai	RGR	2IC CSS Coy, 2 RGR
Capt	Gangabahadur Malla	RGR	FWO 2 RGR
Capt	Tekbahadur Gharti	RGR	2IC GCS RMAS
Capt	Dhyanprasad Rai	RGR	2IC B Coy, 2 RGR
Capt	Jitbahadur Gharti	RGR	OPTAG
Capt	J M L Cartwright BA(Hons)	RGR	Trg Offr, 1 R IRISH
Capt	Rojbahadur Gurung	RGR Clerk	HQBG SO3 GI MS
Capt	A P Todd BSc(Hons)	RGR	Adj, 2 RGR
Capt	Lachhyabahadur Gurung	RGR	2IC B Coy, 1 RGR
Capt	Samraj Gurung	RGR Clerk	SO3 GI MS, HQ BGN
Capt	Debbahadur Ghale	RGR	UWO, 1 RGR
Capt	Dhanbahadur Gurung	RGR	2IC Sp Coy, 1 RGR
Capt	Daniel Lama	RGR	QM(T), 2 RGR
Capt	P G Howgego BSc(Hons)	RGR	ADC to CinC LAND
Capt	W J Hughes MRPharmS	RGR	OC MMG, 2 RGR
Capt	C J Kyte BA(Hons)	RGR	OC Recce Pl, 2 RGR
Capt	Hitman Gurung	RGR Clerk	SO3 GI, 19 Lt Bde
Capt	D D A Bould BSc(Hons)	RGR	GCSPF
Capt	N R Lloyd BSc	RGR	Ops Offr, 1 RGR
Capt	Chinbahadur Thapa	RGR	2IC GRC2 (1 MERCIAN)
Capt	Rambahadur Pun	RGR	2IC C Coy, 1 RGR
Capt	Tirthabahadur Gurung	RGR	2 RIFLES
Capt	Dilipkumar Thapa	RGR	2IC A Coy 1 RGR
Capt	Prabhuram Rai	RGR	HS, 2 RGR
Capt	D P O'Connor	RGR	OC Atk, 2 RGR
Capt	T P Tuppen BA (Hons)	RGR	OC Recce, 1 RGR
Capt	A R C Mathers MA	RGR	Rear Adj, 2 RGR
Capt	Pratapsing Rai	RGR	2IC C Coy, 2 RGR
Capt	Manoj Mohara	RGR	Wing Comd, GC Catterick
Capt	Kamalprasad Rana	RGR	Pl Comd, 1 RGR
Capt	Bhimlal Gurung	RGR Clerk	SO3 I Bde
Capt	T D Usher BA(Hons)	RGR	1 RGR

Capt	Bishnubahadur Singh	RGR	Trg Offr, 1 RGR	2Lt	R W A Roylance BA (Hons)	RGR	PI Comd, 1 RGR
Capt	Subar Rai	RGR	2IC Sp Coy, 2 RGR	2Lt	R E Morford	RGR	PI Comd, 2 RGR
Capt	Amarjang Subba	RGR	2IC A Coy 2 RGR	2Lt	O C Cochrane	RGR	PI Comd, 2 RGR
Capt	M W Brightwell BA (Hons)	RGR	Tp Ldr, KRH	2Lt	S T Meadows	RGR	PI Comd, 2 RGR
Capt	Ghanasyam Pun	RGR	PI Comd, 1 RGR	2Lt	R J Davies	RGR	PI Comd, 1 RGR
Capt	R T Anderson BA	RGR	Ops Offr, BGP	2Lt	A S Brown	RGR	Commissioned 12 Dec 08
Capt	W D Godwin BSc	RGR	OC Mor, 1 RGR	Attached Officers			
Capt	Manbahadur Garbuja	RGR	PI Comd, GC Catterick	Maj	B McKay	AGC(SPS)	RAO, 2 RGR
Capt	Manikumar Limbu	RGR	2IC GC(M)	Maj	K Beaman	RLC	OC CSS Coy, 2 RGR
Capt	Ramprasad Gurung	RGR	QM(T), 1 RGR	Maj	I Pendlebery	AGC(SPS)	RAO, 1 RGR
Capt	T W Rose MA	RGR	OC Mor, 2 RGR	Maj	P Ross	YORKS	QM, 1 RGR
Capt	Rabindrakrishna Tulachan	RGR	PI Comd, GC Catterick	Maj	R V Gray MBE	RIFLES	QM, 2 RGR
Capt	Narendrakumar Rai	RGR	PI Comd, GC (Mandalay)	Maj	S York	RAMC	RMO, 2 RGR
Capt	J A E E Jeffcoat BA(Hons)	RGR	OC Javelin, 1 RGR	Maj	A M Sands	RAMC	RMO, 1 RGR
Capt	Hemkumar Rai	RGR	PI Comd, GC (Sittang)	Capt	D Bachoo	AGC(ETS)	UEO, 1 RGR
Capt	Gajendra Dewan	RGR	RCMO 2 RGR	Capt	J L Elms	COLDM GDS	MTO, 2 RGR
Capt	Nanibabu Magar	RGR	2IC D Coy, 2 RGR	Capt	E C Peers BA (Hons)	AGC(ETS)	UEO, 2 RGR
Capt	Karamprasad Gurung	RGR Clerk	Det Comd, 1 RGR				
Capt	Kulbahadur Gurung	RGR	UK ANAOTT				
Capt	Rambahadur Malla	RGR	PI Comd, GC Catterick				
Capt	Yubaraj Garbuja	RGR	UK ANAOTT				
Capt	Raghubir Rai	RGR	LO, 2 RGR				
Capt	Sherbahadur Gurung	RGR	PI Comd, GC (Mandalay)				
Capt	Chandrabahadur Pun	RGR	PI Comd, GC Catterick				
Capt	Rembahadur Ghale	RGR	PI Comd, 1 RGR				
Capt	Prakash Gurung	RGR	PI Comd, GC (Sittang)				
Capt	Pimbahadur Gurung	RGR Clerk	Det Comd, 2 RGR				
Capt	Trilochan Gurung	RGR	PI Comd, GC (Sittang)				
Capt	Junkaji Gurung	RGR	RSO, 1 RGR				
Capt	Hemkumar Tamang	RGR	PI Comd, 2 RGR				
Capt	Rajkumar Rai	RGR	RSWO, 2 RGR				
Capt	Suryakumar Rai	RGR Clerk	SO3 GI/MS, HQBG				
Capt	Pitamamber Gurung	RGR	PI Comd, GC (Mandalay)				
Capt	Dolbahadur Gurung	RGR	PI Comd, GC (Sittang)				
Capt	Tubendrabahadur Limbu	RGR	PI Comd (GRC3)				
Capt	Jogendrasing Limbu	RGR	HS, CSS Coy, 2 RGR				
Capt	Gajendra Angdembe	RGR	PI Comd, 2 RGR				
Capt	Gajendrakumar Angdembe	RGR	PI Comd, 2 RGR				
Capt	Prembahadur Gurung	RGR	PI Comd, 2 RGR				
Capt	Liljung Gurung	RGR	PI Comd, 1 RGR				
Capt	Sarojkumar Rai	RGR	PI Comd, 2 RGR				
Capt	Rajeshkumar Gurung	RGR	IO/Influence, 1 RGR				
Capt	Shureshkumar Thapa	RGR	PI Comd, 1 RGR				
Lt	A B D Crawley	RGR	PI Comd, 2 RGR				
Lt	N J Moran	RGR	Tp Comd HCR				
Lt	A G Clark	RGR	Adjt BG Pokhara				
Lt	A C Colquhoun	RGR	PI Comd, 2 RGR				
Lt	PA Houlton-Hart BEng(Hons)	RGR	PI Comd, 1 RGR				
Lt	A P R Hough BSc	RGR	PI Comd, 2 RGR				
Lt	EV Simpson BA(Hons)	RGR	PI Comd, 1 RGR				
Lt	N R Turkington	RGR	PI Comd, 1 RGR				
2Lt	C P A E Bairsto BSc	RGR	PI Comd, 2 RGR				
2Lt	J E Arney	RGR	Commissioned 12 Dec 08				
2Lt	R I Roberts	RGR	Commissioned 12 Dec 08				
2Lt	JW Buckley	RGR	PCBC				
2Lt	C Hotchkiss	RGR	PI Comd, 1 RGR				
2Lt	A Connolly	RGR	PI Comd, 1 RGR				



First Battalion

Newsletter

Having returned to duty after a well earned period of Post Operational Tour Leave, we might have assumed that the Battalion would enjoy a period of relative calm. It has not proved to be so. The idea of completing a recovery phase after Op HERRICK 7 (H7) has had to be finely balanced against the requirements of restructuring as a result of operational lessons learnt, preparation for both the Arms Plot move to the UK and the prospect of deploying on Op HERRICK 12 (H12) in 2010.

It would be remiss however not to start this newsletter with a period of positive reflection. Since returning from Afghanistan, the Battalion has been recognised by thirty British national and international individual honours and awards. On an individual level the highlight has been the award of five Military Crosses and an OBE, which was awarded by Her Majesty The Queen at an investiture at Buckingham Palace on 4 November 2008. To coincide with the investiture, OCA (Maj Paul Pitchfork) returned to the UK in October to complete a series of presentations with a view to promoting the Gurkhas and highlighting our operational achievements within several organizations including potential recruitment pools. The presentation tour and investiture has acted as a natural milestone in drawing a line between looking back on H7 and looking ahead to H12.

Over the last six months the CO has initiated a re-organization of the Battalion to ensure it is better balanced structurally for H12. Based on the lessons of H7, the Battalion has formed up a Manoeuvre Support Platoon (MSP Pl) by regrouping the snipers with the Recce Platoon, which will now enhance our reconnaissance and precision strike capabilities, and by combining the Intelligence and Intelligence Surveillance Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance (ISTAR) hubs under OC Sp (Maj Grenville Chaganis). Under this reorganization OC Sp will become OC ISTAR on H12. In addition, an Air Cell has been established which will be led hopefully by an officer from the RAF Regiment. Also the Signals Platoon has been enlarged to reflect the complexities of operating in the Afghanistan theatre.

The timing of the restructuring has been driven by the need to embrace conversion cadres and career courses before internal collective training starts in earnest prior to Ex TAURUS 09 in Jun. The adjustments have been made all the more challenging by the effective loss of 92 ORs from across the Battalion to man the second Gurkha Reinforcement

Company (GRC2), the 50 ORs already with GRC1 and the recent "transfers out" from the Battalion. Incidentally, the Battalion recently hosted officers and NCOs from 1st Bn Mercian Regiment in Brunei and it is clear that the soldiers joining GRC2 are going to be well looked after when they are formed up in the New Year.

To compensate for the outflow of soldiers, 57 new riflemen were eagerly received from Catterick in October and an Attestation Parade was held in November to welcome them formally into the First Battalion. They were then dispersed into A, B and C Companies to start their induction training. Working around the restructuring, each Coy has spent time in the jungle re-familiarizing themselves with the unique demands of jungle warfare, as befits the Resident Infantry Battalion in the Far East. The importance of jungle training was also recognized with three of our subalterns disappearing to complete the JWAC course between June and July. Following closely was this year's Junior Leadership Cadre, led by B Company under their OC (Major Fraser Rea). 48 riflemen completed the cadre between Oct and Nov and as always the competition was fierce and the calibre very high. The standard of junior leadership is clearly in good hands and the future of the Battalion is reassuringly assured if the talent on display is anything to go by.

One of the main commitments during the last six months has been the hosting of visitors. These have included those involved with inspections such as PSI, LSI, ECI, SPS Assurance and Operational Readiness Inspection, a Confined Spaces Equipment Inspection, a Fraud Health Check, and a Dangerous Goods Compliance Audit! There have also been other 'conversions', 'reviews' and 'refresher' training packages to complete: The Ops Officer (Capt Nick Lloyd) has been engrossed in Blenheim conversion, the RAO (Maj Ian Pendlebery) has presented to the LOA Review Team and there has also been a heavy commitment by the Command Team to Fund Manager Training.

The highlight of the year's visit programme was the visit by the Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall in late October. This provided a wonderful opportunity for our soldiers and their families to meet their Colonel-in-Chief as they made time in their Far East tour to visit the Battalion in Brunei. Although the visit was short, Their Royal Highnesses went out of their way to meet some of the injured soldiers from H7 and as many other soldiers and families and as possible.

Despite the tempo of commitments the Battalion has found time for some adventurous training. In one initiative in June, over 240 people went through a one-week scuba diving package organised by Lt Emile Simpson around the islands of Kota Kinabalu. The package provided a cocktail of diving, water sports and a PADI qualification for not much more than the amount provided by the Standard Learning Credits scheme. For those interested in something a little more challenging, the Adjut (Capt Dave Pack) led a team to compete in the international epic Climbathon up Kota Kinabalu in August. The team put in a superb performance, but have set higher targets for next year as the Battalion aspires to reclaim some former glory in endurance hill running events.

On the sporting front, the Battalion returned to Brunei after winning the Nepal Cup, beating the reigning champions QOGLR in Aldershot. This was a fantastic prize for the Battalion and was achieved with an enormous amount of pride. However, the focus for the football team will now be to show their true class by retaining the Cup next year. Whilst on the subject of football, the Tule Ale Cup, the annual football match between the British and Gurkha Officers, was won by the British Officers this year. The pleasure of winning the Cup could be measured by the tears coming from the eyes of the Gurkha Officers!

Sport continues to be a feature of Battalion life and the competitive spirit was evident throughout the Wallace Memorial Trophy (WMT) competition which got underway in September and culminated in a fantastic Battalion Boxing Night. B Company, whose five boxers all won their respective bouts, won the Boxing Competition, but were beaten overall to the WMT by C Company.

Soldiers from Canada who served with the Battalion on H7 were welcomed to Brunei in October as part of an exchange programme which will see the Recce Platoon return to

Canada in early 09. Ex HARIYO GHAR, which involved the Recce Platoon and 22eme Regt Recon Platoon over the period 1-22 October, was co-ordinated by OC Recce (Captain Tom Tuppen) and hosted by OC MSP (Captain John Jeffcoat) and 2IC Recce (CSgt Yambahadur Gurung). As part of the visit the Canadians had the opportunity to experience many firsts: jungle warfare, Dashain and Gurkha boxing.

The Brunei Estate Development Plan has delivered hundreds of extra service quarters over the last year and progress continues to be made to ensure that a further 240 Soldiers' Families Quarters and 13 Officers' Families Quarters come on line in the near future. Phase 1 of the Single Living Accommodation is nearing completion and buildings will be ready for occupation in the Spring. We are also looking forward to other projects such as a refurbished swimming pool and the expansion of Hornbill School to cater for the increased numbers of children from the additional families in Brunei.

A period of reflection was taken in October on the occasion of the first anniversary of Maj Lex Robert's death. The CO, COS and OC Sp Coy led a short ceremony to remember him with some appropriate words and the unveiling of a remembrance plaque, constructed outside of the Sp Coy Lines. The progress of the injured from H7 has been very encouraging and we continue to support and remember them on visits back to the UK. This includes a recent initiative where several paintings by 1 RGR soldiers are being auctioned off in order to raise funds for our injured soldiers. The current deployment of 2 RGR in Afghanistan, and the loss of two soldiers in recent weeks, has provided a stark reminder of the importance of looking after our soldiers and remembering them and their families. Our thoughts and prayers are firmly with the soldiers and families of the Second Battalion at this time.

Some thoughts on the history of British involvement in Afghanistan inspired by a reading of *The March to Kandahar: Roberts in Afghanistan* by Rodney Atwood

by Lt EV Simpson | RGR

British nineteenth-century involvement in Afghanistan tends to be remembered today amongst the British, Afghani and wider public as a story of defeat. This is generally part of a widely held, popularised narrative that sees all foreign involvement in Afghanistan as having been a catastrophe. In the British case this narrative is captured in the graphic portrayals of the disastrous march from Kabul to Jelalabad in 1842: Lady Butler's painting of Dr Bryden, the sole "remnant of an army" at the gates of Jelalabad; one could also cite the 44th of Foot's forlorn stand at Gandamak. The production of both these works much later than the actual event (1879 and 1898 respectively) emphasises the profound and bitter psychological legacy left by defeat in the First Afghan War (1839-42). These works would have originally been produced to appeal to the Victorian penchant for romanticised "heroic" defeats (which evolved into something of an obsession after General Gordon's death at Khartoum in 1885). It is thus ironic that one can now find these two pieces plentifully on "Islamicist" websites, interpreted in distinctively hostile terms by the accompanying text, as a reminder of what supposedly happens to westerners in Afghanistan. Indeed the popular narrative of foreigners finding catastrophic defeat has found its way to very different audiences from nineteenth century Britain to cyberspace in different guises, be they romantic or hostile.

However, to accept this narrative in its entirety is misguided. Historically, the notion that every foreign army has met with catastrophe is not correct. After all, Kandahar was founded by Alexander the Great. His armies were responsible for the profound Hellenistic legacy in Central Asia, not least the tradition of Greco-Buddhist Art, which lasted over a millennium (see Peter Hopkirk *Foreign Devils on the Silk Road: The Search for the Lost Treasures of Central Asia*, OUP 2001). Indeed we need to move away from the notion that "success" of foreigners in Afghanistan should be measured purely by spectacular military events on the battlefield. The true gauge of success is the ultimate effect of the military action, be it cultural, strategic and/or ideological.

The Second Afghan War (1879-80) is an excellent example of the current predominance of the popularised narrative over careful consideration of what the application of military force achieved. At present, this war is typically remembered for the British defeat at the Battle of Maiwand in 1880. The reception of this destruction of a whole brigade by Afghan tribesmen has followed the standard, tedious, pattern: the romanticised late-Victorian paintings of the last stand of the 66th Regiment; alternatively, Maiwand as the defining battle of the Second Afghan War, in which the infidel is defeated yet again.

The confrontation in military terms fell into two phases: winter 1878-79, then May 1879-August 1880. In the first phase,

a British diplomatic delegation was sent to Kabul to regain the diplomatic initiative after a Russian delegation had been to Kabul in the summer of 1878. It was perceived that Russia would threaten India by its gradual expansion south into Central Asia. When the British diplomatic mission was refused entry by the Afghan government of Sher Ali, an army was sent, effectively to regain lost prestige. 40,000 men in three columns entered Afghanistan with the aim of securing the Kurram Valley and Kandahar. The column led by Major-General Roberts through the Kurram Valley had the majority of the action. The most well known of these actions was the Battle of the Piewar Kotal on 2 December 1878, in which a determined uphill assault by the 5th Goorkhas and 72nd Highlanders broke the enemy resistance.

The successful advances of the three columns forced Sher Ali out of Kabul; he died shortly after. The British installed his son, Yaqub Khan, and signed the Treaty of Gandamak with him in 1879: this gave Britain an annual subsidy and control over Afghan foreign affairs.

The second phase started in September 1879, when Afghan troops rioted, mainly against this treaty, overrunning and killing the small British mission that had been installed in Kabul. Roberts was sent to Kabul to punish the culprits, while another British force would enter and dominate the South from Kandahar. Roberts' force fought its way back to Kabul and occupied it, where martial law was imposed and over 80 Afghans hanged; Yaqub Khan stood down for his complicity in the murders. In December 1879, while encamped at Sharpur outside Kabul for the winter, Roberts was surrounded by a far larger Afghan irregular force. These insurgents had risen against the British from all over Afghanistan, and were led by a former Afghan army officer, Mohammad Jan Khan Wardak. After a tense siege, Roberts surged out and decisively defeated them. In August 1880 Roberts marched to Kandahar to relieve the British garrison, which was under siege by the army of Ayub Khan, Yaqub's younger brother, who was now pushing to rule Afghanistan. He had already destroyed a British brigade sent out to meet him at the Battle of Maiwand in July 1880. Roberts covered the 320 miles to Kandahar in a rapid 28 day march and skilfully outmanoeuvred Ayub's forces at the Battle of Kandahar on 31 August. This proved to be the final event of the two year conflict.

Thus the usually forgotten (or omitted) part of the story of the Second Afghan War (which in the conventional narrative focuses so heavily on the perception of reoccurring catastrophe) is that Maiwand was an isolated defeat in what was a victorious British campaign. The military end-state resulted in the establishment of an Afghan ruler, Abdur Rahman, who maintained British interests, namely a buffer against Russia and relative calm

on India's North-West Frontier. This was a strategic success which remained in place until the Third Afghan War of 1919.

The historiography of the Second Afghan War is sparse. The official history of the war was written by Col Henry Hanna in 1893. As Atwood argues, he had a personal vendetta against Roberts that is evident in the text; the work dated very soon. There has not been a major re-evaluation of this conflict since Roberts' autobiography *Forty One Years in India: From Subaltern to Commander-in-Chief*. This was a contemporary bestseller, running to 28 editions and being translated into Braille, German, Italian and Urdu. Tony Blair was even seen reading it on his way to Afghanistan as Prime Minister. Roberts was a known self-publicist, and was not the only successful general in this campaign, but his management of domestic perception meant that the War would be remembered as his War. Indeed ever since, there has not been any attempt to take a view of the conflict that moves beyond the overbearing figure of Roberts. So although in reality Roberts was one of a number of British protagonists, in what is effectively his own, until the present, unchallenged history of the War, he becomes synonymous with it. Thus the history of the Second Afghan War has ever since been distorted by a strong biographical accent.

Rodney Atwood's book is very much a modern day rehearsal of this peculiar historiographical trait: of a war being remembered intensely through the figure of one man. The introduction explicitly sets out that he is writing about Roberts, not the Second Afghan War. Yet Atwood devotes much space to the narration of the conflict and his structure is based on its chronology. This leaves Atwood vulnerable to the argument that although he laments the lack of attention this War has received from historians, he himself has neglected to offer a perspective that moves beyond that of Roberts' autobiography. Atwood struggles to harmonise the narrative and biographical elements. Information about Roberts' life on either side of the Afghan War is crammed in, interrupting the coherence of the historical narrative. If the book is supposed to be a partial biography, the decision to adopt such a narrative structure confuses the reader as to exactly what the arguments of the book are; they are certainly not made explicit at any point. The author's evidence, which is primarily first person diaries, is pulled in two directions. To stop the narrative stalling, thematic strands and deeper analysis of either Roberts or the War are neglected. In biographical terms, Roberts is presented essentially in the same late-Victorian heroic mode that one finds in his autobiography. The reader is not presented with particularly nuanced analysis of his character and military decisions, or the part he played as a key figure in the development of British military thinking, which he was. On the other hand, the narrative of the war itself is overwhelmed by the role of Roberts. The jumpy chronology that oscillates back and forth is an indicator of Atwood's problem in trying to write biography as historical narrative. The epilogue encapsulates this: it moves abruptly from a biographical focus to a short history of post-Roberts Afghanistan, and from there to unsubstantiated warnings about the direction of NATO's present policy.

More seriously, Atwood's objectivity is compromised by his style, which is very dated if he is claiming status as a

serious historian; at times he resembles some of his nineteenth century journalist sources. Thus the defeat at Maiwand is described as a catalogue of individual acts of British bravery; the Battle of Kandahar, however, is compared to a party: "the British guns opened the ball". Our attention is drawn to how "the Highlander's kilts and shining steel looked magnificent" and so forth. Moreover, the work is punctuated by bizarrely chosen stories about Roberts' personal life, which sharpen the melodramatic style of the book. For instance, we come across a string of correspondence between concerning Roberts' wife and another General's wife about a bracelet. We are reminded of a highly romanticised portrayal of war in which great individuals lead gallant troops forward that, as most historians would hardly need reminding, was shattered by the First World War.

Atwood's work does have merits. From the commendable amount of first person evidence presented we can get close to the Victorian mentality; how officers on the ground perhaps conceived of the issues they were facing, and how they relate to twenty-first-century Afghanistan. As far as this book goes, the themes that resonate in our contemporary operating environment revolve around the personage of Roberts.

Frederick Sleigh Roberts (1832-1914) was one of only two non-royals to have been laid in state in Westminster Hall in the twentieth century; the other was Winston Churchill. "Bobs Bahadur", as Kipling identified him, was one of the most decorated soldiers of his generation. He came from an untitled family of Anglo-Irish gentry to be buried as Field Marshal Frederick Sleigh Roberts, 1st Earl Roberts, VC, KG, KP, GCB, OM, GCSI, GCIE, PC. Roberts first won a certain reputation in India when he won the VC in the Mutiny of 1857. He was well known amongst the Officer Corps of the Indian Army before the Second Afghan War, by which time he had reached the rank of Major-General. However, it was his decisive victory at the Battle of Kandahar (5 December 1880), after an arduous winter march from Kabul, that propelled him to widespread celebrity amongst the British public. This was enhanced with his subsequent command in the later stages of the Boer War, where he regained the initiative and set the conditions for Kitchener's victory. He ultimately acquired a fame with the general public to equal that of his contemporary, General Sir Garnet Wolseley (1833-1913). These men were considered as the great military figures of the time. Roberts succeeded Wolseley as Commander-in-Chief of the British Army in 1901. The intense ideological battles between these two rivals dominated military discourse before the First World War to the extent that many senior officers could be said to belong to the "Roberts" or "Wolseley" cliques. Roberts' own reforms critically modernised the army's high command before the First World War; he was in large part responsible for the creation of the British General Staff and the absorption of the Commander-in-Chief's formerly independent office run from Horse Guards into the War Office. He was thus the last man to hold the post.

Roberts belonged to a generation of senior officers who had to deal with the post-Crimean phenomenon of war-correspondents reporting very soon after the event by telegraph to a political public which was not agreed on the nature of

British imperialism. The reception of Roberts' harsher methods (mass hangings in Kabul without due process, the inventor of concentration camps for Boer civilians) was controversial at home and generated fierce debate. In his successful election campaign of November 1880, Gladstone used Roberts' burning of Afghan villages as an example of Disraeli's "immoral" foreign policy. In a sense, one can identify a distinct resonance with what we would now consider the modern world, in which operations and their commanders are judged by the public in an ethical as well as a strategic context. However, in another sense Roberts belonged to a period in which generals were judged by their results on the battlefield. To synthesise these two ideas we need to locate Roberts in the late-Victorian British military-political dialogue: a military commanders' individual responsibility for ethical conduct in war was incorporated into a wider debate about the direction and purpose of Empire; they, as individuals, might be used as examples of such conduct, but were seen as agents of the Empire who were not, as individuals, accountable for the means by which the Empire's ends were achieved. In this respect Roberts was at the crest of a generation of army officers whose conduct profoundly shaped conceptions of what might in modern parlance be termed legality in war and notions of public and parliamentary interaction with that legality.

These themes are relevant to today's conflict in Afghanistan. Currently, the ethical justification for conflict is predominant. The public asks and politicians answer questions framed along the lines of whether the war is right or wrong rather than discussing strategic realities. In legal terms it is however the soldier on the ground rather than the general whose actions are under the most intense moral scrutiny in the globalised world of sensationalist 24hr news. However, in a sense the situation of today's Rifleman finds a parallel with that of the Victorian general: as agents of the ideology that justifies their presence, their ends justify their means. Hence collateral damage to civilians, for instance, is highly unfortunate but understandable from a certain point of view.

This idea of an ideology justifying controversial military action is critical to linking understanding of nineteenth century to present day Afghanistan. Successful strategy is the harmonisation of ideological imperatives with tactical reality. In ideological terms, we can make a clear distinction between British nineteenth century imperialism and, conspiracy theories aside, what NATO is trying to achieve in Afghanistan today. Lessons can, however, be drawn not by comparing these ideologies, which would be an exercise in anachronism, but their interaction with the tactical reality they confronted. One lesson, which does not suffer from anachronism, is that strategy must be formulated from the ground upwards: ideological visions need to be tailored to what can realistically be achieved on the ground; this requires a particular sensitivity to the cultural and physical terrain. Imposition of ideology without real understanding of the ground will not work; the Neo-con Iraq debacle is the most recent conflict to have brought this into focus.

The sweeping racial generalisations of British imperialists meant that they frequently misunderstood the effects of their actions on the ground. Lord Lytton, Viceroy of India and Roberts' political master, wrote to him after the murder of the British

mission in Kabul: "the whole Afghan population is particeps criminis in a great national crime; every Afghan brought to death by the avenging arm of the British Power, I shall regard as one scoundrel less in a den of scoundrelism, which it is our business to thoroughly purge...it is not justice but retribution you have to administer".* The murders had in fact been carried out by a single rioting regiment from Herat, not the people of Kabul, let alone more distant Afghan tribes. Some of the tribes welcomed the British; as an officer noted of the Turi tribe: "they regarded General Roberts' troops as deliverers from an oppressive government [Sher Ali's]".* The Managals and Wazirs were proudly independent tribes who were hostile not only to the British, but also to Sher Ali or any form of central control over them. However, the fixation with regarding the Afghans as a "nation" of bloodthirsty savages who had to be punished united the tribes against the British in a self-fulfilling prophecy. Roberts himself wrote to the War Office in the wake of domestic criticism to justify his imposition of martial law in Kabul to contain "the natural Afghan fanaticism".* One of Roberts' officers wrote that "if any prisoners have been shot I can only say it was a mistake making them prisoners...[it is] necessary to strike terror into them, they are the most bloodthirsty brutes going".* Indeed the executions at Kabul only fuelled Afghan hostility: "we are thoroughly hated and not enough feared" wrote another of Roberts' officers.* The reality of the executions caused Lord Lytton to backtrack: "we fear that General Roberts has done us serious national injury, by lowering our reputation for justice in the eyes of Europe".* Fundamentally, British policy was misdirected because it was based on views that attributed Afghan political reactions to stereotyped "racial characteristics", in the case of "Afghanis" demi-savages who were duplicitous and lived for fighting, which were constant and had to be subdued, rather than genuine grievances felt by different elements amongst a "country" of many varied tribes.

Associated with the incorrect perception of the Afghans as a "nation" or "race" was an obsession with geo-political boundaries that would have been irrelevant to most Afghan tribes. However, simplistic top down "big finger small map" type policy, which resembles a game of Risk, is evident in Atwood's evidence. This emerges, for example, in the writings of Robert's key adviser Colonel Sir George Colley, whose appreciation was novel in that it regarded Kabul, not Herat, as the "key" to India.* The irony of the Second Afghan War was that although British policy makers' geo-political interest in Afghanistan was mainly to do with the Russian threat from the North, the War was not connected to this. Britain started the War in a knee jerk reaction to regain "British prestige" from the rejection of a diplomatic mission to Kabul. General Sir Neville Chamberlain, the head of the rejected mission, had written to the Viceroy that he hoped "the British Crown loses no time in resenting a gross and unprovoked insult".* This was amplified to the extent that Lytton's report that a British envoy had been "forcibly repulsed" generated a public outcry in Britain which led to a Cabinet decision for war. Atwood argues that it was not appreciated in Britain "that the real object of the mission was to coerce Sher Ali into subservience".* The toppled Sher Ali's private correspondence fell into British hands during the War. This showed that the Russians had told him to make peace with the

British. As Atwood states, this shows that Russian influence at Kabul did not make war necessary.

The misguided racial and geo-political assumptions on which the Second Afghan War was predicated generated issues from which we can learn today. The original justification for war of "retribution" was discredited by Roberts' over-zealous executions in Kabul. The justification of the Russian threat was then applied retrospectively to justify British war aims. This confusion between "justice" and tenuous geo-political justifications caused problems on the ground for Roberts, which were compounded by the idea that Afghanistan was a "nation". To install a friendly ruler who could control the country required a tyrant who ruled through fear. This was the reality on the ground: the Afghan "nation" as such did not exist, despite nineteenth century ideas about racial destinies expressed in states with borders. The man installed was Abdur Rahman, whose extensive use of horrific public torture until his death in 1901 did far more to taint British "reputation for justice" by his active support than the Kabul hangings. Atwood describes his reign as "harsh but efficient", an odd choice of words.*

The relevance these ideas have to today is the difficulty in ideological terms of wanting your cake and eating it. When idealistic visions are pushed onto the ground without due consideration of reality, the host may reject the treatment. The misplaced desire for justice and a satisfactory geo-political outcome in the Second Afghan War led to Abdur Rahman. If one wants a man to rule a country to which the people do not feel real allegiance, the likely result is tyranny, not justice. The British Ambassador to Afghanistan has recently been known to entertain the possibility of an Afghan strong man. Indeed one could argue that Western Democracy is idealistic and unrealistic, as are our ideas of women's' rights and drug eradication in that country.

Afghanistan's wars will always be interpreted in light of current events. In this dialogue between the past and the present it is unsurprising that those who would wish to see Western failure in Afghanistan should promote a narrative that sees the entire history of foreign intervention as disastrous. More intriguing is the reason why this narrative still holds sway amongst many of those who support NATO's presence in Afghanistan. A more balanced appraisal of this narrative is necessary. In this respect Atwood's book is a welcome attempt to give a more comprehensive understanding of this conflict, even if he chooses to do so through the distorting personage of Roberts. Ultimately the stigma which today is attached to the Victorian imperialism (of the type put into practice by Roberts) may militate against Atwood's attempt to present the successful side of the Second Afghan War. That is perhaps the most pressing parallel to today's conflict: that "perception is the only reality". Roberts may have been great in his day, but his War's strategic successes are today overshadowed by the perception of his brutal methods and the legacy of Abdur Rahman. Similarly, NATO's effort in Afghanistan may well make strategic sense, but its future perception of success or failure will rest largely upon its reception in ethical terms. The idea that perception is the only reality can also be found at the tactical level. In my own experience, this is apparent in the artificial division of "kinetic" and "influence" operations:

local and international perception is shaped primarily by how we conduct the kinetic operations, not how we explain them. The idea that one can have tactical success but lose the support of the local population is a fallacy based on the erroneous idea that one can isolate the events on the battlefield from the perception of those events: there is no such thing as tactical success in counter-insurgency if it is not perceived as such. This is evident from the evolving reception of the Second Afghan War over more than a century: although Roberts' version can sing loud about his tactical triumphs and be repeated by Atwood, the popular perception of western failure in Afghanistan is still dominant.

[* These quotations are all cited in *The March to Kandahar: Roberts in Afghanistan* by Rodney Atwood – see Book Reviews later in the journal.]



Second Battalion

Newsletter

With the completion of Exercise FIRST FLIGHT for Spearhead and a CT-level 3 exercise on a rather cold Salisbury Plain Training Area (SPTA), 2 RGR, much to the joy of all, re-assumed the role of Spearhead from December 2007. The New Year presented Battalion HQ with the demanding intellectual rigours of the Command and Staff Trainer (CAST (S)), whilst the remainder of the Battalion prepared for Exercise DRUIDS DANCE (TESEX). After relieving ourselves of the Spearhead responsibility, there was a rare opportunity to organize a bespoke company live firing package for the rifle companies which would present the debut for the newly formed Fire Support Groups (FSGs). The Battalion was then spread across the breadth of the country as the rollercoaster that is pre-deployment training (PDT) gained speed exponentially, but not before reminding ourselves that leave didn't just come before 'leaven' and after 'leather' in the Oxford English Dictionary.

The successful completion of the deployment of the Battalion by the Adjutant (Capt Edd Oldfield) on Exercise FIRST FLIGHT at South Cerney saw 2 RGR undertake the responsibility of Spearhead (again!). No sooner had the boxes been ticked when the Lead Company Group was stood-to for Op VALERO with the potential task of maintaining stability as Kosovo prepared to declare its independence. Exercise DUBEKO MUSA on SPTA continued nevertheless and was a continuation of the Battalion's preparation for Spearhead and Op HERRICK 9. The exercise afforded the rifle companies the ideal opportunity to re-confirm their CT-level 3 status in the demanding environment of the frozen Plain. For the ISTAR Group, there was the much-needed chance to remind and revise the plethora of skills for the first time since Exercise GRAND PRIX in 2006. Being far too cold for Bn HQ they rushed off to Warminster to conduct a Mini-CAST in some warmth and comfort. The deployment concluded with a Battalion attack on Imber Village and was ably supported by the MMG Platoon who had conducted a contracted and demanding cadre under the auspices of Capt Wes Hughes. At one point the CO and Ops Officer (Capt Tony Hellier) were found leading the Battalion attack – much to the consternation of the Company Commanders. The end-state was achieved - a Battalion that was capable of conducting operations up to unit level.

The inherent frustrations that Spearhead brings were felt by all during the Christmas stand-down period as the Battalion continued its 'on-the-bus off-the-bus' preparation for Op VALERO with Command and G4 teams nipping backwards and forwards to Pristina. Despite this, most members of the Officers' Mess joined the boys on a much deserved period of leave in L.A. (the local area)!

The groans could be heard reverberating throughout Battalion in January, no more so than from the CO's office, as CAST presented itself in full glory. The aim was to train HQ 2 RGR in command and staff procedures within a contemporary operating environment. The exercise used a Counter Insurgency scenario in the fictional country of Afstan (well it's an improvement on Eastlandia!), using the topography of Northern Iraq. The scenario provided the opportunity for the Battle Group (BG) to practise the integration of kinetic and some non-kinetic effects against an asymmetric enemy within the enduring phase (restoration of civil authority) of what had started out as a multi-national intervention operation. Capabilities associated with conventional warfighting could however be exercised, such as Joint Fires, ISTAR integration and CSS. This CAST was unique in that two BGs, 2 RGR and 2 RIFLES, were being exercised simultaneously. With 2 RGR's operational Bde HQ (52 Inf Bde) being deployed themselves in Afghanistan, HQ 19 Lt Bde played HICON. HQ 19 Lt Bde and 2 RIFLES operated from Catterick, collocated in CAST (N), while 2 RGR operated from Warminster. HQ 2 RGR's 6 litre V8, pumping out an unrivalled capacity of intellectual horsepower, went to work with several individuals distinguishing themselves in unfamiliar roles. This was a highly successful exercise, conducted with good humour (the person responsible for the heinous crime of so rudely placing the CO's intent in a cigarette pack is still at large) and with professionalism by all concerned.

With Battalion HQ now polished and refined in their BG planning procedures, and after a fleeting visit back to Folkestone, 2 RGR deployed again to Salisbury Plain for its CT-level 4 training - Exercise DRUIDS DANCE. Again as we were without our own Bde HQ (deployed on HERRICK 7) we trained under 19 Lt Bde with 2 RIFLES as the unit on our flanks. The BG complete, including assets from 40 Regt RA and 77 Sqn RE, convened on Westdown Camp to receive the mission: To conduct training as a BG up to warfighting operations against a free play enemy in a scenario relevant to the contemporary operating environment (COE). The intent was to make maximum use of the Tactical Engagement Simulation (TES) equipment to enhance the opportunity to train in a realistic, demanding and combined arms environment. The realism of TES soon became apparent to all - no more so than OC A (Maj Chris Boryer) who spent more time sipping sweet tea in the confines of the Regimental Aid Post than he did with his Company. The exercise comprised three phases: individual company-level training with limited support from FSGs and CS elements; Exercise SHARK, the CO's confirmatory BG exercise; and finally, Exercise WESSEX

WARRIOR which was 2 RGR's CT-level 4 FTX, part of the mandatory Adaptive Foundation training. This would be the final collective training that the BG would undertake before Op HERRICK PDT, and it saw the return of Maj Toby Jackman as OC Sp Company and Maj Jody Davies as OC D Company, both of whom had taken leave from their current jobs to support the exercise. With nowhere to hide from the ever-watchful eyes of 'Big Brother' (AWES/DFWES) and the ever enlightening 'After Action Reviews', the BG was put to the test under some demanding conditions. Despite Comd 19 Bde's best efforts to "squeeze 2 RGR BG like a lemon to see if he could get any juice out, maybe even some pips", the BG emerged at the other end with a very satisfactory report.

Before the commencement of PDT in preparation for Op HERRICK 9, OC B (Maj Ross Daines) was handed the responsibility of delivering a Battalion live firing package which was to be conducted in Otterburn, a place not unfamiliar to the Battalion. The aim of the package was for all companies to achieve company (day) live firing with FSGs under challenging conditions in the delightful terrain of Otterburn Training Area (OTA). All the stops were pulled out by the QM (Maj Rod Gray), and many favours called-in by the Battalion 2IC (Maj David Robinson), to provide B Company with all the hardware they needed to execute what was an outstanding set of ranges. As always everything had to be provided by the Battalion itself – but the many lessons learnt from running 52 Brigade's CALFEX in 2007 were put to good use.

Meanwhile back in camp, Lt Col David Wombell handed over the reins of a rather tired but well trained Battalion in April to Lt Col Chris Darby (back from a short stint away from the Battalion), and although Col David missed his opportunity to deploy with 2 RGR, he will soon be off to sunnier climes himself.

April, after some much needed leave, saw the start of PDT as the majority of the Battalion found itself extended across the country completing the plethora of courses required to ensure that we were properly prepared for deployment on Op HERRICK 9 in September. The 3 Commando Brigade Study Week proved an enlightening experience for the new CO as he asked himself: "Has the situation changed?" Or perhaps more often "Which task do we have on the laydown this week?" Indeed it did change several times, before plans crystallized for 2 RGR BG to deploy to AO (North West) based at Musa Qal'eh (Bn HQ, B Coy, Recce Pl and A Ech) with two companies (A and D Coys) deployed for tasks in AO (Centre) and AO (South). At first, the new CO hardly saw the Battalion in training as he bounced from a Theatre recce to Study periods to Bde CAST. Compounded by the limited availability of weapon systems and vehicle platforms for training and the now amazing amounts of courses and qualifications required for deployment, this has been an exceptionally busy period for the Battalion leading to the key pre-deployment exercises of the CFX, MRX and CALFEX. The Battalion shooting team did take time off to convincingly win the 3 Div SAAM and the RGR Team won the Methuen Cup at Bisley.

Before concluding this newsletter, mention must go to C Company, command of which was handed to Maj Chris Conroy in March. Due to the demands of Op HERRICK 9, Chris has found much of the Company stripped from his hands before even getting hold of his new train set. However, despite this the Company excelled themselves at both the Freedom of Sandgate Parade and the Royal Princes 'City Salute' in London. C Company has now assumed the role of the Gurkha Reinforcement Company 1 (GRC1) and, fully manned again, began PDT in September in preparation for deployment with 19 Lt Bde on Op HERRICK 10. Jai 2 RGR.

[The deployment of 2 RGR to Afghanistan and their first three months in-theatre are covered in the Operations Chapter.]



The Queen's Gurkha Engineers

History

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

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

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

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

69 Gurkha Independent Field Squadron reformed on 1 March 1981 in Hong Kong and moved to Kitchener Barracks, Chatham later that month. Re-designated 69 Gurkha Field Squadron and incorporated into 36 Engineer Regiment on 1 April 1993. Moved to Invicta Park Barracks, Maidstone 13 September 1994.

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

On 6 August 1982 Support Squadron re-designated 70 Support Squadron. Disbanded on 18 December 1993 in Hong Kong. 70 Gurkha Field Support Squadron was reformed and became part of 36 Engineer Regiment with effect from April 2000.

Current Organisation

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

Affiliated Corps

The Corps of Royal Engineers

Regimental Marches

Pipes Far o'er the Sea
Band Wings

Affiliated Colonel in Chief

Her Majesty the Queen

Colonel of the Regiment

Maj Gen D R Bill CB

Officers of the Regiment (as at December 2008)

RHQ QGE

Lt Col R Wardlaw	Commandant
Maj Dudhprasad Gurung MVO	Gurkha Major
Capt D J Hirst	Adjutant
Capt Prembahadur Ale	GRCMO

Field Officers

Maj R G Walker	OC 69 Gurkha Field Squadron
Maj G D Brown	OC 70 Gurkha Field Support Squadron
Maj Dilparsad Limbu	G3 Ops Engr, HQ 5 Div
Maj Dhanbahadur Chand	Trg Maj, 75 Engr Regt (V)

Captains

Capt Bhismaraj Gurung
Capt M D Hendry
Capt Krishnabhadur Gurung
Capt C J Mitchell
Capt Yogprasad Thapa
Capt Rajen Gurung
Capt N M Anderson
Capt Ekbahadur Gurung
Capt Uttam Sherchan
Capt D J A Dias
Capt Devkumar Gurung
Capt Bishnubhadur Ghale
Capt G W Drysdale
Capt C W Willows
Capt Tarabahadur Pun
Capt Tulbahadur Ale MBE
Capt Mohankumar Tamang
Capt Buddhibahadur Bhandari

Subalterns

Lt S L J Hudson
Lt E T M Gay
Lt T G P Myatt

Regimental Headquarters Newsletter

By Lt Col R Wardlaw, Comdt QGE

With the Regiment's recovery from fighting the counter-insurgency in Helmand Province earlier this year, it is a most apposite time to reflect on 60 successful years since the Regiment was established. Given that so much of our early history was dominated by a different counter-insurgency in a different part of the World, it is immensely gratifying to see that The Queen's Gurkha Engineers continue to play a central part in the operational successes being enjoyed by the British Army of today. While equipment, training and procedures may have changed, the quality of our officers and soldiers has not. Over the six month deployment in Afghanistan, under some of the most demanding operational conditions faced by any soldier in modern times, Gurkha sappers played a central and vital part in enabling the infantry and others to Live, Move and Fight. As Commandant, it has been at once both humbling and inspiring to witness the bravery and commitment of the Gurkha sapper, persevering where others have been dissuaded and succeeding where others have failed. It would be no exaggeration to say that in this most recent of conflicts, The Queen's Gurkha Engineers have established a reputation second to none, reaffirming the high esteem in which the Regiment is held and building on the efforts and sacrifices of those who have gone before.

Away from the immediate glare of operations in Afghanistan, this has been an exceptionally demanding year for the Regiment in so many other ways. While committed to supporting the deployment to Afghanistan, 70 Gurkha Field Support Squadron were also tasked with providing an engineer troop in support

of the Spearhead Land Element (SLE) Battalion and deployed as such to Kosovo on OpVALERO under the leadership of Captain Bishnu Ghale in the period 20 May – 4 July 2008. In addition, the Squadron has packed in a range of other activities including some exceptionally high profile construction tasks in support of civil communities both here in Kent and further afield in Nottingham and Dunblane. Concurrently, the Regiment has been preparing and training a large cohort of Commandos in order to meet the requirement for a 35-man Gurkha Commando Engineer Troop in 24 Commando Engineer Regiment. With a near 100% pass rate, many of those who joined the new Regiment in Chivenor found themselves deploying to Helmand Province in September 2008 in support of 3 Commando Brigade.

In common with the rest of the Brigade of Gurkhas, the transition period for the new Terms and Conditions of Service for many of those currently serving has not been without its difficulties. With so many soldiers now able to serve beyond their traditional pension point, there has and will continue to be considerable challenges in the short to medium term to maintain extant opportunities for promotion and commissioning. However, one of the positives to fall out of the excess manning created by the transition period is the decision by the Engineer in Chief to create a Gurkha Troop in 33 Armoured Engineer Squadron, 26 Engineer Regiment which is due to deploy on HERRICK 10 in March 2009, and the possibility, circumstances permitting, to see further QGE manpower employed similarly in the wider Corps in due course. The new TACOS have

also precipitated some much needed rigour, structure and transparency to our officer career structures and selection processes, with the consequent benefits all the way down the chain of command. The inclusion of our potential commissioning candidates on this year's Royal Engineers Arms Selection Board was the first tangible measure of doing so, with a 100% success rate in open competition with the wider Corps' WO1s a clear testament to the quality of our men.

A new and very welcome addition to the Regiment this year has been Mr Prembahadur Prasad Gaire, our permanent Pandit. His arrival has enabled the officers and soldiers and their families to observe their religious commitments in a way just not possible before. He has also added some much needed balance to the religious ceremonies of 36 Engineer Regiment, marking our departure and return from Afghanistan by leading all in Hindu prayers on both occasions. Dashain was of course a better and brighter occasion for having our own Pandit and, similarly, Tihar was celebrated in great style.

We have, of course, taken immense pride in celebrating our 60th anniversary. In addition to the normal Birthday celebrations on 28 September 2008, a particular highlight of the anniversary was the unveiling of the Gurkha Sapper Statue on 2 October in Maidstone town centre – only the second such statue of a Gurkha soldier in the United Kingdom! Members of The Queen's Gurkha Engineers' Association both in UK and Nepal celebrated the 60th anniversary of the Regiment in Pokhara, Nepal on 23 November with Colonel of Regiment, Lieutenant General David Bill CB leading the celebrations.

69 Gurkha Field Squadron

By Capt M D Hendry

The last time that we wrote the Squadron article for The Kukri, the Squadron was deep in Helmand Province, Afghanistan in amongst one of the largest operations of its kind to retake the Taliban stronghold of Musa Qal'eh. The year seems to have flown by with the remaining months of Op HERRICK 7, Post Operational Tour Leave and a busy switch focus back in barracks. Of particular note has been the 60th Birthday of The Queens Gurkha Engineers - that we will talk more about later in the article but needless to say it was an event to fit the occasion.

Before moving onto the year's events in detail, it is only right and proper that we say goodbye to some old friends and welcome back individuals into the Squadron. Of note, this year has seen Capt Mark Hendry, a 69 Squadron Baje, leaving and welcoming a newcomer to the Squadron and QGE with Capt Nic Anderson taking post as Squadron 2IC in November 2008. The two young Troop Commander Gora Sahebs, Lieutenants Rob Grant and Ed Thompson have also both moved on to be swiftly replaced by 2Lts Ed Gay and Steve Hudson taking over G & I Troop respectively. There has been little Gurkha Officer movement of the last 12 months which has offered excellent continuity in both the Squadron headquarters and the Troops.

Despite the busy operational tempo of the Regiment you will be pleased to hear that the Regiment has maintained its reputation for sporting excellence. 70 Gurkha Field Support Squadron spearheaded much of that success, winning as a Minor Unit in the RE Half Marathon, the Corps Cross Country Competition and coming a close 2nd in the 4th Division Cross Country Championships. As a Regiment we were the Plate Winners for the Nepal Cup and came a very creditable 4th place in Trailwalker. Captain Prembahadur Ale continued to excel on the badminton court, winning at Divisional level before taking (again) the Army Cup. Our shooting skills continue to set the standard for the wider Corps with the Regimental team, almost exclusively QGE soldiers, sweeping the board at the Corps SAAM and hauling in more than their fair share at the Army's Operational Shooting Competition. In addition Spr Kumar Pun and WO2 Meenjang Gurung were awarded the Army Rifle Association 'Army 100' badge for being placed as the 32nd and 51st best shot respectively in the British Army.

At the time of writing, the Regiment is 427 men strong, with 243 married accompanied. As testified by the award of a Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service and two Joint Commander's Commendations following HERRICK 7, with so much to play for operationally, the capacity of the Gurkha sapper has known no bounds and often been the deciding factor between mission success and failure. In this most special year, I therefore believe we can all take immense pride in their achievements and look forward to the future with renewed confidence and optimism.

The Squadron has had a very successful year for promotions with three Sappers to Lance Corporal, five Lance Corporals to Corporal and two Corporals to Sergeant. Both leaving Troop Commanders have also received promotion to Captain.

The pace of life in Afghanistan continued at an intense pace and Gurkha Sappers were deployed all over Northern Helmand in support of the 40 Commando Battle Group. After completing a handover to 9 PARA Sqn, the Squadron left Helmand Province in March 2008 and returned home to a happy reunion with our families and friends. Following an emotional Medals Parade Church Service and a final farewell to our friends from the Regiment that we lost in Afghanistan, the Squadron finally went home on a hard earned Post Operational Tour Leave of six weeks.

On return from Post Operational Tour Leave, the Squadron focus switched to our kit and equipment which was understandably in need of some attention following the busy Op tour. This required some solid G4 training from the QM's department and a lot of hard work in the build up to the Combined Inspection Week by the troops and their store

men. The Combined Inspection Team also looked at all other functional areas of the Squadron from G1 through to G6 requiring the whole of the Squadron to work long hours to ensure that good results were received.

Of note over this period was the performance by Capt Dev and other members of 69 Squadron that made up the Regimental shooting team at the Divisional Skill at Arms Meeting. The team secured runner up position in the Division and Spr Kumar Pun finished in an admirable third place overall in the individual competition. This position put him in the Army 100 and qualified him for the Army team. As part of the Army team, Spr Kumar deployed to America for an international Armed Forces Arms Competition in October 2008, where he put in a truly outstanding performance finishing second overall. An amazing achievement for such a young Sapper!

SSgt Govinda and Lt Hudson organised some good adventurous training out in Bavaria that resulted in over 30 personnel having a week of rock climbing, trekking and mountain biking. Luckily there were no broken limbs and fun was had by all that attended. Following the busy Combined Inspection Week and the Adventurous Training, the Squadron and the Regiment went onto Summer Leave for another much needed break from work.

After Summer Leave the Squadron deployed on Exercise to Minley and Hawley Hard to focus on some basic Combat Engineering, Driver Training and Plant Operating. This exercise served as an excellent refresher to our basic skills and drills as Combat Engineers. Both the weather and enthusiasm remained good throughout.

28 September proved to be a truly historic occasion with the 60th Birthday of QGE and the Squadron was tasked to run one of the biggest birthday parties that Invicta Park Barracks has ever seen. The Squadron and QGE were lucky to have distinguished guests like Lieutenant General Bill (Colonel of the Regiment) and Lieutenant General Piggott (previous Colonel of the Regiment) attending the birthday celebrations.

70 Gurkha Field Support Squadron

By Capt CJ Mitchell RE

Looking back over the year now it is hard to believe that 70 Squadron is actually a Field Support Squadron, given the breadth of commitments we have had to undertake. A lot of changes have come into being throughout the QGE world and Brigade of Gurkhas as a whole, not only transforming our structure within the wider Corps but also radically altering the way in which we serve. The 60th year of the QGE has been a year of hallmarks and outstanding developments, essentially a year of change. The Squadron management has also witnessed a large amount of change in recent months, and it would be hard to recognise the command team that was present at the beginning of the year

In September, news from RHQ QGE broke that the QGE would be sending a new Troop to 33 Armed Engineer Squadron under 26 Engineer Regiment. The Squadron was to provide 22 people of the 35 total including the I Tp management team of Lt Steve Hudson and SSgt Govinda Rana. The Troop and management were quick to form up and entered Pre Deployment Training with 26 Engr Regt with determination and vigour. The Troop has been impressing all at 26 Engr Regt and they are looking forward to their deployment on Op HERRICK 10 to Afghanistan in spring 2009.

Currently the Squadron is very committed. In particular there are significant numbers away on the Divisional Engineer Group Exercise involved in Engineer Recce and Plant training. Capt Mohan Tamang and an Initial Works Party Group of 18 people are currently working in Canada doing preparation works in anticipation of the Squadron Exercise (Ex WARPAIN) to BATUS in February 2009. G Troop is currently preparing to complete two Rhino shelters with our friends down at Howlett Zoo which will serve as some excellent basic construction training whilst helping out our local Rhinos!

At the end of November, 30 personnel from the Squadron deployed to Malaya as part of a Battlefield Study to commemorate the QGE 60th Birthday Celebrations. Visiting the birthplace of QGE is undoubtedly a once in a lifetime experience for all involved and very fitting for QGE at this significant milestone.

A look forward will see the whole Squadron deploying to Canada on Ex WARPAIN for a two month construction tour in the New Year and preparing to support various Battle Group Exercises as we inch closer to Op HERRICK 12 which is currently programmed for March 2010.

In summary, a very successful and busy year for the Squadron and all personnel. Of note was our successful return from Afghanistan and the outstanding 60th birthday celebrations. Although Afghanistan will continue to be our focus over the coming months, the Malaya Battlefield Study and the construction tour in Canada will undoubtedly allow us to recharge our batteries! Jai 69 & Jai QGE.

and the direction we are now headed. But enough of the future, and so let us look to the past, and the year that was.

Although the Squadron did not deploy with the rest of the Regiment on Op HERRICK 7 a large proportion of the men did deploy, either attached to the other Squadrons in the Regiment or as part of the Resources Node based at Kandahar. For many this would have been the highlight of the year, having the opportunity to test themselves on operations. The success of the Regiment in Afghanistan is every much a success of the Squadron and the men that deployed from it. Thankfully, they all

returned home safely, having acquitted themselves magnificently throughout the duration of their six month tour.

With Op HERRICK 7 drawing to a close in late March, and the Regiment looking forward to returning to UK, back home 70 Squadron were busily preparing for their own operational commitment. Spearhead Land Element (SLE) was to be a three month commitment that could potentially see the Squadron deploy at short notice to anywhere in the world. Based on a Field Troop (+) with a Squadron Tac element, 70 Squadron took on the responsibility on 26 March 2008. Much to everyone's delight the Squadron did not have to wait too long before it was confirmed that the SLE would deploy to Kosovo on Op VALERO for at least a 30 day period. The Advance Party, led by the OC Maj G A R McCallum, deployed to Kosovo on 19 May. The main body of 37 Squadron members left Maidstone early on Tuesday 22 May destined for our camp at Peninsula Lines, just outside the capital, Pristina.

As part of the SLE, 70 Squadron's main priority was to provide Engineer support to the 2nd Battalion The Rifles Battle Group. Our training during the previous months leading up to deployment had prepared us well for this role, but it quickly became apparent that the situation in Kosovo was fairly benign and would allow for more Civil-Military Cooperation orientated tasks. The first and by far the biggest task of this nature was rebuilding the Non Equipment Bridge over the River Klina, near Devic, which had fallen into a state of disrepair. This bridge was a key crossing point for both KFOR troops and for the local villagers, as it was one of the only means of reaching Devic Monastery. The task proved to be a very challenging one considering the tight timelines and the amount of resources we needed to procure. Nevertheless, the boys dug-out blind, displaying their excellent trade skills, resourcefulness and determination, restoring the bridge to its former glory. After completion the bridge was renamed The Mitree (Friendship) Bridge in memory of Lt Gareth Evans and SSgt Balam Rai who sadly lost their lives on 21 June 1999 whilst serving on Op AGRICOLA. A memorial service was held later on the same day, and at the same hour they fell. It was a very moving ceremony and a fitting tribute to the memory of these two brave and respected members of the QGE family.

The tour proved to be a very busy time for the SLE Troop, accomplishing a huge number of diverse tasks, from providing drinking water, electricity and drainage systems, to refurbishing the prison cells in a local police station, all within a relatively short time-frame. Special mention must be made of Capt Bishnu Ghale who was awarded an Multi National Taskforce (North) Force Commander's Commendation from Gen Mathey, for his excellent work throughout the tour.

Back on the Home Front the Military Plant Foreman WO2 Markland and most of the POMs from Assaye Troop were busy with the Long Span & Two Span (LS & TS) General Support Bridge Gap Project at Tidworth. The project ran from 27 May – 17 July 2008 and involved building the approaches and platforms for two bridging gaps on Salisbury Plain Training Area (SPTA). This was a unique project and created an excellent training facility for the Corps, which to date is the only one of its kind in the UK.

The run-up to August Block Leave was a busy time for the Squadron. We welcomed back the SLE Troop, but had to say goodbye to a number of Squadron personalities. Leaving us were the OC Maj McCallum, 2IC Capt A Kirkin, QM Capt E Walsh, G/Capt Capt Prem Ale, and Ops Offr Capt Tul. Warmly welcomed were the new OC Maj G Brown, 2IC Capt CJ Mitchell, QM Capt C Willows, G/Capt Capt Rajen Gurung, Ops Offr Capt Bishnu Ghale, Res Tp Comd Capt Krishna Gurung, Sp Tp Comd Capt Buddhi Bhandari, and the SSMWO2 Mohan Gurung. The change experienced within the Squadron was only a precursor to the change that was affecting the QGE as a whole. The formation of a QGETp at 24 Cdo Engr Regt would see the departure of eight Squadron members before the summer break. This trend would continue after we returned from Leave with a further QGE Troop being established in 33 AES at Tidworth. In September we again had to say goodbye to a further 11 members of the Squadron who were departing to form the newest Troop in the QGE family, and who would soon be deploying on operations to Afghanistan. These were indeed unprecedented and exciting times within the QGE, with the promise of a brighter future to come. Nevertheless, we would miss them all like members of our own family, and will look forward to their return to Maidstone and the Squadron in the not too distant future.

With the QGE marking its 60th Birthday on 28 September 2008 by way of a tremendous celebration organised by 69 Gurkha Field Squadron, the month ahead would prove to be just as full of occasions to celebrate. With the bar set so high by 69 Squadron, the ball was now in 70 Squadron's court to equal or surpass them! The new 2IC Capt Mitchell was thrown into the QGE deep end and had the honour of organising a very special and unique occasion in QGE history. On Thursday 2 October the QGE were to have a statue unveiled in Maidstone in their honour, commissioned and paid for by Maidstone Borough Council with donations from the local community. To mark this occasion, QGE would march through the streets of Maidstone and parade outside the Maidstone Museum where the statue was erected. The unveiling ceremony was attended by a host of local dignitaries and scores of well wishers who lined the streets and pavements outside the museum. After some very gracious words from Councillor Dan Daley, the individual most responsible for the commissioning of the statue, the Worshipful Mayor of Maidstone (Councillor Denise Joy) and the Colonel of the Regiment (Lt Gen DR Bill CB) unveiled the statue to rapturous applause. The statue, very much like the parade and ceremony that followed, was a very simple but dignified tribute to the QGE.

With the 2IC now a very relieved man, attention quickly turned to the organisation of this year's Dashain and Kalaratri celebrations planned for 6 - 10 October. The 70 Squadron Gurkha LEs, led by Capt Rajen Gurung, were put through their paces, and in typical QGE fashion left nothing to chance spending hours rehearsing the finest of details. Kalaratri was a smashing success and will surely live long in the memory. Not only was the messing and entertainment of excellent quality (particularly the Gora Dance), but the hidden singing talents of Capt Rajen Saheb were masterfully displayed to a delighted audience, which unanimously demanded his entry into this year's X-Factor! The

night was a tremendous success, and I am sure a few people woke up the next morning with very sore heads!

As the year draws to a close 70 Squadron is again confronted with a new set of challenges and is asked to perform a role to which it is not accustomed, but with which it is becoming increasingly familiar. Since September 2008 the Squadron has been busily preparing for its commitment to support 40 Commando Royal Marines on Ex TARAUS, a ship-borne deployment to the Mediterranean from February to March 2009. Again the Squadron will be deploying a Field Troop (+) with Capt Bishnu Ghale acting as the BGE, and Capt Buddhi Bhandari the Troop Commander. Originally 24 Commando Engineer Regiment was to provide the Field Troop, but with their deployment to Afghanistan their loss is most certainly our gain! This deployment promises to be a fantastic opportunity for the men, who to date have enjoyed the extensive and at times hectic build-up training

with 40 Commando, and who are now itching to get on-board ship. Whether or not they will still feel that way after a few days at sea is another matter!

What this year has demonstrated time and again is the resourcefulness and adaptability of the Squadron, and more importantly the calibre of the soldiers within it. Throughout the year the 70 Squadron family have consistently met and maintained the highest of professional standards, with outstanding performances in events such as the CO's Challenge, the Regimental JNCO Cadre, the CORPSAM, and the Regimental Section Competition. Not surprisingly the Squadron has received some well-earned promotions to match its performance during the year. With the change already witnessed by the QGE this year, and with the potential for more in the future, 70 Gurkha Field Support Squadron is in a strong position to meet these challenges and do all that is asked of it. Jai 70 Sqn! Jai QGE!

Outstanding Performance at Bisley by Gurkha Sappers

The Army Operational Shooting Competition (AOSC) 2008 was held at Bisley Ranges from 6 - 11 July 2008. A six man team lead by Capt Dev Gurung from 69 Gurkha Field Squadron, 36 Engineer Regiment took part in the competition and managed to fly the Corps colours high with excellent results.

After a few days training, the competition started on Sunday 6 July. Two young team members, Spr Seesan Gurung and Spr Mirak Kandangwa, set a high standard by winning the 'Hendry White Head' and the 'Association Cup (Class B)' respectively with exceptional scores. In fact the whole team seemed to be performing well with a number of other team members achieving high scores; this despite the adverse weather conditions. During the second day, Spr Kumar Pun maintained the flow of silverware by winning the 'RouPELL Cup (Class B)' and individual Gun Match.



Capt Dev Gurung and Spr Kumar also won the Gun Team Match ahead of the rest of the Army team. Day three saw the individual rifle competition completed with all team members managing to score very well. As a result the aggregate score was high enough to qualify for the Army 100 Cup. The team would have to wait another day for the Annual General Meeting, where the announcement of the Army 100 list was made. It was however worth the wait and when announced it transpired that all team members from the Regiment were placed inside the top 50 which in itself was an excellent achievement. 'The Old Contemptible Cup', which is awarded to the individual who achieves the highest aggregate score on Rifle, LSW and the Pistol was awarded to Capt Dev Kumar Gurung.

On day five of the event Gen Sir Richard Dannatt KCB, CBE, MC ADC presented the awards for the Army 100 Cup match, the last time he would do so as the President of the Army Rifle Association (ARA). Without a doubt this was the best year for the Royal Engineer Shooting Team in the recent history of the AOSC. The team consisted mostly of young sappers, the majority of whom were participating for the first time. All team members were excited as well as nervous at the start but close supervision and guidance by Capt Dev Gurung certainly made the difference; this was reflected by the achievements of the team. The competition taught us the benefit of mental agility, patience and self-discipline, all of which are essential in mastering the marksmanship principles to the highest standard.

Statue Unveiling Ceremony – 2 October 2008

By Capt CJ Mitchell RE

The bronze figure, standing no more than a meter and a half high, stood proudly at ease on his granite plinth, clutching his rifle and staring determinedly ahead over the town which he can now call home. For over 15 years The Queen's Gurkha Engineers (QGE) have been based at Invicta Park, Maidstone. In recognition of the long and proud association that the QGE have had with Maidstone and the surrounding area, and in fitting celebration of the Diamond Jubilee year of the raising of the QGE, the Worshipful the Mayor of Maidstone (Councillor Denise Joy) and Maidstone Borough Council saw fit to commission a statue of a QGE soldier.

The story behind the statue itself began back in 2000 when Councillor Dan Daley was elected Mayor of Maidstone. As part of his Welcoming Parade 36 Engineer Regiment marched through the centre of Maidstone and it was here that His Worship the Mayor came into contact with the QGE for the first time.



As his time in office continued his awareness of the impact that the QGE have had on the borough increased. So impressed was he by the various construction and fundraising projects that the QGE undertook in the local community, and realising what a small but significant part of that community the QGE and their families had become, the Mayor was keen to recognise their contribution. The notion of a statue of a QGE soldier first took root once he discussed at length his desire with Councillor Trevor Gasson (Deputy Chief Executive) in 2006. In late 2007 Mr Gasson became aware that the following year the QGE would be celebrating their Diamond Jubilee and the prospect of erecting a statue in tribute to the QGE was given fresh momentum.

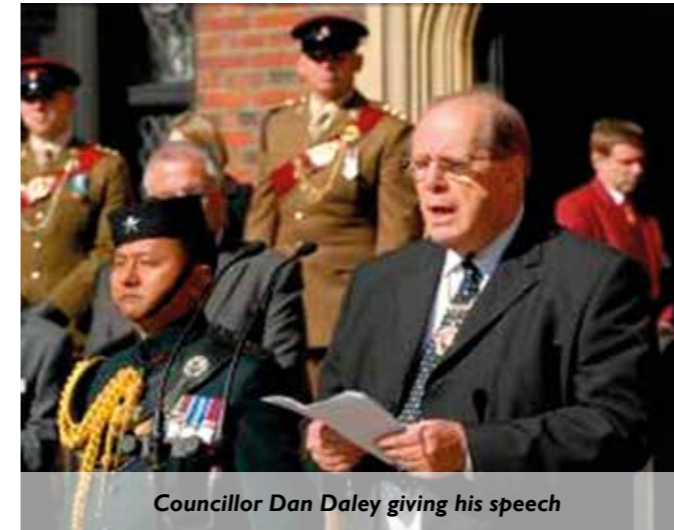
The Council immediately took on the fundraising for this project with a target set at £15,000 for the cost of commissioning a statue. Money was raised through the Maidstone Trust, with various donations being submitted by local companies (the Kent Messenger Group donating £3,000). The target of £15,000 was quickly met, though contributions are still coming in, with all donations in excess of the original target being given to the PAHAR Trust.

Thus, on a bright October morning, over 150 serving QGE soldiers from both 69 Gurkha Fd Sqn and 70 Gurkha Fd Sp Sqn stepped off from Maidstone County Hall for the short parade through the streets of the town, destined for the Maidstone Museum where the unveiling of the statue would take place. The QGE marching contingent was led by the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas, who played a set of rousing music throughout, much to the delight of the onlookers who cheered encouragingly as the parade marched past.

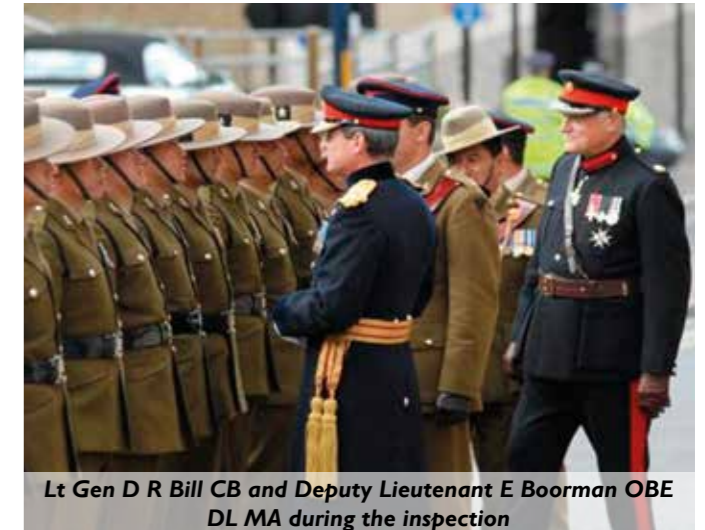
The parade came to a halt outside the Museum, where a large crowd of school children and citizens of Maidstone had gathered to watch the event. With the Parade having been prepared for inspection, Officer Commanding 69 Gurkha Fd Sqn, Maj R Walker, marched forward and invited the Worshipful the Mayor of Maidstone, the Colonel of the Regiment Lt Gen D R Bill CB, the Deputy Lieutenant Edwin Boorman OBE DL MA, and the Commandant QGE Lt Col R Wardlaw to inspect the parade.

The invited VIPs and local dignitaries, who included the Right Honourable Anne Widcombe MP, watched from the courtyard of the Museum as the Inspecting Party conducted their inspection. A great deal of time elapsed before the inspection was complete, and there was a fear that the Band would run out of music to play, such was the delight of the Inspecting Party to chat with the men on their way around the ranks. At last the parade could stand at ease and enjoy the unveiling ceremony itself.

After a brief introduction from Councillor Brian Moss (the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Tourism), Councillor Dan Daley, stood up and addressed the assembled crowds as to the rationale and history behind the statue. It was a truly moving speech, and one that will live long in the memory of the QGE.



Councillor Dan Daley giving his speech



Lt Gen D R Bill CB and Deputy Lieutenant E Boorman OBE DL MA during the inspection

It would be safe to say that all serving and ex-QGE members who stood there that day would have been justifiably proud of their history and heritage, yet humbled by the sentiments of the people of Maidstone. The Adjutant 36 Engr Regt, Capt D Hirst read out a short history of the QGE before the Mayor and the Colonel of the Regiment stepped forward to unveil the statue. Cloaked in Corps Colours and flanked by the Queen's Gurkha Orderly Officers (Capt Prem Ale QGE, and Capt Yambahadur Rana RGR), the Statue was unveiled to rapturous applause. The statue, bathed in sunshine, was blessed by the Pundit, Premprasad Gaire, who handed over to the Mayor who implored all those watching from the Bandstand to "come forward and get a better look at this marvellous statue".

The ceremony was brought to a close by the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas striking up and leading the QGE marching contingent back to Maidstone County Hall. The ceremony and parade were over, though the invited VIPs, local dignitaries and assembled onlookers continued to gather around the statue, exchanging stories, taking pictures, and just marvelling at the statue for a great deal of time after the sound of marching had faded.



Brigade Band during parade

Very much like the parade and ceremony which inaugurated it, the statue was a very simple but dignified tribute to The Queen's Gurkha Engineers. The attention to detail by the Sculptor Mary Cox is remarkable, and successfully captures the pride and dignity of a QGE soldier. The QGE statue at the Maidstone Museum is only the second such statue commemorating the Brigade of Gurkhas on the UK mainland (the other stands in Whitehall). To date, this is the only statue that honours the QGE specifically, and is indeed something we can all be proud of. Jai QGE!

60th Anniversary - The Queen's Gurkha Engineers

By LCpl Kishan Gurung

28 September 2008, marked a huge milestone in the history of The Queen's Gurkha Engineers and the Brigade of Gurkhas as the QGE's 60th Birthday. After six decades of successful service in operational theatres all over the world the Regiment celebrated in real style.

The journey for The Queen's Gurkha Engineers started in Kluang, Malaya back in 1948 with the formation of 67 Gurkha Field Support Squadron. The title of 'The Queen's Gurkha Engineers' was bestowed upon the Regiment by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth on 21 April 1977. Numbers of personnel and squadrons have fluctuated over the years, but at its peak the Regiment numbered over 1400 men in Hong Kong.

Following 'Options for Change' and the withdrawal from Hong Kong, QGE was reduced in size with the disbandment of 67,68 and 70 Squadrons. However, 70 Squadron was reformed in January 1999 in the UK as a Field Support Squadron.

QGE has served and earned honours during the Malayan Emergency (1948-1960), the Borneo Campaign (1962 – 1966), Kosovo (1999), Op TELIC 1 & 4 and more recently Op HERRICK 7.

Today QGE has one Field Squadron and one Field Support Squadron. We also have one Field Troop with 24 Commando Engineer Regiment and one Field Troop with 26 Engineer



The QGE Birthday cake being cut by General Bill Saheb, Commandant Saheb and GM Saheb.

Regiment. Despite the challenges of 'Future Army Structures' and the implementation of GTACOS the Officers and Soldiers of QGE have remained steadfast in their duty to meet and exceed everything expected of them whilst in the UK and on operations. The formation of the Gurkha Field Troops and 24 & 26 Engr Regiments proves that our Sappers and Officers can integrate efficiently and easily into British units whilst maintaining our key Gurkha ethos.

Following weeks of careful planning and preparation, one of our equipment hangars was converted into a small piece of our beloved Nepal in order to celebrate the 60th Anniversary in the appropriate manner. All QGE Members & their families, QGE Association Members and high profile dignitaries, including the Colonel of the Regiment, Lt Gen D R Bill, gathered for what was to be a unique and special day.

The traditional Inter Ranks Football went well with no injuries and all guests gathered at 11.30hrs to witness a fabulous display from the Brigade of Gurkhas Band. Commandant Saheb then welcomed all guests to the party and thanked the dignitaries for their presence. Following the speeches of welcome, Commandant Saheb announced the award of the prestigious Bowring Trophy to LCpl Prithi Chantyal, as the best Lance Corporal in QGE over the previous 12 months. The Commandant went on to announce that the winner of the Durand Medal was Capt Devkumar Gurung, for his outstanding achievements throughout his career. The QGE Birthday cake was then cut by General Bill Saheb, Commandant Saheb and GM Saheb.

The cultural show in the afternoon was spectacular and thoroughly enjoyed by all. A whole range of dances was performed by the children, the boys and their families. The traditional final Cocktail Dance was blessed with all of the Gora Sahebharu strutting their stuff on the dance floor and impressing everyone with their moves.

Eventually this joyous occasion for QGE came to an end and it was clear from the faces of all present that the event had been a complete success. It was also a time for reflection and a good reminder that we must continue to push ourselves to meet the high standards set for us by our predecessors for the next 60 years and beyond.



Presentation of Bowring Trophy

Exercise MALAYSIAN GURKHA SAPPER 2008 - Battlefield Study to Malaysia

After a long and gruelling negotiation at various levels a composite group of 29 Officers and other ranks from The Queen's Gurkha Engineers finally embarked on a Battlefield Study to Malaysia, Ex MALAYSIAN GURKHA SAPPER, from 28 November to 4 December 2008. This Battlefield Study was primarily masterminded by Maj R G Walker RE, Officer Commanding 69 Gurkha Field Squadron QGE, whilst on Op HERRICK 7, to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of The Queen's Gurkha Engineers with the intent of studying the

successful UK-led Counter Insurgency (COIN) campaign conducted during the Malayan Emergency (1948-1960). A key strand to the study was to compare the COIN principles and differences between Malaya and Afghanistan, based upon our own recent operations in Helmand and the OC's experience of the Operational and Strategic levels of command working within the US & NATO Commands in Afghanistan. The entire package was expertly organised by WO2 (SSM) Yambahadur Pun and the study aspect enabled by Lt ET M Gay RE.



WO2 (SSM) Yambahadur Pun led the daunting planning process that began in November 2007, seeking approval and funding for the Battlefield Study, which was finally approved by the Chain of Command two weeks prior to the start date. After a lot of last minute battles, the final programme was produced in consultation with the Defence Advisor (Malaysia) and a renowned travel agent (Travcheque) to meet the main objectives. This was quite a unique and challenging task for the Regiment as the current policy for battlefield studies only supports activities within Europe and with budgets far less than was our requirement. As a part of the package, the team received a special Counter Insurgency briefing from Dr Garth Pratten (Senior Lecturer, Department of War Studies RMA Sandhurst), followed by a lengthy group discussion. Subsequently, we conducted an additional study day where individuals were given the responsibility to research and brief on their topics relating to both the doctrine of the Malayan Emergency and related current operational doctrine.

After approximately 15 hours of air travel and a stop at Dubai, we finally arrived at Kuala Lumpur, the capital of Malaysia, late in the afternoon of 27 November. At the airport we were welcomed and received by the Travel Agent and taken to our hotel. Later that evening, Col Paul Edwards (Defence Advisor to the British High Commission) delivered an impeccable briefing on the history of the country, the background to the Emergency and the strategies adopted by the British Army. Maj Subramaniam Narayanan from MoD, Malaysia, was appointed as our Military guide and remained with us throughout the Battlefield Study, facilitating access to the different sites. Having fought terrorists himself in the remote jungles during the 1980s (the last terrorist finally surrendered in 1989 although the Emergency was declared over in 1960!) he was well placed to offer first hand input based upon his own experience. The evening was excellently organised by Auntie Jenny (Founder TravCheque) and we had the opportunity to witness the superb and mixed traditional and cultural dances of Malaysia.

On the morning of 28 November, the actual field study began in earnest. Initially we proceeded to one of the largest and oldest Malaysian Forces Bases at Sungei Besi; a suburb of Kuala Lumpur. Formerly this camp used to be a very important base for the British Forces during the Emergency. It is probably



best compared with Camp Bastion in Afghanistan in the current operational environment. Soldiers used to deploy to fight the insurgents for eight months and be brought back to Sungei Besi for recuperation for four months before they were sent back out again. This place was of equal importance from the engineer's point of view as it was the central location from where the engineer stores and resources were sent to supply to front lines. Additionally, it was the one time home to 50 Field Engineer Regiment which is inextricably linked to the formative years of the QGE.

After spending a night at Batu Pahat, a small town to the far south of Peninsular Malaysia, we headed towards a nearby Army Barracks at Kluang – the home of the Malaysian Engineers and the true birthplace of the QGE. Officers and members of the Malaysian Royal Engineers were eagerly waiting to welcome us, with media representatives. Kluang has a special connection and importance for QGE as this was the place where the first Gurkha Engineers were formed up in 1948. Some 300 infantrymen were drawn from the Brigade of Gurkhas and trained here at the Engineer Training Centre to convert them into sappers. The remains of the works done by them are still in existence. Still in use by the Malays were the temple (Mandir), the engineer workshops, the watermanship lake and bridging hards, the cinema and handful of married quarters. Later that morning, we arrived at a well-maintained nearby Gurkha Cemetery where hundreds of our brave ancestors rested in peace. We remembered them and paid our tributes with a two minutes silence.

In the afternoon we drove back to the north towards Port Dickson to visit a newly-constructed Malaysian Military Museum. It really was a priceless opportunity for us to deepen our study and focus on the detail of the wider issues surrounding the Malayan Emergency. We were so proud to witness the names on the Roll of Honour - British, Gurkha, Malayan and Commonwealth countries - on the pillars of the museum.

On 30 November, after visiting two British and Gurkha cemeteries at Batu Gajah near Ipoh (another key Brigade of Gurkhas Operational base now turned over to the Malay Infantry), we travelled further north towards Sungei Patani – former Training Depot of the Brigade of Gurkhas. This is based in a small town in the far north, close to the Thailand frontier. Early



in the morning of 1 December, we went to visit Sungei Patani Camp. We were delighted to see the old offices and buildings - the building used as Depot Headquarters is still in good shape and is being used as Admin Headquarters (see photo). All the married quarters are still in existence. However, sadly, we may have been the last visitors to see these old buildings as they were due to be demolished in a few days time! The temple is still being used by the Hindu community. Afterwards, we paid a visit to the Gurkha Cemetery to pay our respects to our ancestors who fell during the Emergency. That afternoon we headed towards the Cameron Highlands (named after the RE Officer who surveyed the area) for a rigorous terrain appreciation.

Unlike other terrain, Malaysia's mountains have unique characteristics. Its majestic tropical forests cover the Malaysian highlands but the treacherous swamps hide underneath making any movement very challenging indeed. Everyone, both Gurkha and Gora (many with jungle experience from Belize, Brunei & Sabah) were surprised by the challenges presented in this jungle. On 2 December, as part of the adventure training and terrain appreciation, the whole team climbed in the Cameron Highlands. This part of the exercise really made us think how our ancestors fought against the insurgents during the Emergency. It was clear to us that determination and physical fitness were utterly vital!

Towards the end of the exercise, we spent time in and around the city of Kuala Lumpur, to appreciate its historic beauty and culture. This beautiful and modern city preserves a blend of old and new arts and traditions of all the diverse races

that make up the Malaysian population. This was a fitting end to a challenging field study and allowed the team a little time to reflect upon how Malaysia had evolved since the end of the Emergency. Sultan Abdul Samad's Building, the National History Monument and Batu Cave became parts of our cultural visit. Lunch at the revolving restaurant of Kuala Lumpur Tower and shopping around the world's tallest twin towers were some of the activities that we couldn't miss.

Finally, on the night of 3 December, we left Malaysia and started our journey back. Every second of the Battlefield Study had been enjoyable even with a very busy schedule. We had a long list of places that were essential to visit. All credit and thanks go to those local experts, Army representatives and our guide Eddie Ooi for their help and unforgettable contribution during our study.

Overall, it was an exceptionally well-balanced Battlefield Study, reinforced with adventure and entertainment, and we all are proud to have taken part. This really was a once in a lifetime opportunity, where we gained a great deal of knowledge and experience about the splendid history of the Brigade of Gurkhas and The Queen's Gurkha Engineers, and above all the differences between Counter Insurgency in Malaya and the current campaign in Afghanistan. Finally, special thanks go to OC Saheb for his direction, and heartfelt thanks to WO2 (SSM) Yambahadur Pun for his tireless work in making this study successful, enjoyable and memorable. It is clear to us all that the exercise would not have happened without the support of Colonel QGE and the Commandant who applied leverage at every level to support the venture. Jai QGE - Jai Brigade of Gurkhas.

Gurkha Highlander 2008

by Capt John Archibald, QGE (1974-77)

Little did I know what I was letting myself in for when, having been wined and lunched in great style at the home of Sheriff Derrick McIntyre, the Chairman of the Gurkha Welfare Trust Scottish branch, I was quietly asked if I would like to do 'Neil's walk' in aid of the charity. As an ex-Queen's Gurkha Engineer Officer now residing in Edinburgh I blithely agreed. I had no idea

who Neil was or what his walk entailed, but I did know that Derrick served a mean Sauvignon Blanc and it was the least I could do to repay the compliment. It subsequently transpired that Neil (Griffiths), an ex-Royal Hampshire, was the Press Officer for the Royal British Legion Scotland and Poppy Scotland and that 'Neil's walk' comprised a 200-mile, eight-day trek across the

highlands of Scotland, coast to coast from Mallaig in the west to Stonehaven in the east. For the numerically challenged that is the equivalent of a marathon every day for eight days.

Neil had first done what came to be called the Gurkha Highlander walk in 2001 when he led a party of six Gurkhas along the old 'Twelve Passes' route from Mallaig to Stonehaven in aid of the GWT. The year before he had walked the 240-mile Southern Upland Way, again with six Gurkhas in aid of the GWT, and in 2002 he had bagged the hat trick when he and his Gurkha friends walked 160 miles down the Outer Hebrides from the Butt of Lewis to the island of Barra. There followed four more Gurkha Highlander walks, but Neil hung up his boots after the 2006 walk, presumably due to exhaustion. There was no Gurkha Highlander walk in 2007.

Neil had left 'operating instructions' for anyone daft enough to emulate his feats of derring do, and the first action was, "First, choose your Gurkhas". Neil had sourced his fellow trekkers from the Queen's Gurkha Signals and the Gurkha Demonstration Company at Sandhurst. As an ex-Gurkha Sapper, however, regimental loyalty came first and so I requested three volunteers from The Queen's Gurkha Engineers in Maidstone and three from the Sandhurst Sittang Company. Capt Prebahadur Ale QGE, Gurkha Captain of 70 Gurkha Field Support Squadron, and Capt Balam Ghale RGR, 2IC Sittang Company, jacked up the volunteers. Prem Saheb subsequently emailed me to say that he was moving to another position (which he modestly omitted to inform me was Queen's Gurkha Orderly Officer) and that his replacement as Gurkha Captain 70 Squadron and contact for the bandobast, would be Capt Rajen Gurung. When I was subsequently sent the team lists imagine my surprise and delight to discover that one of the volunteers was none other than the Gurkha Captain himself. Three months later the two groups of volunteers arrived at Waverly Station Edinburgh looking somewhat bemused and wondering what was in store.

After brief introductions all round on the station platform we returned to the Archibald gaff where sleeping arrangements were agreed, a briefing on what lay in store was given, beer was taken and we then headed off to the Khukuri Restaurant in the Haymarket for bhat. It soon became clear that I was going to enjoy excellent company over the next few days. Capt Rajen

was joined by Cpl Dugendra Tamang and Spr Rajiv Chhetri while The Royal Gurkha Rifles were represented by LCpl Lalbahadur Limbu, Rfn Kalbahadur Pun and Rfn Arjun Malla. In support, as team driver and fund raiser-in-chief was Temple Melville, Vice Chairman of the GWT Scottish branch. Planning for the walk had started six months earlier and a comprehensive PR and marketing campaign organised by Temple, with fundraising ads in the local and national press, had ensured us a high profile along the route.

Our outward journey to the west coast took us past some of Scotland's most impressive scenery and the sense of anticipation was palpable, heightened by the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas playing Mist Covered Mountains, The Black Bear and Ayo Nepali.

Our modus operandi was to stay in conveniently located bed & breakfasts along the route, with Temple delivering us to and from the daily start and finish points in a van donated for the purpose by Arnold Clark. While the Puritans among you are no doubt tut-tutting such unnecessary luxury, a hot bath, dry clothes and a warm bed certainly helped dull the pain at the end of each day. That, and copious quantities of alcohol. (Apparently the tittle of choice among weary infantrymen nowadays is a large Jack Daniels. Whatever happened to the foot powder tin of dark rum?)

The walk commenced at Mallaig harbour, where we were met by Mike Robson, an ex-Gordon Highlander and Gurkha supporter following his days in Malaya, who was on holiday in the area and came to wave us off and hand us a cheque. Mike's departing words were, "See you in Stonehaven". And he did. On a grey and breezy morning we sailed across Loch Nevis on Bruce Watt's ferry Western Isles to Inverie on the Knoydart Peninsula, before setting off eastwards into the 'rough bounds of Knoydart'. This is one of the most remote and mountainous parts of Scotland, which to the delight of the Gurkha, reminded them of Nepal, with its steep valleys and rushing rivers. It had begun to rain heavily as we headed into the mountains so that it quickly became impossible to tell the difference between small streams and the track. The mountain sides were literally spewing flood water. At one point we lost the track in the deluge and had to ford a raging torrent by leaping from boulder to boulder.



Knoydart, Loch Nevis in the background. L-R: Capt John Archibald (ret'd), Spr Rajiv Chhetri, Capt Rajen Gurung



Raging torrents in Knoydart. L-R: Spr Rajiv, Cpl Dugendra, LCpl Lal, Rfn Kal, Rfn Arjun, Capt JA



Ready for the off, day 2, Strathan



Meeting the locals, Ray and George Lee, Loch Arkaig



Day 4. Ben Alder Pass. Loch Ossian in the background, Corroul, the day's start point, on the horizon



Day 5. Dalwhinnie to Braemar. A misty day on the grouse moors. Loch an t-Seilich in the background

Those with short legs would not wish to repeat the experience. After a tough 17 miles with two stiff climbs and a long walk out down Glen Dessary, we were met by Temple and a magnificent 12-pointed red deer stag. The Gurkhas were impressed.

The second day's trek took us along the north shore of Loch Arkaig to Spean Bridge, past Achnacarry House and the Commando memorial where we laid a wreath with the inscription, "From mountain men to mountain men in sad remembrance and proud affinity", to the accompaniment of the bagpipes playing Flowers of the Forest. It was a particularly proud moment for me as my father had served with No. 4 Commando during World War Two.

Temple had arranged a photo opportunity and interview with The Sunday Times at the memorial. When asked the obligatory question - how does Scotland compare with Nepal? - Capt Rajen replied diplomatically that it was very similar, "Except the midges. We don't do midges". Do not let anyone tell you that rain keeps the midges away. They are lying. The only thing that keeps midges away is a midge net worn over the head and face (although Avon Skin So Soft, applied liberally to exposed surfaces, does stop them biting you, which is why it is sold in every highland store, at exorbitant prices). It says much for the misery that the female highland midge can bestow on mankind that the discomfort of wearing a semi-opaque midge net while climbing lung bursting mountains in monsoon-like rains is by far the preferable alternative.

Our route took us south from Spean Bridge through beautiful countryside round Loch Treig to Corroul, past Loch Ossian and over the Ben Alder pass to Loch Pattack, Loch Erich and Dalwhinnie. At one stage, while climbing a steep path with screaming leg muscles, bursting lungs and pounding temples, my right eardrum was assailed with thumping Indian folk music from the MP3 player of the ever-smiling Cpl Dugendra, while my left eardrum was subject to a bombardment of Nepali hits from the mobile phone of LCpl Lalbahadur (nicknamed 'Mr Mountain' by my daughters on account of the prodigious amount of rice he could shift). It was my very own hell on earth; a battle of the bands, sub-continent style in the quiet remoteness of the Scottish Highlands. I had, quite diplomatically I thought, asked Dugendra if he had any Rolling Stones on his MP3 player, but failing to take

the hint, and with a beaming smile he had replied, "No Saheb", and cranked up the volume.

I had quickly realised that today's Gurkhas did not stint when it came to technology. Their mobile phones were the latest G3 models that, amazingly, seemed to maintain coverage across the highlands, while my own 'economy' company mobile lost coverage at Mallaig and apart from isolated spots close to towns, did not gain signal again until we has almost reached the east coast. I was further humbled when Rajen informed me that Rajiv would be making a video of the walk that he would post on You Tube. Gurkhas have come on a bit since my day! To my delight this was to be a recurring theme.

The fifth day was a monster 40-miler from Dalwhinnie to Glen Feshie and along the Geldie Burn to the Linn o' Dee and Braemar. The sun broke through for a couple of hours to reveal mountains covered by the most glorious purple heather. It was a stunning sight. Rajiv however provided the highlight of a very long and latterly wet day by dropping his dry socks into the rushing waters as we forded the River Feshie. To the wild amusement of his infantry colleagues he topped this feat three days later by ending up on his butt while fording a river in the Fetteresso Forest. Hilarious references to his Deep Diving qualification added to the mirth.

On several occasions throughout the trek I had been hugely impressed by the ability of the infantrymen Lal, Kal and Arjun to take the direct route up, down or across mountains, while I picked my dainty way along the nearest track. At one point our doughty warriors had plunged off across the moors towards what I considered to be impenetrable pine forest, only to emerge ten minutes later on the far side. I consoled myself with the thought that it was obviously beginners' luck. It did however prove the old adage that there is no barrier to a determined infantryman.

Day six took us over the summit of Lochnagar and eastwards to Glen Muick, a favourite spot of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. That evening we were invited to dinner by the Lord Lieutenant of Aberdeenshire Angus Farquharson OBE and his friend Lt Col Alastair Rose, 7th Gurkha Rifles. Despite the passing years Lt Col Rose's Gurkhali was immaculate and after dinner he delighted the Gurkhas by picking up the bagpipes and playing

a rousing Ayo Nepali and then singing a Nepali folk song. We of course had to reply in kind, much to the bemusement of a shooting party from Cornwall sharing the restaurant with us. It was a memorable evening.

It was a slightly jaded bunch of trekkers that plodded their way the next day over the peat bogs and moors to Glen Esk, where we were provided with afternoon tea, shortbread and sausage rolls by Cpl Angus Davidson, an 80-year old shepherd and ex-Scots Guardsman who had fought alongside Gurkhas and who had organized the reception with his rural neighbours. We had been met by several old soldiers along the way, each keen to tell his own story of the Gurkhas. That evening, at the Royal British Legion hotel in Banchory, we were met by Lars (Louie) McLean of Finzean, who was now into his 90's but who had been determined to come and meet the lads and hand over his own contribution. He had been one of Mike Calvert's No. 3 Commando and had fought on the North West Frontier alongside 5 RGR, in China with the Shan Chinese, in Burma and eventually India. One can only imagine what this old soldier had endured and the stories he could tell.

The final day was a 30-mile slog in torrential rain through the Fetteresso Forest to Stonehaven. We were plodding through a sodden wood when an elderly man in a Landrover stopped in front of us and got out to speak. "Ah", I thought. "Another donation".

"Hiv ye seen ony coos? Ah've lost nine o' the buggers". Ah, Aberdeenshire. What a rich cultural tapestry.

On arrival in a dusky and stormy Stonehaven we were again met by Mike Robson and Sir Bob Smith the local MP, but not before, to much laughter, we had marched in column into the North Sea, boots and all. We had done it.

On the drive back to Edinburgh we stopped off at the Royal British Legion in Forfar to collect a cheque for £1,500 raised by the local branch at a beating of the retreat in aid of the GWT. A team photo was organised complete with hot Forfar brides to be held aloft. I cannot tell you the will power it took not to wolf them down until all the photos were taken. The next night we attended the Edinburgh Tattoo where, much to the surprise and delight of the Gurkhas, they each received a name call accompanied by the approbation of the packed house. It seemed a fitting way to end the journey.

In the course of our trek we had met with wonderful generosity, with several people handing us cash or cheques when they realised what we were about. It is extraordinary the hold that the Gurkhas have over not only those who have had the privilege of serving with them, but also the ordinary man in the street, both young and old. (When rattling a GWT collecting can in my local Sainsbury I had been approached by a gang of young hoodies who each coughed up a small but very meaningful contribution - I was quite emotional!) It made a huge impact on the Gurkhas to know that they are so well respected and that in the minds of the British people the debt of honour we owe to the Gurkhas remains real. I am delighted that we made over £40,000 for the GWT.



Queen's Gurkha Signals

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

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

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

QG Signals Recent Operations

Iraq/Kuwait	Op GRANBY -	Jan 1991
Turkey	Op RESINATE NORTH	May 1991 - Apr 2003
Balkans (Bosnia/Croatia)	Op RESOLUTE/PALATINE	Apr 1992 - Apr 2004
Saudi Arabia	Op JURAL -	Aug 1992 - Feb 2003
Rawanda	Op GABRIEL -	Oct 1994
Congo/Brazzaville	Op DETERMINANT-	Mar - Apr 1997
Kuwait	Op RESINATE SOUTH	Nov 1997 - Feb 2003
East Timor	Op LANGAR -	Oct - Dec 1999
Macedonia/Kosovo	Op AGRICOLA -	Mar 1999 - 2002
Sierra Leone	Op BASILICAS/SILKMAN	Jun 2000 - Aug 2002
USA	Op VERITAS -	Oct 2001 - On going
Ivory Coast	Op ORACLE -	2002
Afghanistan	Op SAPPHIRE/FINGLE	Feb 2002 - Sep 2002
UK	Op FLAK -	Apr 2003
UK	Op MEDWAY/BASILISK	2000 - 2005
Iraq/Kuwait/Qatar	Op TELIC -	Feb - May 2003
Kosovo	Op MERCIAN -	Mar - Apr 2004
Afghanistan	Op HERRICK -	23 Oct 04 - Apr 2005
Lebanon/Cyprus	Op HIGHBROW -	15 Jul - 6 Aug 2006
Afghanistan	Op HERRICK 7 -	Sep 07 - Feb 2008
Kuwait	Op GRIMES -	Nov 07 - Apr 2008
Kosovo	Op VALERO -	May to Jul 2008
Afghanistan	Op HERRICK 9 -	On going

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

Regimental Headquarters Queen's Gurkha Signals (Bramcote)
 246 Gurkha Signal Squadron (York)
 248 Gurkha Signal Squadron (MOD Stafford)
 250 Gurkha Signal Squadron (Bramcote)
 The Royal School of Signals (Blandford)
 Brunei Signal Troop
 Nepal Signal Troop
 Alpha Troop 217 Signal Squadron (MOD Stafford)

Rear Link Detachment 1 RGR

Rear Link Detachment 2 RGR

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

Colonel of the Regiment

Brigadier N A W Pope CBE

Affiliated Corps:

The Royal Corps of Signals

Affiliated Regiment:

32nd (Scottish) Signal Regiment (Volunteers)

Official Association:

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

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

Regimental March Past: Scotland The Brave

Staff List

British Officers of the Regiment

Brig N A W Pope CBE	Col of the Regt	Dir of the Eqpt Plan, London
Col R J J Ellis Comd	BGN/DA	HQ BGN
Lt Col C A Ford	Comd	RHQ
Maj H J Bardell	SO2 Sldr Wing 2 (G)	APC Glasgow
Maj B G White	OC	246 Gurkha Sig Sqn
Maj O T B Courage	OC	248 Gurkha Sig Sqn
Maj A E A Corkery	OC	250 Gurkha Sig Sqn
Capt C Forgarty	Ops Offr	246 Gurkha Sig Sqn
Capt R J Foster	Ops Offr	248 Gurkha Sig Sqn
Capt S Bill	Ops Offr	250 Gurkha Sig Sqn
Capt N Nuttall	SO3 G6	HQ Brunei Garrison
Capt P A Hodgkinson	SO3 G2/G3/G6	HQ BGN
Lt T I Harrison	Tp Comd	246 Gurkha Sig Sqn
Lt P J G Wilson	Tp Comd	248 Gurkha Sig Sqn
Lt D M Murphy	Tp Comd	250 Gurkha Sig Sqn
Lt E Moore	Tp Comd	217 Sig Sqn

Gurkha Officers of the Regiment

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

Gurkha Officers holding E1/E2 Appointments

Maj Hitman Gurung MVO	SO2 G6 CIS	2 (SE) Bde
Maj Yambahadur Rana	SO2 Programmer	11 Sig Bde
Maj Dhanbahadur Gurung MVO	SO2 G6 CIS	HQ 145 Bde
Maj Krishnabahadur Gurung	QM	37 Sig Regt (V)
Maj Nirmal Bhattachan	Gurkha Major	HQ BGN
Maj Buddh bahadur Gurung (2)	SO2 Comd Sp	HQ SOinC (A)
Maj Ratnabahadur Pun	OC DSG	RSS Blandford
Capt Mahendrakumar Limbu	BWO	Aldershot
Capt Tekbahadur Rai	SO3 G1 USSO	RSS Blandford
Capt Buddh bahadur Gurung (1)	2IC A Sqn	ATR Winchester
Capt Rajeev Shrestha	SO3 CS Sp	HQ SOinC (A)

Regimental Newsletter

Introduction

The Regiment is 609 strong today and this includes 34 new trainees who joined the Regiment on 01 October 2008 on completion of their Basic Military Training at Gurkha Coy, ITC Catterick. We now have three very high profile squadrons and three troops: 246 Gurkha Signal Squadron (246 GSS) in York, 248 Gurkha Signal Squadron (248 GSS) in Stafford, 250 Gurkha Signal Squadron (250 GSS) in Bramcote and troops in Nepal (NST), Brunei (BST) and Stafford (A Troop 217 Squadron, 22 Signal Regiment). Beside these, we also have officers and soldiers serving at Blandford, Catterick, Warminster, Sandhurst, Shornccliffe, Bulford, Liverpool, Aldershot, 1 (UK) Armoured Div in Germany and with 18 (UKSF) Signal Regiment at Hereford. We are extremely proud to report that the Regiment's reputation has continued to flourish. As in the previous years, members of the Regiment are extremely busy and have played their part to the full, with soldiers continually deploying on exercises and operations.

246 Gurkha Signal Squadron

The preceding 12 months has been marked for 246 Gurkha Signal Squadron by being heavily committed to operations. This has included a Squadron (-) tour in Afghanistan and a Troop deployment to Kosovo. In October 2007, Capt Nirmal Bhattachan (now Maj) led a small advance party as Ops Officer to coordinate the Squadron's Relief in Place as Regional Command (South) Signal Squadron. This formally marked the start of the Squadron's commitment to Op HERRICK, which soon saw Squadron personnel deployed across four of the provinces of Southern Afghanistan. Most of the Squadron worked from Kandahar supporting the 2 star NATO HQ but small teams also deployed to the Task Force HQs to provide NATO and coalition Communication Information Systems. Other personnel deployed out in support of the Commander's Tactical HQ and worked closely with 1 RGR's Force Protection/Special Tasks Multiple. 246 GSS personnel were responsible for both the various communications systems within the Kandahar HQ and the close 'life support' to the UK General and his multinational Staff.

Although Island Troop under Capt Hebindra and SSgt Dhan spent long periods at readiness to deploy with the Spearhead Lead Element (SLE), it was after the handover to Sek Kong Troop that the next major operational deployment came. With elections imminent and tension rising, a Battle Group of 600 soldiers deployed to Kosovo on Op VALERO in May 2008. This was supported by Lt Tom Harrison and SSgt Dev Megi Ghotane and members of their Troop to provide strategic communications back to UK using Cormorant. Their task successfully completed, the Troop recovered to UK in July.

In October, a large contingent of Squadron personnel also took part in Ex JOINT VENTURE; a JTFHQ exercise in Cyprus. Island Troop had by this time trained up on new equipment and established itself as the Joint Force Logistic Component (JFLogC) HQ. As ever, Squadron personnel have made numerous additional efforts in sporting and charity events too numerous to record fully here. Kowloon Troop established what it is hoped will be a long-term relationship with a local charity that raises money for orphanages in Nepal. They, with other Squadron personnel, assisted at a charity trek in the grounds of Castle Howard that has to date raised over £13,000.

248 Gurkha Signal Squadron

248 GSS has fully integrated with 22 Signal Regiment in Stafford and has deployed on most of the Regimental Communication Field Training Exercises. With half of the Regiment now deployed on Op HERRICK 9, the Squadron has taken on the entire UK training support task for the year 08/09, since August 2008.

Early 2008 saw 248 GSS inherit a new sophisticated Commercial-off-the-Shelf (COTS) communication system, Richelieu. Richelieu has been procured by the MoD to bridge the capability gap during Ptarmigan to Falcon transition period. With the arrival of Richelieu, it was inevitable that the Squadron would deploy on more UK training support commitments sooner rather than later and it didn't have to wait for too long. In June 2008, the Squadron was tasked by 1 Signal Bde to deploy the Richelieu Node to Catterick Garrison North over the period 23 – 27 June on Ex AC 08, an annual Command and Staff Trainer

exercise for 1 (UK) Arty Bde. The Squadron provided a single Mission Restricted data domain running Allied Rapid Reaction Corps Command & Control Information Systems (ARRC CCIS) and a single Mission Restricted VoIP network.

A contingent of 29 men from 248 GSS had the honour to represent 22 Signal Regiment (in No.1 Ceremonial Dress) in the lining of the route for the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps Change of Command Parade, at Rheindahlen in Germany.

Currently, the Squadron has 39 personnel (including those from A Troop 217 Signal Squadron) deployed on Op HERRICK Nine in Afghanistan. They are performing with the expected BG ethos and enthusiasm and are in good spirits.

On the shooting front, the 22 Signal Regiment team composed of 248 GSS members successfully managed to pick up the Corps SAAM 2008 Championship and some team match trophies from CENTSAAM 2008 - winning the Parachute Regiment Cup and the Britannia Trophy (Combat Snap Shoot) and coming in second position overall in the whole of the British Army.

250 Gurkha Signal Squadron

250 GSS has held the R1 Joint Task Force Headquarters (JTFHQ) contingency operations role for the second year running, only coming off task in August this year. A busy Squadron as ever, 250 GSS has deployed on various exercises, in particular Ex HELIUM MERCURY and Ex JOINT VENTURE where a large contingent of Squadron personnel took part in this JTFHQ training in Cyprus.

The Squadron also had the opportunity to deploy its personnel on various operations. A Troop (-) led by Lt Murphy deployed on Op GRIMES in Kuwait in support of Op TELIC. He was later replaced by Capt Ambar Gurung and the Operation gave the opportunity to deploy the maximum number of Squadron personnel to an operational theatre. Likewise, LCpl Pawan and Signal Omendra deployed on Op VERMOUTH to Kenya during that country's political instability, and LCpl Nimesh deployed on Op COLOBUS to Belize in order to support the humanitarian relief effort.

Once again, the 30 Signal Regiment Team, consisting predominately of Gurkhas from 250 GSS, came second in the Corps SAAM and won the Army Operational Shooting Competition (AOSC) for the third consecutive year. Cpls Netraprasad Rai, Khagendra Tamang & Sachin Thapa and LCpl Chijkumar Gurung were selected to represent the Army Shooting Team in Ex FORTUNA in USA and had good overall results.

Officers and soldiers from 250 GSS have continued to achieve creditable positions on a number of courses. Of particular note, Capt Omprasad Pun achieved an excellent overall 2nd position on his Troop Commanders' Course.

Nepal and Brunei Signal Troops

Both Nepal Signal Troop and Brunei Signal Troop are in the best possible shape. They have been providing unshakeable

CIS Support to their respective commands, sometimes during difficult and challenging periods and a changing situation. They have performed superbly throughout, running the COMMCEN and the Ops Room ensuring the timely passage of information to key personnel, providing in-theatre VHF back up comms when the mobile service was shutdown, and maintaining strategic comms back to UK. The professionalism displayed by BST and NST by providing secure and secret messaging through the local networks, secure fax, Joint Operations Command Systems (JOCS) and Video Conferencing (VTC), not least to 1 RGR on their deployment to Afghanistan, has been recognised by senior commanders.

Royal School of Signals, Blandford

The officers and instructional staff at the Royal School of Signals have been maintaining the Regiment's 'foot print' at Blandford, the home of the Royal Corps of Signals. Our men have frequently achieved top student awards both at military skills and on trade courses. A Hindu temple was officially opened by Air Marshal Stephen Dalton, Deputy Commander in Chief for Personnel in the RAF, on 22 January 2008. It is now fully functioning and provides religious services for all Gurkhas and their families.

Trailwalker

A total of 502 teams took part in TRAILWALKER 2008, with some 350 QG Signals personnel administering them. The event was judged to be hugely successful. As in previous years, two teams from QG Signals represented the Regiment and finished in second and third places. The team OIC was Captain Narayan Bhandari for the second consecutive year.

From Trailwalker 2007, we presented over £350,000 to the Gurkha Welfare Trust and this year it was over £450,000. The partnership between QG Signals and Oxfam GB since 2001 has been very successful. This special association has led to official recognition of the importance of the event and an MOD contract with Oxfam GB. Now Trailwalker (UK) has become the largest ultra-marathon in UK and, more importantly, the single biggest fundraiser for both the GWT and Oxfam GB.

Trailwalker is a truly international event, which is run in the UK, Hong Kong, Japan, Sydney, Australia (Sydney & Melbourne), New Zealand and Belgium.

Shooting

Led by Capt Nirmal Gurung, members of the Regiment provided the majority of personnel in the winning team when 30th Signal Regiment made it a hat trick by winning the overall Army Operational Shooting Competition for the third consecutive year, beating all other Infantry and Corps units. So, without a doubt, this has been another outstanding year in 30th Signal Regiment's shooting history, winning 17 trophies in a single event as well as securing the Championship again. Maj Yamkumar Gurung and Sgt Devprakash Gurung also took part in the Army Eight to represent the Army in the Inter Services Shooting Competition, winning the event. In addition, all 19 members of QG Signals managed to get into the Army Hundred. Moreover,

as recorded above, four members of QG Signals represented the Army on Ex FORTUNA in USA.

Gurkha Married Accompanied Service

GMAS has been a great success and currently there are some 329 married accompanied personnel. This includes QG Signals officers and other ranks serving in the wider Army.

Transfers

The change from the old Gurkha terms and condition of service to the new TACOS has opened up a new horizon. A total of 29 other ranks have now successfully transferred to other Regiments, mainly within the Royal Signals.

Wider employment.

The Regiment currently has 10 Officers and 39 other ranks employed around the UK and Germany in UKTAP and E1 & E2 Posts. All these are performing well in their relevant fields; consistently achieving goals with considerable tenacity and leading by example.

Change of Commander and Gurkha Major

Lt Col R J B Spencer will take over the appointment of Commander QG Signals from Lt Col C A Ford with effect

Farewell to the Commander and Gurkha Major

The Regiment saw both Commander and Gurkha Major change over this year.

Maj Krishnabhadur Gurung, on completion of his two and a half years tour as the Gurkha Major, was bid farewell by the Regiment on 13 April 2008. All members of the Regiment and their families gathered at Bramcote on 12 April to join him for the farewell dinner followed by a lively cultural show which lasted until the early hours. This was followed by the tow-out in an open top Landrover to the Guardroom where he took a final salute from the Guard of Honour. He has now moved on to take the appointment of Quartermaster 37 Signal Regiment



Maj and Mrs Krishna Gurung flanked by the Commander, Memsahab and Maj and Mrs Yamkumar Gurung

from 5 January 2009. Major Yamkumar Gurung replaced Major Krishnabhadur Gurung as Gurkha Major QG Signals with effect from 31 March 2008.

Retirement

Capt Mahendrakumar Limbu retired from the Army on 31 Oct 2008 after having served for 27 years. However, he continues to serve, now in a civilian capacity, as the Brigade Welfare Officer in HQBG's Gurkha Welfare Support Office in Aldershot.

Obituary

The Regiment was greatly saddened to lose 21169978 Corporal Dhanabhadur Thapa Magar in a road traffic accident in Kathmandu on Friday 12 September 2008 whilst serving with Nepal Signal Troop.

Summary

The Regiment has remained at the forefront in every field, ranging from high tempo operations and exercises to social, charitable and sporting events. We have embraced every change introduced in the Army with great flexibility and a versatile attitude. The Regiment is heading in the right direction, mastering new equipment and a changing environment but still keeping our traditions, culture and kaida.

(V) Royal Corps of Signals in Redditch near Birmingham. He is succeeded by Maj Yamkumar Gurung who came back to the Regiment on completion of his tour as SO3 G3 Plans in Headquarters Brigade of Gurkhas.

Lieutenant Colonel C A Ford took over the Command of QG Signals on 11 January 2007. On completion of almost two years, his farewell from the Regiment was on 19 December 2008. All available QG Signals personnel, attached RGR and QOGLR personnel, and families including children and some visitors (soldiers' parents) assembled at the Gymnasium at 1800hrs. Officers, SNCOs and their wives lined the entrance



Outgoing Commander, Memsahab and daughter flanked by the Gurkha Major and Mrs Gurung

of the function hall to receive the Commander and his family. As per the Regiment's tradition, the guests were greeted by the line up and were led by a piper into the beautifully decorated hall for dinner.

After dinner, the Gurkha Major, Maj Yamkumar Gurung, thanked the Commander for his contribution to the Regiment during his tenure and presented farewell mementos to him and his wife. In a heartfelt speech, the Commander expressed his

gratitude to the Regiment and its members for the support he had received. He also highlighted some of the Regimental achievements during his tenure as Commander. His speech was followed by a cultural show which was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone.

It must be agreed that the outgoing Commander was one of the most popular Commanders amongst all ranks in the Regiment. He is succeeded by Lt Col R J B Spencer.

The City of York Salutes the Gurkhas

By Sgt Jiwan Rai

Eighty-seven members of the Squadron returned safe and sound back to York from Afghanistan at the end of February 2008. After well-earned leave, everyone returned to work and has picked up the Regiment's daily routine. To mark this highly successful deployment and our safe return from Op HERRICK, a medal presentation was held in York city centre on Friday 11 April 2008.

On the day, the band from the Royal Regiment of Scotland paraded with 246 Gurkha Signal Squadron on Parliament Street. Maj Ben White, OC 246 Gurkha Signal Squadron, led the Squadron through the city centre. The Mayor of York, accompanied by GOC 6 Division, Maj Gen Jacko Page, and the Civic Party took the salute at the Mansion House. As we marched through the City of York it was wonderful to see its people watching with friendly smiles - cheering, applauding and taking photos. We were very pleased and proud to march through the city, which had given us such warm and generous support. When we entered

Yorkshire Museum Garden, we were pleased to see our families, friends and spectators patiently waiting for us. Maj Gen Page along with the Lord Mayor and the rest of the Civic Party arrived and took their respective positions. The medal presentation by the GOC and the Lord Mayor followed. It was our pleasure to receive our well-deserved medals from such dignitaries.

After the medal parade we returned to Imphal Barracks and assembled at the 'Bhet-Ghat' club for some light refreshments. While in 'Bhet-Ghat' we also grasped the opportunity to promote SSgt (SQMS) Nimbahadur Garbuja Pun and Sig Quirk to the rank of WO2 and Lance Corporal respectively and to say goodbye to Maj Krishnabhadur Gurung, Gurkha Major Queen's Gurkha Signals, as it was his final visit to the Squadron prior to leaving the RHQ for another appointment within the wider Corps. Overall we had a wonderful day and everything went extremely well. I am certain this historic event will be long remembered by all the Squadron personnel and their families.



Maj Ben White, OC 246 Gurkha Sig Sqn, leading the Squadron through York city centre

Exercise JOINT VENTURE 2008

By Cpl Basanta Rai

As usual, it has been an extremely busy period for the 250 Gurkha Signal Squadron with a series of Joint Task Force Headquarters (JTFHQ) exercises. 250 Gurkha Signal Squadron is the Close Support Signal Sqn to the JTFHQ, which provide CIS and Real Life Support. The Exercise JOINT VENTURE 2008 is a biennial three tier Joint Forces exercise. This year it was held at RAF Akrotiri in Cyprus. The aim of this exercise was to focus on the interaction between Joint Task Force Headquarters (JTFHQ) and Component Headquarters, with Government Departments, International Organisation (IO) and Non Governmental Organisation (NGO) participation at all appropriate levels to ensure a comprehensive approach to the UK's expeditionary capability. Its main aim is to maintain and promote the UK's ability to conduct Medium Scale (MS) Expeditionary operations across the spectrum of conflict with a focus on integrating and developing Joint Military capability through a comprehensive approach.

On 24 October, while the other members of the Regiment were warm under their duvets, Enabler Staff comprising 75 members from 250 Gurkha Signal Squadron plus augmentees from the other Squadrons assembled at the parade square for deployment. The long awaited myth of JTFHQ deployment to Cyprus was on the verge of turning into reality as the coaches departed Bramcote at 0300 hrs. After a quick stop at the Joint Air Mounting Centre (JAMC) at South Cerney, we were transported to RAF Brize Norton where our plane was waiting for us. After five hours in the air we landed at Larnaca International Airport in Cyprus at 1900hrs (local time). From Larnaca airport, it was an hour's coach ride to the exercise location, RAF Akrotiri.

On the following morning, we woke up to warm and sunny weather. The JTFHQ build up phase began on 25 October. The first three days saw the erecting of a Staff Working Environment (SWE) complex; which started with the laying out of the footprints, erecting the frame work and finally, the laying of the canvas. Once the tents were fully erected, different trade

groups started their own responsibilities to meet the target Full Operational Capability (FOC) by 17 November. The Royal Signal Electricians laid the power to the Headquarters and Installation Technicians fibres for the telecommunication. Technicians and Operators started commissioning all Cormorant assets and Communication equipments. Due to the tireless effort, outstanding team spirit and contribution from each individual, the JTFHQ complex was up and running within two weeks, waiting for the Staff Officers to take their position.

As we had ample time during the build up phase, many recreational events were organised. On the evening of 28 October, SSM 250 Gurkha Sig Sqn, WO2 (SSM) Amrit Gurung organised gambling events followed by a fresh goat meal at Mom's Place to celebrate Tihar. There were numerous beach trips organised on Sundays. Cpl Indra organised Inter-Rank Beach Volleyball Competitions and open sea Swimming Competitions followed by a delicious BBQ. During the week, OC V Troop, Capt Om Pun, organised an Adventure Training package, which was full of exciting activities - Hill Walking, Cycling, Parachuting, Kayaking and Rock Climbing. Hill Walking proved to be the most favoured activity; perhaps it was because of the fresh trout and wine lunch at the half way point! There is a small element of the US Air Force in Cyprus, which operates U2 planes. A visit programme was organised to visit Olive Harvest (the American site) to get more information on U2 planes, its capability and the pilots. Some lucky ones even had the chance to take part in the Car Chase.

As I write this article, JTFHQ Medium Scale has reached its FOC and has been receiving its Staff Officers. The exercise is due to finish on 5 December. That is for the Staff Officers. For the Enabler Staffs, tear down of the complex is due to start from the 6 December. If everything goes according to plan, the recovery to the UK starts from 11 December 08. All freight and freight party will be recovered back to UK by ship. Let's hope everybody will be home for Christmas and New Year.



Bird's Eye View of the JTFHQ under construction

Queen's Gurkha Signals Attestation, Long Service & Good Conduct Medal Presentation and Commissioning Parade

The attestation parade for the new recruits is an important annual event in the Queen's Gurkha Signals' calendar. This year it took place on Friday 19 December 2008 at Gamecock Barracks, Bramcote, and encompassed Commissioning as well as Long Service & Good Conduct medal presentation ceremonies. Altogether 34 recruits joined QG Signals this year.

The day began with the Regimental parade under command of Adjutant QG Signals, Capt Narayanbahadur Bhandari. The Colonel of the Regiment, Brig N A W Pope CBE, took the parade. The Commander, Lt Col CA Ford, the Gurkha Major, Maj Yamkumar Gurung, and Pandit Jagdish Paudel were in attendance, with officers and soldiers of the Regiment and their families including some parents.

The ceremony began with oath taking by trainees in threes. All trainee recruits took the oath in turn by placing their right palm on top of the table covered by the Union Jack whilst the Pandit read out the "Mantra", an extract from the "Shreemad Bhagwat Geeta".

On completion of the attestation, Cpl Dilip Rai, Cpl Kharun Rai and LCpl Thambahadur Armaja Pun were presented the Long Service & Good Conduct (LS&GC) medal by the Colonel of the Regiment.

After the LS&GC presentation, the Colonel of the Regiment and the Gurkha Major commissioned WO2 Tesharjang Gurung, WO1 (FoS) Rajeev Shrestha, WO2 (SSM) Omprasad Pun and WO2 (SSM) Lokbahadur Gurung.

The parade concluded with a very powerful speech by the Colonel of the Regiment in which he extended a warm welcome to the young trainees and told them what the Regiment expected of them. During the refreshments after the parade in the Himali Club, the Commander announced the results of the trainees' trade selection board - seven Communication Systems Engineers, 19 Communication Systems Operators and eight Royal Signals Electricians were selected this year.



Recruits being attested in accordance with tradition



LS&GC Medal presentation



Warrant Officers being commissioned

News from Blandford Garrison

By Cpl Manoj Limbu

2008 was very busy and yet very successful for the Gurkha community based in Blandford Camp. The number of Gurkha permanent staff has increased to over 30. There has been significant achievement on all fronts throughout the year, for both permanent staff and soldiers on trade courses and military training.

The year began with the inauguration of the newly built temple by Air Marshal S G D Dalton MC BSc FRAeS FCMI RAF, Deputy Commander in Chief Personnel and Air Member for Personnel, in January.

The 11 Signal Regiment Commanding Officer's award was presented to Cpl Jagatram Rai in July for his all round performance. Sig Suresh Gurung topped his Basic Electrician Course in September, and, in October, Cpl Bikash Gurung was awarded the Cogent Cup for being the top student on his Class 2 to Class 1 System Engineering Technician Upgrading Course.

On the occasion of the Queen's Gurkha Signals 59th Regimental Birthday on 27 September, Brigadier N A W Pope CBE presented Cpl Gopal Saru Magar the Ridlington Trophy for being the most hard-working soldier of the year, and Sig Bijaya Gurung received the Best Trainee of the year award.

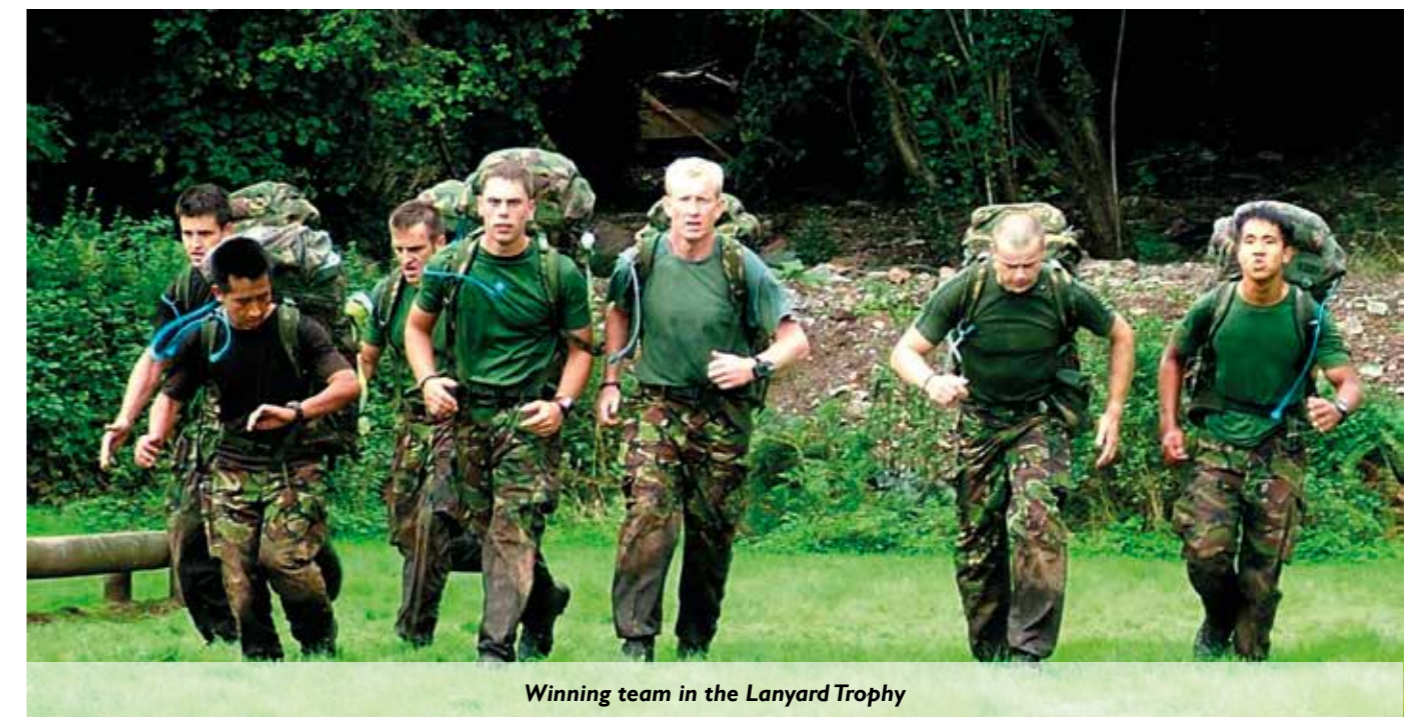
For the first time in history, 11 Signal Regiment won the Lanyard Trophy Competition in September. Signallers Kabin Rai and Tej Rai demonstrated their endurance by securing the position along with their team. Sig Kailash Shahi's team secured third position. In July, a team of Gurkhas participated in the Bournemouth and Swanage Half Marathon.

2008 has been successful on the promotion front too. Sgt Kamal Gurung was selected and subsequently promoted to Staff Sergeant in June. Corporals Ram Rana and Raju Thapa also picked up their Sergeant's stripes. Lance Corporals Indra Kamal Limbu and Surendra Sampang were promoted to Corporal and Signaller Gopal was promoted to Lance Corporal.

On 6 November, the Nepal Flood Relief Charity Curry Lunch, the brainchild of Senior Gurkha Officer, Capt Prembahadur Ale, was organised at the Semaphore Arms. The lunch was provided by the Sandford Oriental Express Restaurant - over 200 Garrison personnel attended. To make it a more traditional affair, there was Gurkha dancing and a raffle was also organised. At the lunch £1500 was raised. Command Support Division personnel handed the money, clothes and books that had been collected to the Koshi flood victims through the Nepal Government in December when they were in Nepal for Exercise ANNAPURNA TIGER.

Throughout the year, the Gurkha community at Blandford gets actively involved in charity events. The biggest of these is, without a doubt, Trailwalker. As in previous years, we supported the Regiment by providing manpower and teams which finished second and third out of 500 teams. We also supported the Blandford Georgian Fair in May, the Royal Cornwall Show in Wadebridge in June, Cadet training in July and the Bournemouth Air Show in August. In this way, we have not only managed to foster good community relations, but also to help raise money for charities.

There have been a number of farewells and welcomes this year. We said farewell to Maj Dhan Gurung MVO and Capt Narayan Bhandari on 4 July. Both officers have moved to take



Winning team in the Lanyard Trophy



Bournemouth and Swanage half-marathon team



Guests showing off their dancing skills at the end of the Dashain Celebration

up new appointments. Likewise, a farewell function was held to bid farewell to Commander QG Signals and Memsahab on 13 October. We also held a function to welcome the Blandford Camp Commandant, Brigadier T J P Watts OBE and the CI CS Div/Gurkha focus Lt Col A R Knott MBE on 29 March. Similarly, a function was organised on 31 May to welcome incoming Gurkha Major Maj Yamkumar Gurung and his family. On 31 August at a summer BBQ, Maj Ratna Pun and Maj Buddibahadur Gurung were welcomed.

On 25 October, a grand party was organised by the Gurkha community at the Semaphore Arms to celebrate Dashain 2008. Warm wishes and goodwill were exchanged. The function was attended by some VIPs including Group Captain Nigel Phillips, who is the Director Plans in HQ Defence College

of Communications and Information Systems. Then followed Tihar when 'daju-bhai' were treated by 'didi-bahinis' to delicious food and 'selroti'. Amid traditional 'juwa', the second day was devoted to saying 'Thank You' to all soldiers and families for their tireless support and contribution to the community and Capt Prembahadur Ale arranged a special meal.

Overall, this year has been very busy and successful for Blandford based Gurkhas and their families. We are now well set up with a new temple and new personalities. Our soldiers' personal achievements both on military and trade training have been very satisfactory. In addition, we have been applauded for the support we have extended to the community and the Garrison. Our 'kaida' has been pivotal in achieving all this. We look forward to another challenging year ahead!



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.

The title of the Regiment was changed to The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment on 5 April 2001.

Extract from Royal Warrant:

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

Change of Title:

Her Majesty The Queen graciously approved the change in title of The Queen's Own Gurkha Transport Regiment (QOGTR) to "The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment (QOGLR)" with effect from 5 April 2001. The Bde of Gurkha Chfs 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.

Organisation:

Regimental Headquarters 10 Transport Regiment The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment
 1 Transport Squadron QOGLR
 28 Transport Squadron QOGLR
 36 (HQ) Squadron QOGLR
 66 Fuel Sqn RLC
 94 Stores Squadron QOGLR
 LAD QOGLR
 QOGLR Detachment Brunei
 QOGLR ERE Detachments with other units

Affiliated Colonel-in-Chief:

Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal

Affiliated Corps:

Royal Logistic Corps (RLC)

Colonels of the Regiment:

Colonel – The Gurkha Army Service Corps

1960 – 1965 Maj Gen P G Turpin CB, OBE

Colonel – The Gurkha Transport Regiment

1965 – 1973 Maj Gen P G Turpin CB, OBE

1973 – 1978

Maj Gen D G T Horsford CBE, DSO

1978 – 1984

Brig P I Attack MBE

1984 – 1987

Brig R M Llewellyn OBE

1987 – 1992

Maj Gen R M Llewellyn OBE

Colonel – The Queen’s Own Gurkha Transport Regiment

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

Colonel – The Queen’s Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment

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

Active Service Campaigns:

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

Staff List (as at December 2007)

Officers of the Regiment

Lt Col A P Duncan RLC psc (j)
 Maj M Arkell RLC BA(Hons) MA psc (j)
 Maj Gyanbahadur Limbu MVO
 Capt H M Dobson RLC BSc (Hons)
 Maj D Binks MBE RLC
 Capt M I Lavers RLC
 Capt R S Clarke RLC
 Capt M W J Pittaway RLC
 Capt J Grant RLC
 Capt Diwan Limbu
 Capt Palijar Tamang
 Maj V T Nanovo RLC
 Capt R Cusworth RLC BSc (Hons)
 Capt Pradip Limbu
 Capt Bishnukumar Limbu
 2Lt A R Hughes RLC
 Maj D Marshall RLC BA (Hons)
 Capt A Lamb RLC
 Capt Sovitbahadur Hamal Thakuri
 Capt Kumar Gurung
 Capt Rajdip Gurung
 Lt T M V Cowan RLC
 Maj A Birkby RLC
 Capt Devendra Ale
 Capt D R M Gordon RLC
 Maj N D Jurd RLC psc (j)
 Capt Phattabahadur Gurung
 Capt E M L Bowman RLC BA(Hons)
 Capt Tikaprasad Rai
 Capt Rajpati Gurung
 2Lt M Le Maistre RLC
 2Lt T Ritchie RLC
 Maj E Dick RLC
 Capt C P Butterworth RLC
 Lt N H Blake RLC
 2Lt C M Allford RLC
 Maj Rudrabahadur Sahi
 A/Maj Tirtharaj Gurung
 Capt Khimprasad Gauchan
 Capt Shobaman Golay

Comd QOGLR
 Second in Command
 Gurkha Major
 Adjutant
 Regimental Quartermaster
 Technical Quartermaster
 Operations Officer
 Regimental Career Management Officer
 Regimental Welfare Officer
 Gurkha Regimental Career Management Officer
 Gurkha Chef Manning Officer
 OC 1 Tpt Sqn QOGLR
 2IC 1 Tpt Sqn QOGLR
 Admin Officer 1 Tpt Sqn QOGLR
 Tp Comd 1 Tpt Sqn QOGLR
 Tp Comd 1 Tpt Sqn QOGLR
 OC 28 Tpt Sqn QOGLR
 2IC 28 Tpt Sqn QOGLR
 Admin Officer 28 Tpt Sqn QOGLR
 Tp Comd 28 Tpt Sqn QOGLR
 Tp Comd 28 Tpt Sqn QOGLR
 Tp Comd 28 Tpt Sqn QOGLR
 OC 36 (HQ) Sqn QOGLR
 2IC 36 (HQ) Sqn QOGLR
 AO 36 (HQ) Sqn QOGLR
 OC 94 Stores Sqn QOGLR
 2IC 94 Stores Sqn QOGLR
 Ops Offr 94 Stores Sqn QOGLR
 Tp Comd 94 Stores Sqn QOGLR
 Tp Comd 94 Stores Sqn QOGLR
 Tp Comd 94 Stores Sqn QOGLR
 Tp Comd 94 Stores Sqn QOGLR
 OC 66 Sqn RLC
 2IC 66 Sqn RLC
 Admin Officer 66 Sqn RLC
 Tp Comd 66 Sqn RLC
 SO2 Trg Pol DRLC
 Trg Maj 5 Trg Regt
 SO3/G3/G7 HQ 49 Bde
 OC DST

Capt Minbahadur Gurung
 Capt W Fielding RLC
 Capt Tambahadur Dhega
 Capt D H W Gibbs RLC BSc (Hons)
 Capt Laxmiprasad Chongbang
 Capt D Hussey BSc (Hons)

Language Instructor GLW
 SO3 Log Sp (Tpt & Mov) BGN
 MTO BGN
 SO3 Log Sp Brunei
 Det Comd Brunei Det
 OC LAD

Commander’s Annual Review

By Lieutenant Colonel A P Duncan RLC

What an eventful and memorable year. The Regiment completed its United Nations operational tour to Cyprus, celebrated the 50th Anniversary, deployed on our first formation-level exercise for over two years in the autumn and then began the early stages of pre-deployment training for Operation HERRICK II in Afghanistan next year.

The early part of the year saw a continuation of the Regiment’s operational commitment to Cyprus and those deployed on Operation TOSCA maintained a high level of performance throughout. Centred on the divided city of Nicosia, the Regiment was active in the support of the political line of development, which saw elections in the South in February, and ultimately the opening of the Ledra Street Crossing on the final day of our tour, signalling one of the most significant confidence building measures in Cyprus for many years. The Regiment raised the bar as the British contingent in Sector 2 and the British High Commissioner Peter Millet wrote personally to congratulate the Regiment on the success of our tour.

The Regiment returned to Aldershot in April to rejoin the sizeable and hard working Rear Element which had been commanded by Major David Marshall, OC 28 Transport Squadron. Following a well deserved period of leave, the Regiment then focused on the delivery of the UK-based 50th Anniversary Celebrations. During the process of re-integration, the Commander’s Sword Competition events took place in preparation for the presentation of the Commander’s Sword at the Regimental birthday celebrations. A few additional sporting disciplines were added this year to mark the 50th Anniversary and on this occasion it was 36 Headquarters Squadron and the Light Aid Detachment who together came through on top.

After six years of planning and preparation, the 50th Anniversary Celebrations finally took place in Aldershot on 4 and 5 July. On the night of 4 July, the Regiment facilitated the Association Cocktail Party, which was attended by approximately two hundred members and guests. During the cocktail party, the Colonel of the Regiment read out a message of congratulations from Her Majesty the Queen, and the commemorative silver centre piece and painting were unveiled. On Saturday 5 July, the main 50th Anniversary Celebration took place. Colonel Commandant Brigade of Gurkhas, General Sir David Richards KCB CBE DSO was the reviewing officer for the parade, which began the day’s festivities. The parade was a grand affair and incorporated a number of surprises including the weapons

display by the Kasam Khane toli, the flypast by a Merlin helicopter from 28 Squadron RAF, and who could forget the fireworks display as the parade marched off the square? A curry lunch was then held in respective Messes within New Normandy Barracks before moving across to the sports field for the open day arena events.

The open day kicked off with a Dakota flypast. A dragon dance, our regimental pipes and drums and a host of other activities including traditional dances followed on. Surrounding the main arena were various historical stands put together by each of the sub-units and some cultural stands provided by our Foreign and Commonwealth contingent. Many of the ‘old guard’ remarked on how pleased they were to find old photographs of themselves from our days in Hong Kong and Singapore. This was a particularly enjoyable part of the day when serving and ex-serving members of the Regiment got together to share in past experiences over a drink or two; there was more to come!

As the arena events drew to a close, the assembled masses then migrated across to the Junior Ranks Club area. It was at this point that the Commander’s Sword was presented to an ecstatic OC 36 HQ Sqn QOGLR, Major Andy Birkby. The Colonel of the Regiment, the Gurkha Major and I then cut the impressive commemorative cake which had been personally made by the Regimental Catering Warrant Officer, WO2 Rawbone. Dancing and merriment continued throughout the afternoon before we moved back onto the main parade square to take our seats for the Sounding the Retreat by the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas. Another magnificent performance by the Band was immortalised by a certain episode. All those who attended that day will never



Farewell

forget the scene when the children invaded the parade square to pick up the discarded cardboard from the fireworks which had little parachutes attached and had proved to be a big hit with the children at the earlier parade; totally unexpected, hilarious and a moment that summed up the family nature of the day's events. Of the near two thousand who had arrived in the morning the majority made it through to the final stage and a welcome BBQ. As the evening wore on, numbers slowly but surely dwindled away signalling the end of a most memorable occasion.

I wish to thank every member of the Regiment for their part in facilitating these events. Each of the Squadrons had been tasked to organize different parts of the day: 28 Squadron was responsible for the parade and overall coordination, 66 Squadron was responsible for the main open day arena events, 36 Squadron was responsible for the Bhela and I Squadron was responsible for all activities pertaining to the Officers' Mess including the Association Cocktail Party. It was therefore a team effort in every sense of the word with virtually every member of the Regiment (and the Association Committee) involved in the preparation and conduct of the celebrations.

After summer leave we began to prepare ourselves for Exercise GRIFFIN FOCUS, which would signal the first time the Regiment had deployed together to train in role for nearly three years. With a big changeover of key staff, such as the Second in Command, Adjutant and Operations Officer, we were put under unique pressure to perform in a fairly short period of time. Exercising in the Stafford and then Catterick areas, the Regiment was deployed from barracks for a period in excess of three weeks. It was towards the end of the exercise that Her Royal Highness, The Princess Royal, came to visit the Regiment in the field.

The Princess Royal arrived by helicopter on the Catterick training area. Accompanied by the previous Director Royal Logistic Corps, Brigadier Jeff Little, the Princess was met at the main Regimental Headquarters by the Gurkha Major and a young Nepalese girl who presented her with a phulmalla. After a short briefing, the Princess and I moved by vehicle to two viewing points on the training area to watch members of the Regiment conduct Combat Logistic Patrols, demonstrating the nature and complexity of logistic operations on the modern battlefield. The Princess was particularly impressed and amused

by the level of enthusiasm demonstrated by our Gurkha soldiers, especially those who were playing the walking wounded in the medical extraction demonstration. We then returned to the Regimental Headquarters to meet a number of small groups of specialists such as chefs, clerks and radio operators. The Princess Royal then kindly presented her pipe banner to the Regiment. Finally, a group photograph was taken on the training area with Officers and Warrant Officers before she departed. The visit thankfully went like clockwork and a letter was received the following week from the Lady in Waiting expressing how much the Princess Royal had enjoyed it.

Throughout the year on the sporting front the Regiment had mixed fortunes. In May, the Regimental Clerks won the Brigade of Gurkhas Clerks Cup. In June our victorious Nepal Cup Team from 2007 narrowly lost in the final to 1 RGR, 2-1. The Regiment had equalised at 1-1 with five minutes remaining only to be thwarted with two minutes left with a late strike against the run of play. The obvious disappointment of the Nepal Cup was soon forgotten when three days later the Regiment regained victory in Trailwalker. It is also worth mentioning the QOGLR Veterans Team which achieved a commendable runners-up position in the Royal Logistic Corps Gore Trophy (military skills), which took place in Deepcut in October. Individually, Sergeant Jitendra retained his Army Karate title, and in the Tri-Service Combined Cookery Competition the Regiment won a gold, three silver and two bronze medals; a significant achievement. Throughout the year the Regiment has maintained its support to the Brigade of Gurkhas and to the Royal Logistic Corp. We have hosted Officer Cadets from Sandhurst in the Officers' Mess on several occasions, hosted the Engineer Logistic Staff Corps visit, set up the Brigade of Gurkhas Bhela and 28 Squadron have supported Exercise TIMBER TRUSS, which is a Royal Logistic Corps exercise for the newly-commissioned Troop Commanders Course.

In November, the Colonel of the Regiment Cowlam Saheb, the current Gurkha Major Gyan Saheb, the previous Gurkha Major Rudra Saheb and I travelled to Nepal on an official visit to meet ex-service members of the Regiment and the many association members who had made the trip for the 50th Anniversary Celebrations in Nepal before embarking on a short trek. The Nepal-based 50th Anniversary Celebrations were quite magnificent and my congratulations go to Major B K Saheb and his team for laying on such a wonderful series of events. The

cocktail party in the Sankar Hotel in Kathmandu was organized in great style, and there were high emotions when so many of us met up with our previous friends who served back in Hong Kong. The following day at the Tarbhuman Nepal Army Camp in Kathmandu we all enjoyed a great occasion. The preparations were impeccable and we could not have asked for a better day. All those who attended were given a commemorative anniversary hat and these hats came in very handy in the sunny conditions and during our forthcoming trek. The Nepal Army Band and a range of superb entertainment were laid on throughout the afternoon. The level of camaraderie on that particular occasion was second to none, and it was certainly an event that will live long in my memory. I am sure all of those who attended will share the same sentiment. The only point of regret was the tragic loss of Andrew Macbeth. My heartfelt condolences go to Ann, family and friends.

As I rapidly approach the end of my time in command, I look back over this tour and my previous service with the Regiment with great pride. The Regiment has come a long way and has seen many changes since the Regiment I joined in Hong Kong in early 1991. Our modern Gurkha soldiers are maintaining the high standards set by their predecessors and continue to achieve success at home and on operations. Looking back over two and a half years, the Regiment has achieved much: the implementation of the new Gurkha terms and conditions of service, deployment on two back-to-back operational tours, the formation of 36 HQ Sqn QOGLR, the establishment of the QOGLR driver/radio operator trade, the temporary liability substitution measure for the employment of excess Gurkha manpower, the 50th Anniversary Celebrations in UK and success on the sports field including the Regiment's first victory in the Nepal Cup in 2007. Looking forward, next year the Regiment will deploy to Afghanistan complete on probably its most challenging operation to date. On its return it will arms plot to Gale Barracks up the road in Aldershot, and the second QOGLR Supply Squadron will come on line from 2011. There is much to do and many challenges and opportunities lie ahead. I wish the incoming Commander, Lieutenant Colonel Martin Moore, and his wife Karen the very best of good fortune for their tour.

Finally, I wish to thank wholeheartedly all members of the Regiment for their hard work, dedication and support during my time in command. It has been my immense privilege to serve as your Commander for the past two and a half years. Jai QOGLR!



During Trek in Nepal



During Trek in Nepal



HRH Princess Royal's Visit during 101 Log Bde FTX, Ex GRIFFIN FOCUS

Address by General Sir David Richards KCB CBE DSO ADC GEN, Colonel Commandant Brigade of Gurkhas to 10 The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment On the Occasion of the Regiment's 50th Anniversary Celebration Held on Saturday 5 July 2008 at New Normandy Barracks, Aldershot

Colonel of the Regiment, Commanding Officer, Gurkha Major, Officers and All Ranks of the Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment – past and present – on behalf of all your honoured guests, congratulations on your first 50th birthday.

Your 50th year is a relatively young milestone in your Regiment's already distinguished history. Nonetheless it is a significant and proud moment in the life of your Regiment.

We can reflect on 50 successful years during which your Regiment, under astute leadership and often visionary command, has grasped its opportunities and been rewarded with the high reputation that is rightfully yours.

That reputation is not only within the Brigade of Gurkhas from whose embrace and ethos this Regiment was born, but also within your professional family, that of the Royal Logistics Corps, and indeed the wider army. This wider integration is reflected on parade today.

Your Regiment's achievements have been fostered by huge pride in your Gurkha heritage and a great wealth of professional skills. Skills now frequently deployed within an era of high operational tempo in all the Army's main theatres of operations.

Throughout its history the Brigade of Gurkhas has journeyed through many permutations, be that in its role, theatre of operations or structure. Throughout that journey critical constants have remained – professional commitment, pride, a sense of adventure, the will to innovate and take 'risk'; to learn and then build on that experience. All of that has been done without losing the robust lineage of Gurkha courage, discipline, humour and charm.

From your formation as the Gurkha Army Service Corps in 1958 you were drawn from the Infantry Regiments of the Brigade. This gave you that Infantry foundation of which you are so rightly proud, and which we must preserve.

You have become masters of the art of change and have prospered as the Army has evolved. Your strength in depth is demonstrated by the variety of skills and trades that are represented on parade today.

I have acknowledged the success of the Regiment. None of that could have been achieved without the leadership and vision I referred to earlier. It was provided by the many retired members of the Regiment from the UK and Nepal who are represented here with us today, and no doubt many more of them will be celebrating with us in the hills of Nepal and elsewhere around the world.

I know that serving members of the Regiment today honour its past commanders and ex-Gurkha servicemen. We thank them for their wisdom and encouragement in leading this Regiment towards its 50th year, and to have done so in such a rightfully proud and respected manner and with great style.

I would also like here to thank the wives and families of the Regiment, past and serving. They are the unsung heroes of any busy regiment, especially in periods of conflict. We are all in their debt and it is terrific to see so many of them here today.

From your beginnings in Malaya and Borneo as the Gurkha Army Service Corps – to being bestowed with our Sovereign's title in your Regiment's name – through your involvement in Iraq and Cyprus in the early 90s whilst based in Hong Kong, to establishing yourself here in the UK in the forefront of the Army's logistical operational capability, to operations in the Former Republic of Yugoslavia throughout the 90s and in more recent times in Iraq and Cyprus – I salute you as a Regiment.

Next year, you will be in direct support of 11 Light Brigade in Afghanistan, where I have no doubt you will serve with distinction. And for the future, I know that you will continue to look forward, to anticipate what may be over the Army's horizon, and to think and plan how you can contribute to the challenges ahead. And, to coincide with the 50th Anniversary, I am delighted to announce that the Regiment is today re-titled 10 The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment.

I have acknowledged those who are serving in the QOGLR today, and those who have gone before you. I now invite you to invest in those that will follow you; the Kasam Khane contingent today and the young recruits who are now training at the Infantry Training Centre at Catterick. I attested them in Pokhara last January, and I shall take their salute as they pass out in September. Your Regiment is their future, as much as their future is in your Regiment. When they arrive here value them, guide them and instil in them all the experience and respect that you have earned and valued.

Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment, today reflect on, and honour with pride, your first 50 years. As both your Colonel Commandant and Commander-in-Chief, my thanks and congratulations. You can look forward with characteristic confidence and courage to the next 50 years, and many more beyond that. I, and your many admirers across the Army, have no doubt that you will succeed in all that is asked of you, as you have always done.

Shyabash, Jai QOGLR



A Charity Event – Help For Heroes in Feb 08



The GM and OC 28 Sqn on Op TOSCA

Gurkha Major's Notes

By Major Gyanbahadur Limbu MVO

No doubt, it has been one of the busiest years for the Regiment – each and every date in the Regimental Forecast of Events was filled up with one or the other important events. Having just returned from Op TOSCA in Cyprus, the Regiment was geared to go for the final preparation of its 50th Anniversary celebration. This was by no means a simple task as the Regiment also had to provide manpower assistance for the running of the Nepal Cup and Brigade 'Bhela'.

With the 50th Anniversary of 5 July coming closer, there was very little time between post Op TOSCA tour leave and D-Day. A lot of preparation was ongoing as planned both on and behind the scenes. I must praise the efforts and the commitments put in by the QOGLR Associations members and both past and present members of the Regiment towards this special birthday celebrations.

The celebration went extremely well starting with a cocktail party in the Officers' Mess on the Friday evening. The newly commissioned regimental painting and silver centre-piece to mark the occasion were unveiled on the day.



The Colonel of the Regiment – Brig S P Cowlam CBE, Comd and GM cutting the Regimental Birthday Cake.



The Commissioning Parade

On the 5 July, the actual celebration took place and the Inspecting Officer for the Parade was Colonel Commandant the Brigade of Gurkhas, Lieutenant General Sir David Richards KCB CBE DSO. These included the birthday parade, the Kasam Khane parade for Intake 2007 and the commissioning of two new Gurkha Officers Capts Palijar Tamang and Baldeep Tamang. All these were witnessed by both the past and present members of the Regiment and their families. The afternoon was set aside for various fun-filled activities with stands in and around the New Normandy Bks. The Lion Dance and the Dragon Dance teams hired locally added extra flavour. Surprisingly, we had three of the 29 RCT members of the Hong Kong days, who happened to hear the news through the local radio, turn up for the celebration all the way from the midlands. We had also invited our ex members of the Regiment to attend this event all the way from Nepal – thanks to the QOGLR Association.

Later in the evening, the Regimental birthday cake was cut by the Colonel of the Regiment, the Commander and the Gurkha Major. The Commander's Sword was presented to 36 HQ Sqn who emerged victorious on various military and sporting events.



Silver centrepiece unveiled to mark the 50th Anniversary

This followed the sounding of the Retreat performed by our own Pipes and Drums and the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas with some splendid fireworks in the main parade square. The celebration culminated with an all ranks Bhela in the vicinity of the Junior Ranks Club, where once again all Regimental personnel, ex members of the Regiment, families and invited guests were welcomed by our own Regimental Chef team with a delicious BBQ. This was indeed a good opportunity to mingle with the ex members of the regiment for a bit of chit chat and revive the emotions.

The 50th anniversary added another significant chapter in our history as the Regiment was re-titled "10 The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment" from its previous title of "10 Transport Regiment Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment".

The celebrations also took place in Nepal on 14 and 15 November organised by the QOGLR Regimental Association Nepal (RAN) in Hotel Shanker and the Nepalese Army Headquarters compound, Kathmandu. The Colonel of the Regiment, Commander QOGLR and myself were in attendance. The event took place successfully without any glitch apart from the fact that one of the Regimental Association Members, Maj (Retd) Andrew Macbeth sadly passed away just a few days before the celebration in Kathmandu.

It was once again very good to see the past members of the Regiment in such jubilant mood for this historic celebration. My sincere thanks go to Maj (Retd) Balkrishna Rana MBE and his RAN committee for the successful running of the event and all those past and present QOGLR members who attended the event.

We hosted a number of high ranking official visits throughout the year. In September, HRH The Princess Royal, in her capacity as Colonel-in-chief RLC paid an official visit to the Regiment during 101 Log Bde FTX, Ex GRIFFIN FOCUS. Comd 11 Light Brigade, who will be commanding the Regiment for Op HERRICK 11 also visited the Regiment.

The GMAS implementation is working ever so well and about 2/3rd of the Regimental personnel are currently serving married accompanied. The families are coping well with the new environment and enjoying their stay with their loved ones. Most of them have found jobs locally but are more than willing to show their attendance in the Regimental functions whenever



Intake 2007 Kasam Khane Pde led by 2Lt John Saunders



The Commander and Gurkha Major with HRH Princess Royal



50th Anniversary Celebration in Nepal



50th Anniversary Celebration in Nepal

necessary. Of particular note, we had the Regimental families taking part in the "HELP FOR HEROES" charity run in the local area at the beginning of the year in February. In addition, regular coffee mornings are attended with great anticipation.

The Regiment is also doing very well in terms of transfer across the trade and according to my Gurkha Career and Management Officer's data sheet; there have been 25 successful transfers into the wider Army outside the Brigade. The Regiment is fully aware of the excess manpower as a windfall of the GTACOS and managing them well in liaison with HQ DRLC and other agencies. We currently provide manpower to an extra Squadron in 9 Supply Regiment and works are in the pipeline for the possibility of establishing a second Supply Squadron in the near future.

This year's Dashain was another great success. All Religious ceremonies were conducted by our own Religious Teacher (Pundit) in the temple. It was good to see a lot of families and children taking part in the Kalarati cultural show with much enthusiasm.

On the sporting side, the Regiment managed to reach the Nepal Cup final for the second year in a row having won the cup the previous year. History was about to repeat itself, but, 1 RGR somehow proved strong enough to run away with the cup. Nonetheless, this is a remarkable achievement in terms of time and effort put in by each and every member of the Regiment.

The Trailwalker Team once again managed to maintain the Regimental Fitness trademark by emerging victorious in this gruelling 100-km race in the South Downs. Congratulations must go to the team of Ptes Hitman Ghale, Ram Gurung, Dhanprasad Angdambe, Manoj Rai and their trainer Cpl Madan Rana.

A lot of changes in the Regimental key personalities took place this year. Brig S P Cowlam CBE relinquished his appointment as Colonel of the Regiment in December. Brig A S J Fay, who commanded the Regiment just two years back has taken up this prestigious and important appointment. Lt Col A P Duncan relinquished his appointment as the Comd QOGLR on promotion to full Colonel on 9 December. Lt Col Martine Moore is now already on the hot seat. A traditional farewell was organised in honour of the outgoing Col of the Regt and Comd QOGLR by all ranks of QOGLR and their families on 7 December in the Junior Ranks Club. Lt Col A P Duncan was later officially towed out of the Regiment on 9 December.

Overall, 2008 has been a significant and successful year for the Regiment. Coming years look ever so busy with a full-scale Regimental deployment to Afghanistan in September 2009 followed by the Regiment's move to its new location within Aldershot in mid 2010. A lot of changes are taking place rapidly. I sincerely hope that everything will go well and the Regiment will get as best as it possibly can achieve to live up to the name. Jai QOGLR



Dashain 2008 Celebration



The QOGLR Trailwalker Team crossing the finish line first



Col of the Regt and Comd's Farewell at the Junior Ranks Club



Col of the Regt and Comd's Farewell at the Junior Ranks Club

The New Commander QOGLR - Lieutenant Colonel M P Moore RLC



Lt Col M P Moore

Lieutenant Colonel Moore was educated at Tiffin Grammar School, Kingston-Upon-Thames, and commissioned into the Royal Army Ordnance Corps in December 1988. He has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Information Systems Management, a Master of Science in Defence Logistic Management and Master of Arts in Defence Studies.

Lieutenant Colonel Moore has served twice with the Commando Logistic Regiment Royal Marines, the second time as a Petroleum Specialist Officer establishing the Regiment's fuel support capability. As a senior Captain, he was a Platoon Instructor at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. He commanded 11 Brigade Support Squadron in Germany and deployed it on Operation TELIC 5, in support of 4th Armoured Brigade.

On the Staff, Lieutenant Colonel Moore was a Grade 3 Staff Officer in Headquarters Director Special Forces, where he deployed with the United Kingdom's Special Forces Component to Kosovo in 1999. He was later Deputy Chief of Staff in Headquarters 101 Logistic Brigade, and deployed with Brigade in 2003 to Iraq, where it formed the Joint Force Logistic Component. He also spent a brief period at the Army Personnel Centre running the Royal Logistic Corps Majors' Desk.

Lieutenant Colonel Moore attended the Army Command and Staff Course from 2001-02. He was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel in October 2006 and appointed Military Assistant to the United Kingdom Military Representative to NATO and the EU. He was selected to command The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment in October 2007, assuming command in December 2008.

Lieutenant Colonel Moore is married to Karen, who is a practising Health Visitor, and they have two children, Ellie and Freddie. His interests are travelling, tennis, downhill skiing and rugby, although, for the latter, he is now an avid spectator rather than player.

I Transport Squadron

In our last notes, I Squadron had just embarked on a six months United Nations (UN) tour in Cyprus on Operation TOSCA. The 12 months that followed were a rollercoaster ride, with the completion of the Cyprus tour running through to our initial preparations back in UK for deployment to Afghanistan on Operation HERRICK. Life was far from dull!

From October 2007 the Squadron, commanded by Major Nov Nanovo, continued to patrol the UN Buffer Zone (BZ) between the Republic of Cyprus (RoC) and the so called 'Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). As the Sector 2 Operations Squadron, we conducted infantry framework patrols either by foot, car, mountain bike or helicopter to dominate the BZ and observe or pre-empt violations. There was a rich array of events to keep us on our toes. Prison break outs, unauthorised construction, illegal waste dumping and trespassing became regular occurrences which required a considered response. In the heart of Nicosia, Centre Troop led by Captain Rajdip Gurung and Staff Sergeant Mani Gurung had to deal with a steady stream of VIP visitors. Whether US Senators, UN diplomats or foreign Generals, they were all briefed by the team and allowed to observe the "land that time forgot" since 1974 in the old city. Across in the East of the Squadron's AO, Captain Kumar Gurung and Staff Sergeant Bharat Shakya had to deal with the very sensitive issues of containing commercial construction and errant local farmers. Right from the start, East Troop were thrown into the deep end to deal with protests over

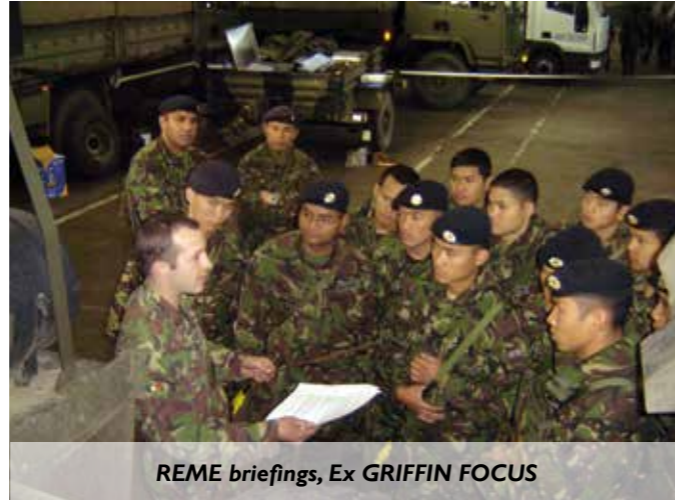
the controversial PATIS development site. But the Troop's calm actions soothed the obvious tensions. And over in the West, Second Lieutenant Alistair Hughes supported by Staff Sergeant Dinesh Rai had to overcome the frustrations of dealing with the misbehaving Opposing Forces (OPFORs). This was one area that did not let up. The OPFORs were intent on annoying and provoking each other like school kids in the playground. On occasions a rather more serious incident would arise such as large scale demonstrations at the crossing point outside our barracks at Ledra Palace. This did get our adrenaline pumping as we waited to react, along with the UN Police. The boys also provided welcome business for the local farmers with their purchase of goats. The Squadron Second-in-Command / Sector Operations Officer, Captain Richard Cusworth, worked hard to co-ordinate our activities with the UN Police; in between golfing and skydiving! He was ably supported by personnel attached from 36 Squadron and the LAD. The Ops Warrant Officer, WO2 (SSM) Keith 'Stan' Boardman, along with Sergeants Lee 'Dippy' Diprose and Steve Campbell and Corporal 'Hoppy' Hopkinson (REME) were the workhorses in the Sector Joint Operations Centre. They must have done well as WO2 Boardman was selected for promotion as RSM of 158 Regiment whilst Sergeants Diprose and Campbell were also promoted. Tucked away in the Operational Information cell, Captain Pradip Limbu led his merry band of WO2 (SQMS) Taff Gullam and Sergeant Milan Gurung. They grappled with spreadsheets and graphs to analyse OPFOR behaviour which then allowed us to target our efforts.



Cpl Yam Gurung and his mountainbike team, Op TOSCA



Humanitarian aid delivery in Northern Cyprus, Op TOSCA



REME briefings, Ex GRIFFIN FOCUS



Standby!, Ex GRIFFIN FOCUS



Waiting for the attack, Ex GRIFFIN FOCUS

But it was not all work. There were fantastic opportunities for adventurous training (AT). All of the boys spent at least one week at the AT Centre in Dhekelia where they could sample kayaking, mountain biking and scuba diving. For our instructors, such as Corporal Yam Gurung, it was an unusual way to earn your UN campaign medal. For the more adventurous types such as Pte Hitaman Gurung, the appeal of free-fall parachuting was too overpowering and they were able to throw themselves out of perfectly serviceable aircraft for fun! There were also opportunities to kayak around the island and ski the slopes of Mount Troodos. Privates Hitaman Gurung and Sudip Rai travelled back to the UK to take part in the Army's martial arts tournament. They swept aside the competition and scooped top places. Meanwhile, the OC's Challenge competition between the Troops reached its climax. Following weeks of inter-Troop volleyball, football and basketball matches it all came down to the cross-country race. Despite the OC's attempts to skew the final result in favour of the SHQ, Second Lieutenant Hughes' West Troop achieved victory! In between work and AT, there were several charity fund raising events. Corporal Rambahadur

Limbu organised a hill walk up Mount Troodos, West Troop pulled together a curry and horse racing evening with Sergeant Campbell orchestrating an auction evening. These events raised over £2000 for charitable causes, including the Gurkha Welfare Trust and Help for Heroes. A truly tremendous effort! We hosted the Combined Services Entertainment show in early March and were fortunate to have Sofia Hayat visit. Her dancing routine went down a storm and even Private Jackee Gurung was asked to join her backing team.

The Christmas and New Year period came and went. We were all full of turkey and thankfully even the OPFORs took a seasonal break. At the start of 2008, we witnessed encouraging signs in political developments as the ROC and 'TRNC' appeared to take a first tentative step towards a settlement. In March, the election of a new President of the ROC proved to be a catalyst. The two Presidents met on Good Friday and agreed to work more closely to reach a settlement. As a confidence building measure, it was agreed to open the Ledra Street crossing (LSX) in Nicosia. LSX was a sensitive landmark in Nicosia old town as it linked the Greek and Turkish quarters but had been closed since the outbreak of inter-communal violence in 1964. The 10 days that followed the announcement were hectic as the Squadron juggled our routine tasks with preparations for the opening. After much political shenanigans, the tour's finale took place less than six hours before we actually handed over Sector 2 to 7 Transport Regiment. The street was opened to a UN fanfare under the gaze of regional media. It was a fantastic way to round off the tour before we packed bags and headed back to UK the next day! Looking back, our training paid off and the boys were magnificent. The reputation of the Regiment and the Brigade of Gurkhas was held high in the eyes of both our British and UN counterparts. We also suspect that the OPFORs were also grudgingly impressed and fascinated professionally by our soldiers. The tour itself was frustrating in parts but with many unique shared experiences and genuine rewards. Private Deepen Rana's tour video captured perfectly the events of those six months.

Following post-tour leave, we returned in early May to welcome Captain Baldeep Tamang as a new Troop Commander. The next few months were at full throttle. We were thrown into the CO's Sword Competition and preparations for the

50th Anniversary celebrations. Sergeant Purnabhadur Balal's winning performance in the backstroke in the pool, Private Chakra Rai's whippet-like performance in the cross-country and our iron men beating 28 Squadron in the tug-of-war were all highlights of the competition. But maybe next year will be our moment to wrestle the Sword from 36 Squadron / LAD and lift the great prize! The 50th Anniversary saw a hive of activity as the Squadron pulled together events in the Officers' Mess. A/WO2 Mani Kumar drilled the Squadron for the 50th Anniversary Parade. Even the officers fell into line smartly. The parade was carried off to perfection without any ad hoc drill movements by the officers! During this period our shooting ace, Pte Prakash Gurung, received his RLC Sports Award from the former Olympic athlete Roger Black for his consistently high achievements in the field of shooting. With Captain Cusworth posted to 158 Regiment, a new Second-in-Command, Captain Tom Cowan, joined us from 28 Squadron and set about preparing the Squadron for the forthcoming exercise season.

At the start of the summer we received great news. With WO2 Indra Tamang's commissioning and posting to 9 Regiment, Staff Sergeant Mani Gurung stepped up as SSM. Sergeant Jit Pun left us on promotion and posting to 28 Squadron, to be replaced by the newly promoted Sergeant Prakash Rai. We also had a number of JNCO promotions. Prakash Rai, Rajendra Karki, Rudrabhadur Limbu and Tikaram Gurung now wear their first stripes, whilst Lance Corporals Danuri Sherpa and Tekbahadur Thapa stepped up to Corporal.

As we stood down for summer leave, the Regiment's Trailwalker team blazed to victory and set a new course record. Private Manoj Rai was a member of the successful quartet whilst Private Bishworaj Limbu trained hard with the squad. After leave, the Squadron returned in early August to re-train in its core transport role. With Captain Pradip Limbu posted to 27 Regiment, we also welcomed Captain Laxmi Chongbang from Brunei as the new AO. An infantry exercise shake-out in Aldershot allowed us to restore our field skills. There is nothing like a Section attack to blow out the cobwebs! This was followed by a short Squadron exercise in Thetford which brought our training to a head before the Brigade's FTX, Exercise GRIFFIN FOCUS, in September. Exercise GRIFFIN FOCUS saw the Squadron deploy to Stafford for a series of

Theatre operational briefing stands, followed by field training in Catterick with short military skills competitions at Altcar and Halton in between. Despite the Somme-like rain and mud of Stafford, our boys were updated on operational Theatre skills ranging from mine clearance to first aid. Re-acquainting ourselves with living out of forest hides in the Catterick area, navigating the UK motorway network and juggling the culinary delights of ORP were reminders of our core warfighting role. This also helped to focus our minds on preparations for the Afghanistan deployment in 2009. Throughout this training period the SQMS, Staff Sergeant Bishnu Chhantyal, and his team looked after the boys royally with their morale-restoring tuck shop and chefs that could conjure a curry from nowhere!

By the time that this article is published, the Squadron will have exercised in Kenya with 11 Light Brigade and will be in the midst of pre-deployment training for Operation HERRICK. There will be more news on those adventures in the 2009 Kukri! Jai I Squadron!



Pte Prakash Gurung receives his RLC Sports Award from Roger Black



The OC briefs a visiting Italian Colonel, Ex GRIFFIN FOCUS

28 Transport Squadron

By Cpl Manoj Limbu

2008 has been a busy year for 28 Squadron. The majority of the Squadron started the year on rear party duties whilst the rest of the Regiment was away in Cyprus. The first major challenge was the Equipment Care Inspection in February. Thanks to the dedication of all members of the Squadron a 'GREEN' result was achieved in all areas of the inspection. The Squadron also had to fulfill a significant number of other regimental duties, including supporting the Corps Operational Shooting Competition and continuing with preparations for the 50th Anniversary.

The return of the Regiment from Op TOSCA saw a considerable restructuring of the Squadron as soldiers returned from Cyprus whilst others were posted. Many new faces came and some others went but it left the Squadron in good shape to tackle the rest of the year. The first major responsibility for the Squadron would be the Spearhead Land Element (SLE) commitment. Initially, this comprised a Transport Troop from the Squadron on forty-eight hours notice to move.

Around the same time the Squadron was focusing on the celebrations of the 50th Anniversary. The day would comprise a Regimental parade, with Gen Sir David Richards taking the salute, lunch in the respective messes, a Families' Open Day, a Sounding of the Retreat and an all-ranks Bhela to finish. The Squadron was responsible for organizing the parade itself, by far the largest and most important part of the celebrations. With much planning and a colossal investment of man hours rehearsing, the big day finally arrived. The parade featured a march past by the Regiment, an impressive drill display by the Kasim Khane recruits and a fly-over from a Merlin helicopter courtesy of 28 Squadron RAF. Many members of the Regiment were also involved in the cultural displays of the afternoon and the evening's entertainment.

With the celebrations of the 50th Anniversary over, there was still no easing in tempo for the Squadron. Immediately following the anniversary weekend the Regimental Shooting Team, three members from 28 Squadron, went to Bisley for

the Army CentSAAM competition. From the end of July into August, the Squadron enjoyed some well deserved leave, though this was no rest for all by any means. The Squadron continued to maintain its commitment to SLE and numerous personnel attended familiarization courses for the new MAN fleet, which the Squadron look forward to using on Op HERRICK II.

On return from leave, the Squadron began training in preparation for Ex GRIFFIN FOCUS. This was a chance for the Squadron to take a 'back to basics' approach to ensure that all of the basic skills were up to scratch and gain their CT1 and CT2 validation. These couple of weeks proved vital as all ranks were able to return to the mindset of the field after a hectic number of months in barracks. Ex NAYA KUKURI took place on the local Eelmoor training area and provided the soldiers with revision of basic skills in the field and driving skills. The cross country driver training course was also utilised and the soldiers even had chance for a few command tasks on the final day.

Concurrently, the Regiment was receiving a substantial inload of vehicles from Whole Fleet Management. Many of the initial concerns about this did not manifest themselves as the process ran relatively smoothly, though not without a considerable investment in manpower. The last event to take place before deployment on Ex GRIFFIN FOCUS was a rehearsal for Ex FIRST FLIGHT, the SLE commitment with 1 Bn The Irish Guards. This went smoothly and proved the SLE element's readiness for deployment.

September saw the Squadron deploy on Ex GRIFFIN FOCUS, a Theatre Troops-level exercise. It was also the first time the whole Regiment had deployed since 2005. 28 Squadron started the exercise by deploying to the Longmoor training area where it consolidated the training started in Ex NAYA KUKURI. Not being an ideal area for a Transport Squadron, the terrain presented challenges which the soldiers took no time to overcome. The next move was to the Stafford training area where the Squadron was housed in a disused hangar. This

provided the Squadron with some more training, both as a unit and as part of the wider 101 Logistic Brigade Exercise. For the test phase of the Exercise, the squadron moved and located itself on the Catterick training area. Once again, the Squadron proved its adaptability and the skill of its soldiers by occupying an awkward site. From this location, the Squadron conducted further training and other logistic tasks. The final phase of the Exercise saw a visit by HRH The Princess Royal to the Catterick area. This was planned as part of the 50th Anniversary celebrations. 28 Squadron had the honour of leading on this, and provided a series of dramatic displays for the Princess. After the displays Princess Anne had the opportunity to walk around the Squadron and meet and talk to the soldiers.

Of course on its return from Exercise the Squadron could not possibly rest, as the Squadron HQ took on its commitment to SLE, and started looking ahead to the next exercise period. Furthermore, soldiers from the Squadron were selected to represent the Regiment at the Remembrance Day service at the Cenotaph. This took a surprising amount of preparation as the soldiers had to get their Greatcoats and Heavy Drill up to the standard that is expected for such an important event. On the day itself, those representing the Squadron performed faultlessly, taking great pride in being given such an important task.

36 Headquarters Squadron

By Major Andy Birkby, OC 36 Squadron

In April 2008, 10 QOGLR returned from Op TOSCA where 36 Squadron personnel had been spread over the UN Support Squadron, the Operations Squadron and the Mobile Force Reserve (MFR). After a well-earned period of leave, the Regiment returned to work and hit the ground running with training, competitions, inspections and celebrations.

Radio Troop embarked on Ex CROSS FLAGS, upgrading the younger Driver Radio Operators from Class 3 to Class 2. The GI Inspection and the Equipment Care Inspection were both passed and the Squadron saw its sporting highlight of the year, winning the Commander's Sword Competition with the LAD. First places in Football, Basketball, Volleyball and Tug of War were enough for the Squadron to win the event, bringing the Sword back to the lines after 15 long years. The QOGLR 50th Anniversary Celebrations had the Squadron organising the Junior Ranks Lunch and the evening Bhela for around 2000 guests. This was all in and around the Parade where the youngest Gurkha Squadron was able to take to the square for one of the few occasions since its re-titling parade in 2006. The Squadron was also tasked with running and administering the Methuen Cup on behalf of the RLC before it took its summer leave.

On return from the summer stand down in mid August, the Squadron again hit the ground running with a Military Annual Training Tests week before embarking on Exercise GRIFFIN FOCUS. Elements of the Squadron, namely the Chefs and Radio Operators, deployed with their respective Squadrons on their

The next significant event was to be the week-long Ex TIMBER TRUSS. Ex TIMBER TRUSS is the final confirmatory exercise for the RLC Troop Commanders' Course and this November was supported by 28 Squadron. The exercise consisted of a move across sea and land to Salisbury Plain Training Area. The soldiers conducted a series of Distribution Points before returning to camp. The Squadron then took part in the regimental range package where everybody got the chance to fire hundreds of rounds on personal weapons, pistols and the GPMG.

As the Squadron moved into Christmas leave, we had the chance to reflect on a very busy but productive year. As always, faces had come and gone and a great deal had been achieved. Now the Squadron looks forward to 2009 where it will focus on training for Afghanistan before deploying on Ex Op HERRICK II as a Close Support Squadron with its own Force Protection Troop. Before this, we will complete Ex MASAI VIPER in Kenya followed by some intensive pre-deployment training under 11 Brigade and seeing out the SLE commitment to no doubt a successful conclusion. As ever the Squadron will take this in its stride and show why it still remains one of the most respected Squadrons within QOGLR.

CT2 build up training and in early September the SHQ finally deployed. Their initial task was to facilitate 101 Log Brigade's main effort in setting up the Forward Assembly Area (FAA) at Abingdon. The FAA ran smoothly and after a few days the Squadron followed the Brigade's regiments up to the Stafford area. Here it contributed to the Swynerton Training Package with a highly commended Patrol Lane Stand. At Stafford the Squadron found its niche as the Brigade's Convoy Support Centre (CSC) provider and went on to establish CSCs on the M6, A1, in Stafford and finally at Grantham on the move back to Aldershot.

Dashain was the main effort for the first part of October and the Squadron then led on the visit to the Regiment of a number of Officer Cadets from Sandhurst, who had all expressed an interest in joining the RLC. After their briefings, a spot of Light Drill, a bhat in the field, some cross-country driving and anti ambush drills on the Illmoore Training Area, they all departed, claiming QOGLR as their first choice, unsurprisingly. In late October, while the remainder of the Regiment took some leave, a few committed Chefs took part in the Annual Combined Services Catering Challenge coming away with a Gold, three Silver and two Bronze medals, a fantastic achievement.

In the build up to Christmas, the Squadron was heavily involved in a Mini Combined Arms Service Training, Exercise TIMBER TRUSS and a Board of Officers as well as the myriad of other taskings and activities expected of the festive Season.



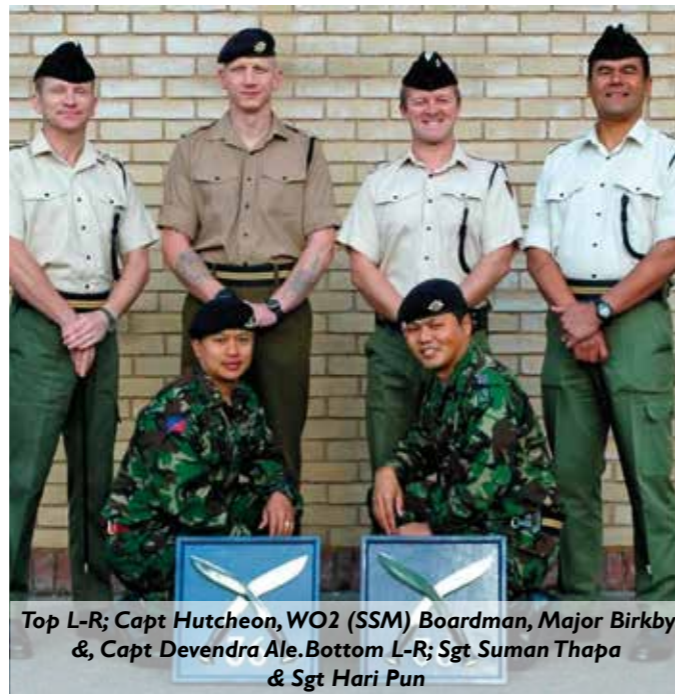
Negotiating tough terrain on Ex GRIFFIN FOCUS.



Marching to the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday



L-R Cpl Kedar (Silver), WO2 Rawbone (Bronze), Pte Wrangham (Gold) Bottom L-R Pte Furba Tamang (Bronze), LCpl Amrit (Silver), Pte Krishna (Silver).



Top L-R; Capt Hutcheon, WO2 (SSM) Boardman, Major Birkby & Capt Devendra Ale. Bottom L-R; Sgt Suman Thapa & Sgt Hari Pun

The year saw the Squadron say farewell to a number of key players including its Admin Officer, Capt Dave Gordon, who was seamlessly replaced by Capt 'Hutch' Hutcheon. The legend that is Maj Derek Binks left on promotion and lived up to his irreplaceable status...by not being replaced! The Squadron continued with the process of its UKTAP soldiers being replaced by GURTAM soldiers and this was especially noticeable in the departure of the SSM WO2 Stan Boardman who was replaced by WO2 Rudrabahadur Chantyal, a GURTAM WO2; a fond

farewell to all who have departed and a warm welcome to the new arrivals.

It has been an incredibly busy year for the Squadron during which it has provided excellent support to the Regiment and has enjoyed considerable successes. Over the year it has continued to mature and develop its Gurkha identity whilst still embracing its unique history and diverse range of personnel and trades. Jai 36 Squadron!

66 Fuel Squadron RLC

The Regiment has been very busy in the past 12 months and there have been many personality changes in the Squadron. Furthermore many members of the Squadron have been spread to the four winds with detached personnel as far afield as Afghanistan, Belize, Brunei, Falklands Islands, Kenya and Cyprus. Major Emma Dick has left the Army to concentrate on her family life and we congratulate her and her husband Ewan on the birth of their third child Emily on 30 September 2008. Major Dick was succeeded by Major James Rhodes in July. Captain Butterworth was posted to 5 Training Regt RLC as the Adjutant. Lieutenant Meehan departed to 13 Air Assault Support Regiment and deployed directly to Afghanistan and was replaced by Second Lieutenant Ben Ford. Staff Sergeant Lyons was posted on promotion to DRLC TDT, and was replaced by Staff Sergeant Smith. Sergeant Lloyd was replaced by Sergeant Bhaktabhadur Gurung. Staff Sergeant Birbahadur Balal has replaced Staff Sergeant Cottrell as the SQMS and finally Staff Sergeant Dinesh Rai has replaced Staff Sergeant Goodall in Y Troop.

Due to the changes to Gurkha terms and conditions within the Army there has been a bulge in Gurkha soldiers within the Regiment. As a result, 66 Squadron on return from Cyprus has

for the first time had Gurkhas posted in. It has been a great experience for the Squadron and gives us additional diversity within our already culturally rich nominal role.

The first three months of the year found the Squadron deployed in Cyprus on Op TOSCA. 66 Squadron were part of the United Nations Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) fulfilling the role of the Mobile Force Reserve (MFR) and were collocated with Head Quarters UNFICYP in Blue Beret Camp, Nicosia. The MFR is a Multi National Organisation, consisting of 106 personnel from Argentina, Hungary, Slovakia and the UK. Its mission is to 'maintain the perpetual state of high readiness and training to allow rapid deployment throughout the Buffer Zone in support of operations as directed by the force commander.' So in short the MFR provided the QRF to the entire UN Force working directly for the Force Commander, General Barni (Argentina). This meant that the Squadron had to be conversant with all 187Km of the Buffer Zone (BZ) and be able to provide a credible force capable of controlling a disturbance anywhere within it. The MFR quickly settled into routine following its arrival in October 2007 and after the Christmas break UNFICYP HQ immediately set about sector-sized rehearsals with both the Argentinean



66 Sqn rehearsing anti riot drills at Nicosia International Airport

and Hungarian/Slovakian contingencies. Both these rehearsals involved the vast majority of the deployed force and weeks of planning. The MFR were stood too and deployed to two very different situations within the two sectors, using the crowd control drills that were practised weekly and the Tactica APCs were able to demonstrate to the large number of spectators that the MFR was indeed a very credible force able to work very effectively within its role as a peacekeeper.

During this time several adventurous training activities took place varying from hill walking to rock climbing.

Ex KUKRI PADDLER saw several brave souls take to the high seas in canoes and paddle around the Republic of Cyprus. Snow boarding on Mount Olympus in the Troodos Mountains, skydiving and power boating courses were also taken full advantage of by the Soldiers within the MFR. Ex ZENOBIA PENETRATION, conducted on New Year's Eve, involved a penetration dive into the Zenobia wreck which was a large roll-on roll-off ferry. During her maiden voyage from Sweden, she sank just 1km from the shore of Larnaca Bay with over 100 lorries onboard. The dive on the Zenobia requires special mention due to the fact that the intrepid divers were able to prize the Squadrons Flag from Squadron Sergeant Major Ryan's grasp and take it with them to a depth of 30 metres all in the name of acquiring a memento photo.

The Squadron were also heavily involved in the OPTAG for 7 Transport Regiment and 62 Squadron of 6 Supply Regt who were to relieve us of our position in April 08. This involved three members of the MFR travelling to Germany to lead the instruction on the MFR's capabilities and help prepare them for their tour. This proved to be an interesting trip, for not only did we have to fly the most convoluted route to Paderborn but we also had to adjust to the severe weather that Germany was experiencing at the time. Beautiful sunny days gave way to heavy rain, sleet and snow for our visit which could only be best

appreciated by a good long run along Bielefeld Ridge - or that's how the Squadron Sergeant Major saw it anyway.

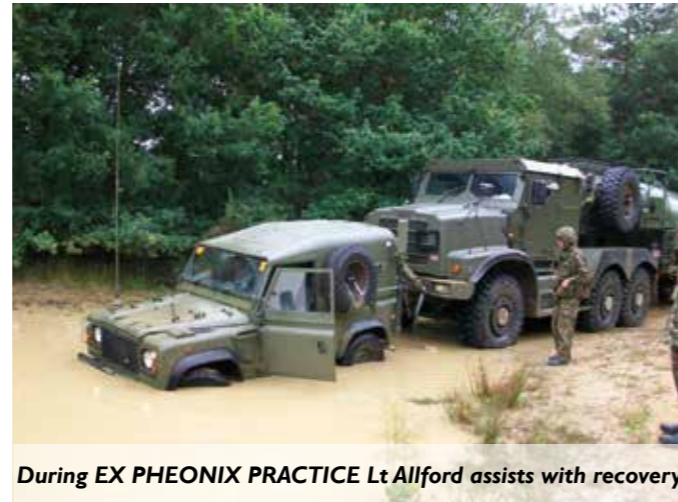
The Squadron recovered to New Normandy Barracks at the start of April 2008 and immediately took the reins in running three of the ranges for CORPOSC, including the ETR and two Pistol Ranges. The standard of shooting was high with one or two of the old and bold scoring very well and others claiming that they saw the rounds hitting targets with their own eyes, yet the console failed to record them. On completion of CORPOSC the Squadron joined the Regiment in Post Operational Leave and all were dispatched to be reunited with their family and friends for a well-earned break.

This year saw the Regiment celebrate its 50th Anniversary which 66 Squadron were very proud to be a part of. The Officers and Soldiers all thoroughly enjoyed learning Light Drill and took to it far better than the Squadron Sergeant Major whom is a firm believer in the school of bend at the knee not at the hip and drive your foot with purpose into the floor, kind of drill. The 50th Anniversary allowed the British Commonwealth Soldiers to show off their cultural wares in several tents in which they provided food and drink from their home countries. The Commander's Sword was decided during the day's celebrations with 66 Squadron disappointed not to have won the event after strong showings in the swimming and basketball.

On return from summer block leave, the Squadron deployed on Ex PHEONIX PRACTICE which was based initially in Piddington and then moved to Barton Stacey. It was a great way to shake away the cobwebs and get the Squadron back doing its primary role of fuel distribution and storage - both of these have remained fairly untested due to Regimental commitments over the past 12 months. The initial phase involved a convoy road move from Aldershot to Piddington training area where X Troop constructed a Bulk Fuel Installation (BFI) and all Squadron departments had a good shake-out including SHQ. A number



Ex ZENOBIA PENETRATION



During EX PHEONIX PRACTICE Lt Allford assists with recovery

of teaching / practice drills were run to jog the memories and get everyone thinking green again. The pace of the exercise was initially slow and then progressed as all became more confident in their skills and drills. The exercise then moved from Piddington to Barton Stacey via a convoy road move. X Troop once again built the BFI and Y Troop were put through their paces on the roads around South West England doing simulated Combat Sustainment Patrols (CSP) and Fuel Exchange Points (XP). It was noticeable that Y Troop were starting to feel more comfortable with driving their Close Support Tankers (CST) and the Squadron as a whole had developed so much over such a short period of time. Ex PHEONIX PRACTICE was a real success and prepared the Squadron well for Ex GRIFFIN FOCUS which was a week later.

Ex GRIFFIN FOCUS had been long anticipated in the build up to our deployment on 3 September. The Squadron were the first to deploy out of the gates and the sight of ten CST (F), three DROPS, and a plethora of 4T DAFs, Landrovers and assorted vehicles parked on the Parade Square ready to pull out of the gates caused quite a bit of excitement amongst the Troops. This is what they trained for and we were finally about to put all the hard work over the previous months into practice. The Squadron were especially looking forward to being able to run a live fuel account, a task not completed since 2005. The Squadron were split into two troops: Transport and Petroleum Troop.

On arrival at Catterick the BFI was rapidly constructed and the commissioning of the site was eagerly overseen by many sets of eyes, all ready to spring to action on the first sign of a leak. Once the BFI had been established the Troop were able to settle into routine and began issues and receipts to the Transport Troop who were running both exercise scenarios and real-time fuel deliveries. This was really valuable experience for both Troops as it enabled them to see how each other worked and gave them an insight into some of the tasks they will be conducting on tour next year. During this time the Transport Troop gained valuable hands-on driving experience of the CST (F) in countless convoys and also in the operation of the pumping equipment while carrying out tasks for the Brigade. One of the CST (F) also benefited from having the new camouflage netting attached to it for the duration of the exercise, leading to the Troop referring to it as the Godzilla truck.

During the final stages of Ex GRFFIN FOCUS, 66 Fuel Squadron ran a CSP anti-ambush drills stand for the visit of HRH Princess Royal. This involved vast quantities of pyrotechnics and GPMG fire notably coming from Pte Walsh. It was a very successful day and proved a great way to conclude the exercise.

Following the Squadron return from Ex GRIFFIN FOCUS there has been a notable shift in the outlook of the Regiment with the next mission looming quickly upon us - a visit from Officer Cadets currently at RMA Sandhurst. The Squadron were tasked with providing a CSP Anti-Ambush Stand to demonstrate the RLC's soldiering credentials and more importantly to highlight the DRLC ethos of 'Fighting Logistics Through'. The Officer Cadets were given a short introduction by Lieutenant Allford into the background of CSP covering aspects from FP to the skills and drills required and the weapon and vehicle types that the RLC has to hand.

The scenario started with a CSP that came into view and had to cross a Wadi, using many of the Theatre Tactics and Procedures that are extant in Iraq and Afghanistan. The CSP was contacted by a Command Wire Improvised Explosive Device and Small Arms Fire which forced the denial of a stricken vehicle and the CASEVAC of the vehicle crew. The Officer Cadets, having watched the first demo, were then invited to join the convoy as



Ex GRIFFIN FOCUS Squadron Sergeant Major Ryan briefs HRH



Ex GRIFFIN FOCUS (66 Sqn HRH stand)

the top cover element. After a short brief from Lance Corporal Singh (the Platoon Commander), the demo was run a second time allowing the Officer Cadets to get a feel for life as a soldier in a CSP first-hand.

During September and October, ten individuals from X Troop had the opportunity to deploy with 516 Specialist Team Royal Engineers on Ex FUELS ENDEAVOUR which was based in Akrotiri, Cyprus. This involved the construction of cross-country pipelines, ship-to-shore pipelines and main pipeline stations. It was a very good exercise with a lot of training value, and all involved certainly developed immensely in trade knowledge.

On 10 - 11 November, 66 Fuel Squadron was tasked with taking the lead for the 10 QOGLR stand at the Corps Orientation Tour (COT). This is one of the biggest dates in

the Calendar with respect to recruiting Officer Cadets into the RLC from Sandhurst; its success is vital to the future of the Corps. This time the COT was to take on a new format, where all Officer Cadets would be taken through how the Corps does its business on operations; starting with the loading of equipment at a seaport, through its transportation along the line of communications, to its eventual delivery to the frontline user. This demonstrates the breadth, depth and diversity of the Corps and puts into perspective the individual role of each of the Regiments and how they operate. The 10 QOGLR task was three fold. Initially, Capt Dove briefed the Officer Cadets on what is involved with third line Logistics and how the different Regiments make it work. This was accompanied by various vehicle movements simulating activities carried out in a rear supply area. The Officer Cadets then had the opportunity to visit the 10 QOGLR stand which was split into two.



66 Sqn Demonstration team for the RMAS visit.



10 QOGLR COT demonstration team

Firstly Capt Devendra briefed the Officer Cadets about Gurkhas and what unique opportunities are afforded to officers serving with Gurkha soldiers in 10 QOGLR. Capt Dove spoke about his experience on the Officers' Petroleum course; this was followed by LCpl Melrose who talked to the Officer Cadets through a mini Bulk Fuel Installation (BFI) which had been constructed for them to observe. Finally, Cpl Reynolds demonstrated some of the tests that are used to ensure quality control of fuel being stored within a BFI which proved to be very popular. All in all the Officer Cadets were very interested in the Regiment's stand and asked many questions on all aspects of life in the Regiment and the Petroleum Operator trade. From the general feedback we will hope to see a large percentage of the

Officer Cadets that came to the Regiment's stand as officers in the Corps in the not too distant future.

Looking to the future the Squadron has its eyes firmly set on Afghanistan where it will be divided into three, the major role being ISAF where 51 personnel will deploy to Kabul along with a platoon from the Royal Anglians as the Force Protection and Transport Company. This will involve working alongside a Macedonian Infantry Company which should prove to be an interesting challenge. Secondly, a Close Support Tanker Troop will be detached to 1 Squadron who are going to Helmand Province to form a Bulk Fluids Troop, and finally a Petroleum Troop of 25 soldiers will be detached to the Theatre Logistic Group.

QOGLR Chefs' Update

By Captain Hariprasad Rai

A lot of significant events have happened this year and the QOGLR Chefs spread across the spectrum have seen a lot of the activities - to name a few, the Brigade Week, Nepal Cup 2008, HRH The Princess Royal's visit, Tri Service Culinary Competition, Colonel of the Regiment and the Commander QOGLR farewell and above all the historic QOGLR 50th Anniversary Celebration.

The Chefs have been busy as always with the various functions that are forever coming up but have also been operationally active and mobile. 14 Chefs from 1 RGR and one from QG Signals were deployed on operations HERRICK 7 and TELIC 9 to Afghanistan and Iraq, one from 69 Gurkha Fd Sqn QGE went on Exercise to Canada and, most recently, 14 chefs from 2 RGR have deployed to Afghanistan on Op HERRICK 9.

Chefs in the parent unit 10 QOGLR have been equally busy hosting the high profile events listed above. Despite all this, six chefs from the Regiment managed to get away and take part in the Tri Service Culinary Challenge Competition held at Sandown Park and none of them returned empty handed, winning one gold medal, three silver and two bronze medals.

On the manning side, so far 13 chefs have been transferred across to the wider Army; mostly as RLC Chefs, and a few as drivers and suppliers. There are six new arrivals from Intake 2008 as QOGLR Chefs, who are currently on their Class 3 Course at the Defence Food Services School in Aldershot. Capt Hariprasad Rai has taken over the responsibilities of Gurkha Catering Manning Officer (GCMO) from Capt Palijar Tamang, who is now a Troop Commander in QOGLR. Jai QOGLR!



Capt Palijar Tamang and the new GCMO Capt Hariprasad Rai during their handover - takeover

The QOGLR Radio Troop

By Capt Devendra Ale, 36 Sqn

When 28 Transport Squadron moved from Hong Kong in 1993, the Squadron brought with it its own integral Gurkha Driver Radio Operators or Dvr Radops. In 1993 the Dvr Radops consisted of a Corporal and six Lance Corporals/Privatees who provided the Clansman communication support to the Squadron.

With the growth of 10 QOGLR through the Gurkhaization of 1 Transport Squadron and subsequently 36 Headquarters Squadron, the number of GURTAM Dvr Radops has gradually grown as the departing UKTAP Dvr Radop posts have been filled with GURTAM.

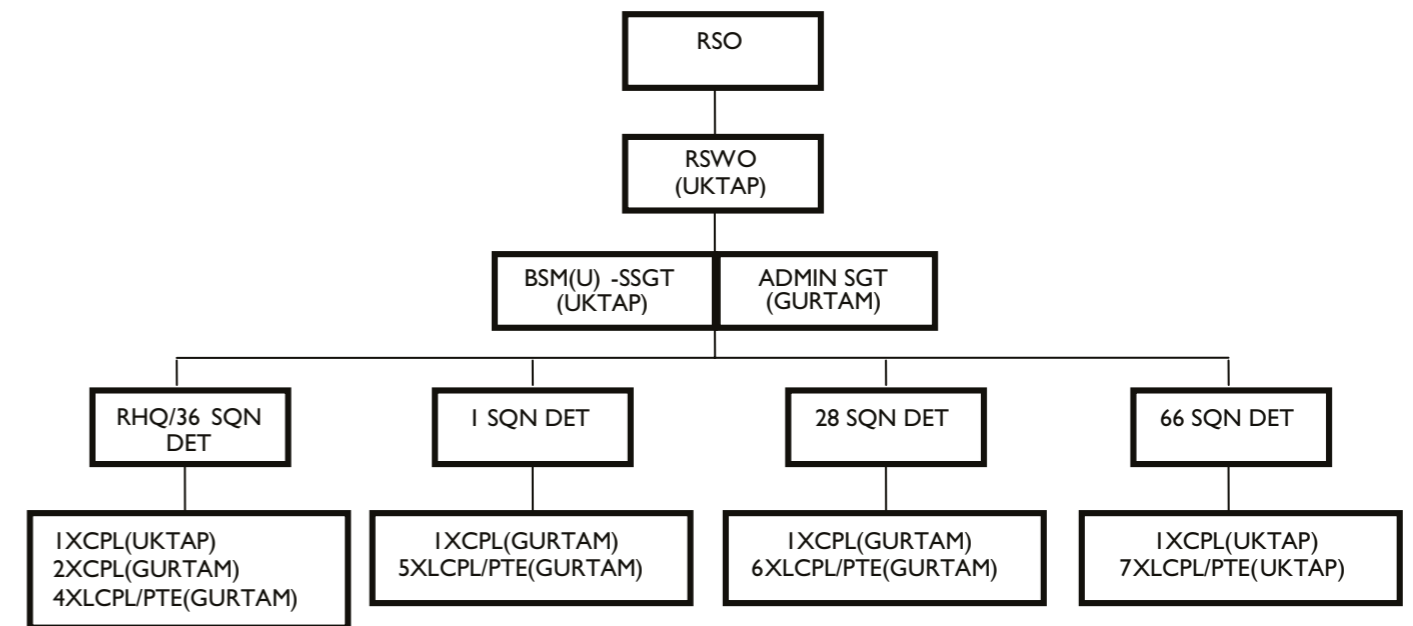
To date, 22 of the 31 Dvr Radop positions within the troop are filled by GURTAM soldiers who are now providing the high tech Bowman communication support to the Regiment.

Unlike the bygone years where the Dvr Radops were in Radio Troop for a maximum of two years, today the volunteers

are permanently posted into the Troop and remain as Dvr Radops for as long as they wish to do so. This evolution has added the fourth trade into the QOGLR and a new chapter in the Regimental History has begun.

The RSWO, WO2 Dalby, and BSM, SSgt McCrae, both joined the Troop in the summer and filled the last of the few gapped posts which remained. As the Regiment moves towards its deployment on Op HERRICK and with less than a year to go, Radio Troop is healthily almost in place.

Training continues for all, with the newcomers being trained on Bowman Class 3 courses and those who are already qualified attending the more advanced courses at the Defence School of Transport, Leconfield. Sgt Uttam has recently become the first QOGLR Advanced Signaller (System) Bowman - equivalent to Clansman RSI-trained Dvr Radop. The Troop is now looking forward to a future of growth, operations and wider experiences.



Commander's Sword Competition 2008 – The Winning Squadron's Perspective

By WO2 Keith Boardman, SSM 36 Squadron

The Commander's Sword Competition for 2008 was always going to be a closely fought contest. All Squadrons would make valiant efforts to retain or gain the Sword but the youngest squadron, 36 Squadron, wanted to mark its arrival as a fully fledged QOGLR Squadron in the 50th Anniversary Year. The enthusiasm within the Squadron hierarchy was outstanding, pushing for maximum participation and training in the build up to the competition. It is worthy of note at this stage that 36 Squadron was also joined by the Regimental LAD, as they are under the administrative control of 36 Squadron within the Regiment, and this had never been an issue before ...until we won!

The competition began on 4 June 2008 with both basketball and volleyball being played off in one day. The large influx of Gurkha soldiers into 36 Squadron in the last year meant SSgt Dal was able to put a strong volleyball team together to compete against the usually unbeatable 28 Squadron and, after a few close games, they managed to come away with the spoils. The basketball team, under the guidance of Cpl Ruffell, was a truly diverse affair with the team being well represented by its foreign and Commonwealth brethren. Here, 36 Squadron came away with the top spot yet again. This was a strong start for the Squadron with maximum points for the day.

The event most recently added to the Commander's Sword Competition was the hockey. Lack of training and many absences saw the Squadron struggle to perform and we walked away in last place. 28 Squadron took first place and the competition had really begun.

The swimming gala took place in the Aldershot Garrison Pool and, although the 36 Squadron team did not look strong on paper, determination took over and the confidence rose. The Squadron struggled to win the individual events and 66 Squadron, helped by a number of very talented swimmers, won the competition. 36 Squadron took a creditable third place, which kept them in the overall lead but they were closely followed by 28 Squadron. Determination grew in all of the squadron camps.

Having won the football for the past two years, it was critical that 36 Squadron maintained their game. It was a hard-fought event with some controversial decisions by the officials. 66 Squadron put in a strong performance but 36 Squadron managed to raise their game and, from a slow start, took maximum points from the event.

The Regimental Cross-Country was a huge event with all the Regiment's personnel running around the Illmoore Training Area with the top five, plus the number ten of each Squadron, counting towards the scoring. There was a lack of young runners within the Squadron and, with hindsight, the Squadron may be better placed entering a Vets Team, but with WO2 Cocking sick and unable to run all hopes hung on SSgt Lovell of LAD to inspire the Squadron to put in maximum effort. This was not an easy task as he had worn himself out for the REME the day before in the Inter Corps Athletics. With some strong performances from Capt Levick and Major Birkby, the Squadron managed to secure third place meaning it was going into the final still in the lead.

The Tug of War was the final event and was reserved for the pomp and ceremony of the day's proceedings at the QOGLR 50th Anniversary Celebrations. The Squadron entered in a strong position as the tug of war competition was not gauged on weight and therefore with a number of 'big units' from LAD, including the mighty figure of ASM Tolson, 36 Squadron were the force to be reckoned with. With the first pull-off against the well-drilled 66 Squadron ending in a 2-0 victory, the competition became a one-sided affair and 36 Squadron were able to put the silver lining to their victory by not only becoming the Tug of War victors but also the winners of the Commander's Sword Competition.

The Sword now sits proudly in the 36 Squadron lines and is soon due to move for the remaining six months to the LAD HQ, but we do not intend to wait until the QOGLR 100th Anniversary Celebrations to win the Commander's Sword Competition again! Bring on 2009!



10 QOGLR in the Royal Logistics Corps Military Skills Competition 2008 – The Gore Trophy

By Capt Anthony Hutcheon AO 36 Sqn

In between the flurry of all of the other activities, 10 QOGLR, after a slow start, managed to present three teams for this year's competition; an A Team, a Veterans Team and a Mixed Team. The steady build up training had to be fitted in around Ex GRIFFEN FOCUS and Dashain and much reliance was put on the four days prior to the event where the best training was going to be achieved. The adopted attitude of 'do or die' was assumed and the squad trained hard in all of the skills, culminating in a range package for which they were to reap the rewards in the competition.

18 October finally arrived and each of the QOGLR teams successfully passed the stringent kit weigh-in with no penalty points awarded. The adopted practice of 20 questions after each training session was to pay dividends and all of the teams did very well on the military skills questions. The NATO Assault Course was to prove more of a 'hang out' session for all, but the three teams managed creditable times and then it was straight onto the march to the range which had to be completed within the allocated time. All managed this, although the A Team adopted a pace as though their lives depended on it! Once at the range, the practice sessions paid off and the Veterans Team hit more falling plates than any teams through before them.

Finally it was the gruelling six mile march which included some, if not all, of the steepest hills on the Deepcut Training



Area. Here the Veterans Team 'pulled it out of the bag' and proudly equalled the time of the A Team and came in in just over 66 minutes; not bad going for a team with a combined age of 235 years.

At the prize giving the squad was rightfully proud of its achievements but it soon became apparent that 23 Pioneer Regiment's solid month's training at ATR Pirbright may have been the key to their successes and 27 Transport Regiment had put in a very strong performance. In the end, the 10 QOGLR Veterans Team were required to do some hasty Drill practice if they were to avoid the prize for Worst Drill when collecting their Trophy for winning the Falling Plate Competition and for coming a close second in the veterans' category. Roll on RLC Mil Skills 2009.

Op TOSCA with the United Nations Roulement Regiment Adventure Training Team (UNRRATT)

By LCpl Komal Thakuri, 36 Squadron

10 Regiment QOGLR deployed to Cyprus in October 2007 and I was lucky enough to be one of the 10 QOGLR United Nations Roulement Regiment Adventure Training Team as an Adventure Training Instructor based in the Dhekalia Garrison. The team comprised a Capt, WO2 and ten other ranks.

Our job was to organise the adventure training package for the UK UN Troops who came down to Dhekalia for one week during their tour. During this week they did kayaking, rock climbing, mountain biking, sailing, gliding, sub aqua, horse riding and a high-level water entry (HLWE). On the HLWE all the staff and students had to jump from the edge of a 30ft high cliff into the sea. This was the scariest part of the package for most of the students and was a real test of nerve they will not forget for a long time.

After arriving on the Sunday evening the students were briefed on the activities of the package and took their swimming

test. From Monday to Thursday they took part in different activities, including the most exciting days where they got the opportunity to do sub-aqua, horse riding and gliding. On their final evening they finished their package with a BBQ and drinks.



Kayaking off Dhekalia



The UNRRATT Team

The instructors nominated one person from every event who was the most active, enthusiastic and motivated during the package and he/she got a big well done and a bottle of fizz from the UNRRATT Team.

During our six months we organised over 25 packages and helped run numerous expeditions. My highpoint was Ex KHUKURI PADDLER. This was a Kayak expedition which navigated the Greek Cypriot side of the island in ten days and was organised by my OC, Major Andy Birkby. This was a once-in-a-lifetime experience for me and for the rest of the boys who took part.

Finally in April 2008 we handed over to 7 Transport Regiment RLC and returned to the UK. The Cyprus tour was a completely different experience for the soldiers who took part and unlike any other tour we had gone on before, especially for the new soldiers who had just arrived to the Regiment. It was a superb adventure and an enjoyable start to many Army careers.

Expedition Khukuri Paddler

By LCpl Komal Thakuri, 36 Squadron

A team of soldiers from QOGLR made history in February 2008 on their recent Op TOSCA deployment in Cyprus by kayaking the southern coast of the island of Cyprus, from the UN Buffer Zone in the East to the UN Buffer Zone in the West. Major Andy Birkby led the team of 11 paddlers and support crew through their ten-day adventure, which saw them paddling up to 30-40 km per day in varying sea conditions.

For the majority of the time the team followed the coastline, but on occasion chose to cross bays as far out to sea as 10km. They were blessed with good weather for most days and kept themselves entertained with endless games of 'twenty questions', onboard iPods and countless sea shanties.

Mostly unsupported in the water, the team fully embraced the ethos of adventure training. On one occasion, in particularly challenging sea conditions, the search and rescue flight, which had been requested to take photographs of the group, failed to locate the paddlers in the open water and then later the same

day a rigid raider, which had been requested to accompany the group as they went round the Akrotiri Peninsula, was forced to return to harbour as the sea was 'too rough'.

The challenge was completed in ten days and had seen the group sleeping in a combination of Sovereign Base Areas, villas and beach camps on their way round the island. It was a unique opportunity to see the island from a different aspect whilst gaining qualifications and honing skills along the way.



Khukuri Paddler Team on completion of their epic voyage



Gurkha Company (Sittang) Royal Military Academy Sandhurst



Staff List

Major SA Archer RGR
 Capt Tek Bahadur Gharti 1 RGR
 Capt Trilochan Gurung 2 RGR
 Sgt Nunbahadur Thapa 1 RGR
 Capt Hemkumar Rai 2 RGR
 Sgt Som Thulung 2 RGR
 Capt Prakash Gurung 1 RGR
 Sgt Tekbir Rai 2 RGR
 Capt Dolbahadur Gurung
 Sgt Minbahadur Pun 1 RGR
 WO2 Sureshkumar Kandangwa 2 RGR
 CSgt Rohitbahadur Gurung 1 RGR
 SSgt Mohan Gurung QG Signals
 Sgt Mulbir Rai
 CSgt Sureshkumar Rai RGR

OC
 2IC
 Ops/Trg
 Ops/Trg SNCO
 1 PI Comd
 1 PI SNCO
 2 PI Comd
 2 PI SNCO
 3 PI Comd
 3 PI SNCO
 CSM
 CQMS
 Reset/Edn
 Ch Clk
 Families Welfare SNCO

Newsletter

Key Personality Changes

A significant change has been seen in the higher echelons of Gurkha Company (Sittang) at the start of the Winter Term. Firstly, GC(S) is delighted to have Major SA Archer RGR who assumed the appointment of Officer Commanding GC(S) on 1 August 2008 from outgoing OC Maj GRJ Glanville MBE RGR. Secondly, Capt Baram Ghale has also handed over his appointment and responsibilities of Second-In-Command GC(S), to Capt Tekbahadur Gharti 1 RGR during the period 20 -24 October.

At the same time Capt Prakash Gurung has taken over 2 Platoon from Capt Kamalprasad Rana while Capt Dol Gurung has taken over 1 Platoon from Capt Balkrishna Gurung who has departed on retirement from the Army.

Farewell to OC and Other Members of Gurkha Company (Sittang)

The farewell to the OC, Maj GRJ Glanville and other outgoing members, including Capt Balkrishna Gurung and Capt Kamalprasad Rana, of GCS was held on Saturday 9 August at the Ark Community Centre, RMAS. An End of Summer Term BBQ was organised which all available GCS members and their families attended. The event started with drinks and tipan-tapan, followed by Tombola. Prior to the BBQ, Capt Baram Ghale, 2IC GCS, gave a short speech firstly to thank all other outgoing members

including Capt Balkrishna Gurung and Capt Kamalprasad Rana for their support for the GCS. He then thanked the OC for his contribution to the Company throughout his tenure and presented a memento on behalf of all ranks.

After the presentation, the OC gave his final speech giving thanks to everyone in GCS for their tremendous support. All ranks of GCS and their families wish the OC and outgoing members all the best for the future.

Dashain Celebration

Dashain is the most important festival of the year. It is a time when Gurkha families can get together to relax and catch up with old friends. This year, members of GCS and their families celebrated this most auspicious Hindu festival, on Saturday 11 October in traditional style.

The evening started with drinks and tipan tapan on the sports pitches in front of New College. This was then followed by a Bhat for all the Company and their wives in the New College Dining Room. However, the main event of Dashain is the entertainment. This took the form of cultural dancing, provided by the children, wives and men from within the Company. This year, like all years, was a great success, largely due to the hard work put in by the organising committee and the performers. We were also very honoured to have the Academy Chief of Staff, Col T J Checketts and Mrs Checketts, attend as the chief guests

this year. The evening, like all Dashain parties, ended with the Khusiko Naatch (Cocktail dance) when the guests were escorted onto the dance floor by the Naatch pariwar.

Sports Competition 2008

The sports competition was organised during weeks six and seven of Winter Term 2008. The competition included Inter-Section Shooting, Swimming, Orienteering, Quiz and Cross-country events. It started with the Inter-Section Shooting Competition, which took place on Wednesday 15 October and finished with the Cross-country. The overall results of the competitions were:

Event	Winner	Runner Up
March & Shoot	2 PI 3 Sec	3 PI 2 Sec
Swimming	3 PI 1 Sec	1 PI 3 Sec
Orienteering	3 PI 1 Sec	1 PI 1 Sec
Quiz	CHQ	3 PI 3 Sec
Cross Country	IPI	2 PI

The main aim of the competition was to select the Champion Section and Platoon for the year 2008/2009 and also to give everyone a break from their hectic schedule. The final prize

giving was held on Thursday 23 October after the cross-country race. The OC and 2IC presented the prizes and congratulated all competitors on their tremendous effort - the OC also expressed his thanks to the organising staff.

Opening of Snooker & Welfare (TV) Room

The Gurkha Company (Sittang), Welfare (Snooker & TV) Room has recently been refurbished with a new carpet and tables and chairs. In addition the Company have rented a new snooker table to keep everyone entertained during the dark winter evenings.

Much of this would not have been possible without the help of the Staff Quartermaster and his team. It was therefore fitting that Lt Col EM Middleton BEM should be on hand to open the room formally, assisted by the youngest member of the Company, on 23 October 2008.

We are also shortly due to receive a series of photographs to decorate the Welfare Room. The photos have been very kindly donated by the Gurkha Welfare Trust and reproduced by the RMAS Multimedia Centre.



Gurkha Company Infantry Training Centre Catterick



The Brigade of Gurkhas 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 1 June 1976, when Sek Kong South Camp became Malaya Lines. The Gurkha Training Wing was raised in Hong 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 Hellen Barracks.

Staff List

Maj S C Marcandonatos RGR
 Capt Bhupjit Rai 2RGR
 Capt Lachhyabhadur Gurung 1RGR
 Capt Manoj Mohara 2RGR
 Capt Dilipkumar Thapa 1RGR
 Capt Rabindra Tulachan 1RGR
 Capt Tarabahadur Pun QGE
 Capt Dilipkumar Thapa 1RGR
 Sgt Telindrabhadur Limbu 2RGR
 Capt Ghyanashyam Pun 1RGR
 Capt Jayaprakash Sunuwar 2RGR
 Sgt Deny Gurung QOGLR
 Capt Raghubir Rai 2RGR
 Capt Kulbahadur Rai 2RGR
 Capt Manbahadur Garbuja 2RGR

OC Gurkha Company
 2IC Gurkha Company
 A Wing Commander (until Jun 08)
 B Wing Commander (until 1 Jul 08)
 Trg Offr (fm Jul - Sept 08)
 Trg Offr (wef 20 Jul 08)
 1 PI Comd
 2 PI Comd (until 3 Jun 08)
 2 PI Comd (wef Jul 08)
 3 PI Comd (wef Feb 08)
 3 PI Comd (Feb 08 - May 08)
 3 PI Comd (fm 1 May 08 until 30 Sept 08)
 4 PI Comd (until Jul 08)
 4 PI Comd (wef 01 Jul 08)
 5 PI Comd

Awards for Recruit Intake 2008

Champion Section

3 Section, 3 Platoon, commanded by 21169197 Cpl Birbahadur Shahi 1 RGR

30047600 Rfn Arjun Gurung QGE
 30047618 Rfn Rusal Thapa QGE
 30047647 Rfn Prembdr Gurung QGE
 30047660 Rfn Karnakumar Gurung 1RGR
 30047685 Rfn Suman Gurung QGE
 30047702 Rfn Bikash Thapa Magar QOGLR

30048362 Rfn Dhanbahadur Ghising 2RGR
 30048385 Rfn Prembahadur Rai 2RGR
 30048339 Rfn Sanjay Tamang 2RGR
 30048354 Rfn Sujan Shigu 1RGR
 30048407 Rfn Newton Rai QOGLR

Overall Champion Recruit

30048353 Rifleman Seemoon Limbu 2RGR

Best Shot

30047702 Rifleman Bikash Thapa Magar QOGLR

Rifleman with the most improved English

30048368 Rifleman Umesh Gurung 2RGR

Commandant's Trophy

21168806 Corporal Lilabahadur Damai 2RGR

Champion Platoon

No 4 Platoon. Trg Team: Captain Kulbahadur Gurung 2RGR, PI Comd; Sgt Lalitbahadur Gurung 1RGR, PI Sgt; Cpl Khelendrabdr Gurung QGE, Sect Comd; Cpl Suryaprasad Tumbahangphe QGE, Sect Comd; Cpl Shivakumar Rai 2RGR, Sect Comd; Cpl Yougraj Limbu 2RGR, Sect Comd; Cpl Narbahadur Gaha 1RGR, Sect Comd.

Newsletter

By Maj S E Marcandonatos RGR, OC Gurkha Company

Introduction

To follow on from my Intake 2007 article my intention this year is to articulate some of the changes that have occurred within Gurkha Company thus far and my intentions for the forthcoming year. I also wish to cover an element of the development of my Staff that is conducted for all ITC Staff and falls under the Values Based Infantry Leadership (VBIL) tag - 'the ability to role model, inspire in others and embrace the Core Values of the British Infantry in order to create an empowering climate for success, motivating everyone to perform to the highest levels of performance and beyond.'

However, before continuing, I must pay tribute to Bhanbhagta VC who sadly died during the last year. Keenly felt and signalled within Gurkha Company, as the Lines are named after him, his name and actions will live on and act as an inspiration to us all.

Training for Intake 2008 has run its course under the new three-week training programme. Whilst there were numerous teething problems, we have now set up a validation system which will be practiced from now on. With regard to output, I would only be able to comment on this when I hear back

from 2RGR's Op HERRICK tour and their performance on operations, for after all that is my delivery statement from here in the ITC(C).

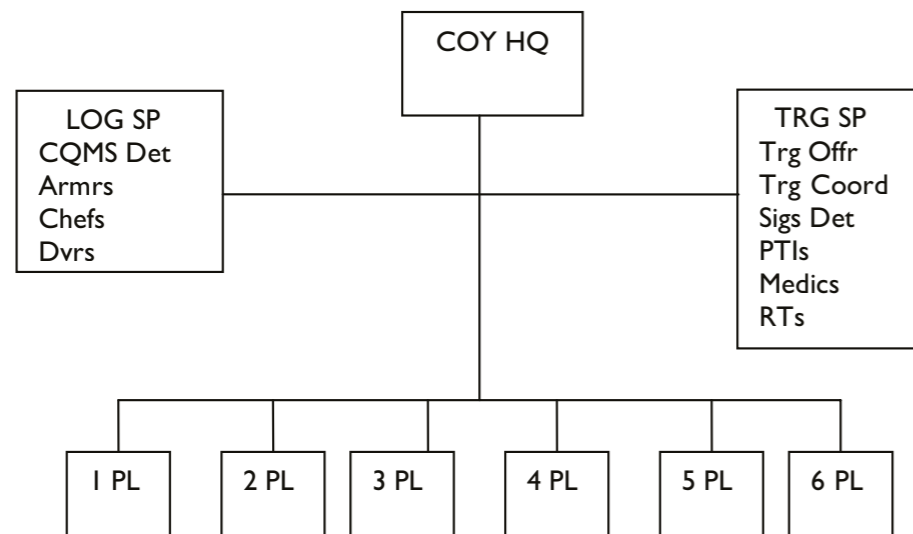
Changes /Additions

Orbat

For Intake 2008 Gurkha Company consisted of 230 Trainees and 80 staff. Its organisation was as previously.

However, this orbat has now been changed resulting in the formation of a 6th Platoon (currently on a temporary establishment) and the removal of Wing Commanders who have been replaced by one Training Officer.

For Intake 2009 (230 recruits) there are therefore six Platoons; five Platoons of 40 trainees and one platoon of 30 trainees. Each section consists of ten trainees, which funnily enough coincides with ten-man rooms, of which there are again coincidentally 23 in the Bhanbhagta Block.



BTT Course for Corps Instructors

A two-week course has been drawn up and run with the Brigade Training Team in Shorncliffe. This is for all Corps individuals prior to their arrival at Gurkha Company and the assumption of their responsibilities. The main aim is to remind and revise Corps NCOs and Officers on the application of Infantry tactics and practices at the appropriate level. This in turn gives them the confidence to lead more effectively in the field and therefore ensures that the recruits are taught the basics correctly. Feedback from those that attended has been more than favourable and as a result the course will continue for the foreseeable future.

Zero Week – Gurkha Company complete

A two week preparation period for the whole Company has been set up to coincide with all new Staff arrivals after an Intake Pass off Parade and the pre-deployment of Gurkha Company Staff to assist with the next batch of recruits in Nepal. This has proven invaluable to all as it enabled;

- Me, as OC Gurkha Company, to set out my stall and for everyone to understand my intent.
- Training teams to come together for vital time together before the next Intake.
- Each and every individual time to familiarise themselves with the ITC(C), its nuances and terminology.
- Time for clarification and questions.

Critical to its success is that all Staff attend. To that end much thanks goes to all Units who endeavoured to make it happen and in anticipation for forthcoming years.

Values Based Infantry Leadership

Applying the Theory.

This is an area that Gurkha Company has covered for the last year with its Staff and as a Company complete. It is wordy and there are expressions that could be done without, but it has benefit throughout an organisation and individually, essentially making individuals think a little more about what they are doing, how they are doing it, what they can do better and what is the bigger picture. A lot of what I will allude to we all believe we do already and that we are good at it. Reality is only for you to answer!

For argument's sake I shall refer to it as Values Based Leadership (VBL). We are all in the training business. The old maxim states that; "Those that can, do, and those that can't, teach". Those of us who are trainers understand that it's not quite that simple and that inspiring others to perform to their own maximum potential is not so much about putting facts in, much more about drawing potential out of those who we train.

In 2002 the ITC(C) started looking at the use of coaching skills to help instructors. It was quickly identified that as trainers, and particularly as infantry commanders, there was

more to influencing outcomes than just coaching. The ideology is simply good leadership, but unless leadership can be broken down into its constituent parts we cannot hope to improve our own leadership and that of our trainers, which in turn enhances the performance of the Infantry / Brigade / Army, often beyond expectations.

The ideology of VBL is about the application of Transformational Leadership behaviours in order to create a motivational climate for achievement. (Transformational leaders set examples to be emulated by their followers.) An important aspect of VBL is that the leader's behaviour is underpinned by the core values of the army. VBL is the application of Transformational Leadership behaviours underpinned by the Core Values of the British Army (Selfless Commitment, Courage, Discipline, Integrity, Loyalty, Respect for Others).

Transformational Leadership.

Transformational leaders are role models, leading by example; they are concerned with the development of their subordinates to perform above expectations within a framework of mutually shared values (Army Values). Leadership influence through leading by example and inspiration are the key to the achievement of internally motivated subordinates who believe in the organisation and who ultimately work for themselves. Transformational Leadership is determined by the following behaviours:

- **Providing an Appropriate Model.** Living by army regimental values, leading by example, being seen to do the right thing.
- **Inspirational Motivation.** Inspiring with enthusiastic and positive talk about the regiment and articulating a belief in the follower that success can be achieved.
- **Fostering an Acceptance of Group Goals.** Building effective teams based on military values, including the use of competition to develop Esprit de Corps.
- **Individual Consideration.** Developing your subordinates' strengths and correcting their Weaknesses through gradual development and advice. Two-way communication, and in particular listening, is critical to get the best out of individuals.
- **Intellectual Stimulation.** Promoting ownership of training and encouraging new ideas about how to achieve goals.
- **High Performance Expectations.** Performing only to the highest standards and expecting nothing less from subordinates by agreeing challenging but realistic goals.

Transactional Leadership.

Transactional Leadership is based on a process of exchange. Commanders achieve organizational aims through developing incentives. Followers work to achieve reward or avoid punishment. This behaviour is mostly appropriate when immediate action is needed. Transactional leadership is based on the following behaviours:

- **Positive Reinforcement.** Regular praise and motivational feedback.
- **Negative Reinforcement.** Punishment. Where failure results from attitudinal problems and where severe operational penalties would result, punish to reinforce the implication. All punishment must be fair, understood and never humiliating.

When combined together Transactional and Transformational leader behaviours get the best out of the Leader/Commander. Transactional behaviour forms the foundation whilst Transformational behaviour enhances it and allows for follower growth to self efficiency and self determination.

These leadership behaviours take the form of a leadership cycle in which the leader provides a Vision (Role Modelling; Inspirational Motivation; Fostering Acceptance of Group Goals), and provides Support (Individual Consideration; Positive and Negative Reinforcement) in order for the subordinate to meet the challenge of high performance (High Performance Expectations; Intellectual Stimulation) above and beyond expectations. The process is not a linear interaction, but a continuous cycle.

Creating the Climate for Success.

The creation of a motivational climate is essential for organizational success. The climate ('atmosphere') within which people operate, determines the ethos and culture of the organization. The climate is dependant on the leadership at all levels.

Leadership and Command.

To understand the application of VBL, it is important to understand the difference between leadership and command. Commanders motivate by rewards or the threat of sanction. Although good leaders use reward and punishment on occasion, they predominantly lead by example and inspire confidence while generating enthusiasm and commitment in their followers:

- **Command** – Military command is the position of authority and responsibility to which soldiers are legally appointed in order to control subordinates and enforce obedience.
- **Leadership** – Leadership is fundamentally the projection of personality and character to inspire soldiers do what is required of them.

Coaching.

Instruction often takes the form of telling the learner what to do and how to do it. It is very directive, with little input from the trainee/soldier. This process has its place when a new skill is being taught, but in order to allow a trainee/soldier to achieve his full potential, at some point a degree of ownership of their own development is required. A simple but effective coaching model has been implemented at ITC. The Coaching Cycle incorporates four basic principles of coaching:

- **Observation.** Clear observation allows the appropriate feedback to be given and the trainee to be effectively and fairly reported on. However the trainer should be aware that several factors will affect what he 'sees' when observing. They are as follows:
 - **Environment** – Weather and the physical environment can effect how people learn and their ability to carry out a task.
 - **People** – People all have different ways of learning as well as different strengths and weaknesses.
 - **Situation** – The stage of learning and development that an individual is at will have an affect on how competent they are.
 - **Perceptions** – No two people will see the same thing when observing and people will perceive what they have seen differently.
 - **Emotion** – The mood of the trainer on any given occasion will also affect what is seen and the frame of mind of the trainee will affect how he performs.
- **Effective Communication.** The purpose of effective communication is for both viewpoints to be considered. The individual conducting the task will quite possibly have a different perception of what occurred to the observer. The trainer certainly will not know what the trainee 'felt'. Effective communication helps to create a complete picture of what occurred and involves both effective questioning and effective listening on behalf of the trainer.
- **Constructive Feedback.** Feedback is a vital component in anyone's development, the primary purpose being designed to correct errors, reinforce and motivate. Feedback should be specific and clear, focused on actions and for the benefit of the receiver; all of which encourages ownership.
- **Goal-Setting.** Goal-setting is a proven coaching tool to focus an individual's attention in order to improve their performance. Achieving personal goals gives satisfaction and increases self-esteem and one's sense of well-being. Certain principles should be considered when setting goals to make them achievable;
 - **Specific.** Explicit, specific goals are better than 'general' or 'do your best' goals.
 - **Measurable.** There should be a standard by which to measure whether the goal has been achieved, in order for improvement to be confirmed.
 - **Achievable/Agreed.** Failure to achieve a goal could have a de-motivational effect. Ensure that the goal is achievable within the individual's capabilities. This should be agreed by both parties.
 - **Realistic/Relevant.** Goals need to be realistic but challenging, in order to elicit the effort required. Thereby a greater degree of satisfaction and an increased motivational effect is obtained. Furthermore, the goal should be relevant to what the individual is trying to achieve.



Gurkha Company 2008

- **Time based.** A clear time frame is to be decided by when the goal is to be achieved. This will allow a clearer focus.

Motivation.

Motivation is the activation of action which energizes, directs and regulates the intensity and persistence of effort:

- Motivation is the foundation of achievement.
- People who are well motivated perform better than those who are not.
- Positive motivation can improve the performance of any team or individual.
- A leader's understanding of motivation is essential to get the best out of their subordinates.
- Only by understanding motivation can you truly inspire your followers.

People are naturally curious, vitally, and self-motivated, with an inherent tendency to seek new challenges and to develop and master new skills and freely apply their talents and abilities. When people freely engage in a behaviour or activity out of pure enjoyment and inherent satisfaction, with no thought for any separable consequences, they are said to be intrinsically motivated. Intrinsic motivation involves the internalisation of a behaviour so that it is conducted because it is 'the right thing to do'.

VBL now forms an integral part of Gurkha Company and how it conducts its business. I believe it is relevant to what we all do and can be utilised to affect performance and not just in the training environment within the ARTD – Lead, Train and Motivate.

Conclusion

On passing out on 27 September 2008, the RGR Clerks left almost immediately. Those joining the 1st and 2nd Battalions left soon after. Elements of those going to 2RGR then deployed to Afghanistan from December. The QGS element followed closely after to start their pre-Phase II Special-to-Arm Training.

QOGLR and QGE Riflemen remained behind to conduct Post Recruit Training with GLW, after which they also followed to conduct their Phase II Special to Arm Training. It will take up to an additional period of three months to one year of engineer, signals and driver training before these men are ready to join their Squadrons on operations.

Finally, it is our aim to train Gurkha recruits to the highest standards that the Brigade has always expected. That is, as trained Infantrymen who are mentally and physically robust, with excellent fieldcraft skills, who are good shots and capable of communicating with their British counterparts. To do this we must adapt and be prepared to change how we conduct ourselves and therefore evolve; VBL is an integral part of this. Within this it is also my aim to try to encourage initiative, decisiveness and imagination at all levels.

I therefore request that if units or individuals have any feedback regarding the soldier they receive, that they do not hesitate to let me know on Catterick Military (94731) 3742.

Lastly, I would encourage all Brigade Officers to come at least once to visit Gurkha Company and to watch training in progress. After all, this is where the process to train our soldiers to be the finest in the world begins.



Col Comdt, Lady Richards, Rambahadur Limbu VC, Mrs Limbu and Rfn Shaktihang Begha (Grandson of Rambahadur Limbu VC).



Gurkha Language Wing



Staff List

Military Staff

Maj J L Mann AGC (ETS)
 Capt EA Boag AGC (ETS)
 Capt Gamarsing Gurung I RGR
 Capt J C Button AGC (ETS)
 Capt N S Higgins AGC (ETS)
 Capt Minbahadur Limbu QOGLR
 WO2 Ashok Gurung QGE
 CSgt Yambahadur Bahik I RGR
 CSgt Tarachandra Thapa RGR
 Sgt Balaram Magar Pun QGS
 Sgt Kamal Gurung QGE
 Cpl Bharat Mani Limbu QGS
 Cpl Binod Gurung I RGR
 Cpl Binod Sherchan RGR

OC
 2IC
 CI (N)
 Offr Instructor
 Offr Instructor
 Offr Instructor
 WSM
 CQMS
 Chief Clerk
 Sgt Instructor
 Sgt Instructor
 Cpl Instructor
 Cpl Instructor
 Clerk

Civilian Staff

Mrs H M Harper
 Mr G Thompson

Burnham Lecturer 1
 Burnham Lecturer 2

Newsletter

Introduction

Gurkha Language Wing sits within the Infantry Training Centre like a swan upon a lake: on the surface, moving continuously with grace and precision, yet, below the surface, legs kicking vigorously. Thus, GLW provides a range of courses with a smooth efficiency and zest, but this is only due to the hard work of its team of military and civilian staff. Of course, it is not all about work, and the Wing still finds ample time for sport and social events

Recruit English Package

The 230 Trainee Riflemen in Gurkha Company were split into two Wings with AWing being the larger with three platoons compared to BWing's two. AWing commenced its initial English language training on 17 March whilst BWing arrived four weeks later. Each Wing had a block of four weeks tuition before they regrouped for a one-week Company military exercise. The Wings then returned to complete five more weeks of English, attending on alternate weeks.

Each class had a dedicated English Language Teacher (ELT) who saw them through their overall nine-week package, delivered over a 19-week period, but with Current Affairs, Military English and IT taught by the military staff.

From this intake, 141 recruits sat the SLP3 exam with 112 passing in all four contiguous disciplines (listening, speaking, reading and writing), while 89 recruits took the SLP2 exam with 78 passing all four elements.

During their tuition, the recruits had the opportunity to gain civilian qualifications in the form of City & Guilds English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) at either Entry Level 3 (SLP2 students) or Level 1 (SLP3 Students). Virtually all SLP3 students passed all Level 1 modules and the majority of SLP2 students passed the Entry Level 3 tests; many of these soldiers also successfully attempted the more demanding Literacy Level 1 assessment.

On 10 October, GLW proudly watched Intake 2008's Pass Out Parade. Special mention went to an SLP2 student, Rfn Umesh Gurung, 2 RGR, who won the prize for the most improved English language student. His achievement reflected

his efforts and determination and GLW wish him all the best in his future career.

Post Recruit Training

Post Recruit Training is a short, intensive language course designed specifically to meet the needs of Phase 2 Training as requested by trainers from QGE and QOGLR. The newly capbadged QGE soldiers joined us for three weeks and were taught generic English in the morning and trade specific knowledge and mathematics in the afternoon by QGE JNCOs. The QOGLR soldiers had a two-week intensive English course with tuition from GLW staff.

During the course, the students were taught a wide array of skills. They were required to take notes, summarise and to learn by listening for key information. They were also taught UK survival information such as reading a road map and planning journeys, and all this theory was something that many of them were very keen to put into practice.

Trained Soldiers

The Wing has also run two trained soldier courses this year. The main difference between this course and the REP is that the nine-week course is delivered in one go, rather than in separate parts.

The soldiers are also taught current affairs with lessons based on topical or controversial articles in the media. As they gained in confidence and became enlightened to the fact that there is no wrong answer, the debates became more passionate and heated which was more enjoyable for the students and instructors alike. These skills are vital to Gurkhas who need to be able to debate current affairs issues with their British colleagues on the mandatory career Command Leadership and Management courses.

Survival Nepali Language Courses

The long arms of GLW are felt well beyond the wire of ITC; each year it runs two Survival Nepali Language Courses (SNLC 1110) in Nepal. SNLC 1110 involves Listening, Reading, Speaking, but not Writing, to the standard of SLP1. Each course is a three-month intensive course, taking place from January to March or August to November every year and is designed for the permanent cadre British Officers who have recently joined the Brigade of Gurkhas.

The course book itself is in-depth and daunting to those who have no knowledge of the Nepali Language beforehand. The students go from the basic learning of the Nepali alphabet (Devanagari) to reading sentences and eventually paragraphs. The final examination is set by the University of Westminster.

The course is run in Nepal as it provides an ideal location for the students to be fully immersed in Nepalese culture and society as well as bringing them in direct contact with native speakers. The students were also dispatched to Gurkha Welfare

Scheme Area Welfare Centres for up to five days during the course to put their classroom learning to practical use. They all found their attachment of immense benefit as an ideal way to cement their learning and provide a solid foundation for the remainder of their course.

Regional Selection

Capt Boag and Capt Whysall went out to oversee the educational phase of Regional Selection that took place during September and October. Capt Boag went west to Pokhara whilst Capt Whysall went east to Dharan.

It was a busy time with thirty days of testing over 300 recruits per day. The recruiting staff worked hard but there was also time to explore the majestic locations. Capt Boag had not experienced Nepal before and was struck by the benevolence and hospitality in Pokhara that made him feel most welcome. In between the punishing schedule, he was shown the nightlife by the local staff and also took some leave to do a trek around the Annapurna Mountain Range; he speaks enthusiastically about his next visit.

Capt Whysal praised the excellent camp at Dharan, surrounded by near-impenetrable jungle, which he discovered first hand during one of many attempted cross-country running sessions late into the night. Despite the animal noises emanating from the jungle, he was not deterred. However, the local staff were decidedly more perturbed, clearly knowing things that he did not, and emphatically advised against it. Despite this being his fourth visit to Nepal Capt Whysall still took back many fond memories, and also a cockroach that he discovered had been transiting in his bag when he got to Kathmandu. Having already become battle-hardened with his forays into the jungle, witnesses confirmed that the cockroach was the more surprised of the two.

Badminton

In October, Capt Gamarsing Gurung captained the ITC badminton team to victory for a third year running at the Army 2 Division championships. He was joined by Sgt Kamal Gurung, Cpl Binod Gurung and the OC, Maj Mann. The OC was the token white man in the team and, coupled with his professional moustache, created a cynosure that sufficiently unsettled the opposition's strategy. With some excellent play, the team retained their crown.

Promotions

Lt Higgins was promoted to Captain in October.

Departures and Arrivals

In June 2008 GLW bid a sad farewell to Judy Woodings, a civil servant who had served at GLW from 2001. Having extensive experience teaching abroad including in African and Asian countries, she takes with her years of corporate knowledge.

She is known to a whole generation of Gurkhas, having worked on eight years of recruit and soldier courses, teaching literally hundreds of Gurkha soldiers during her time in Catterick. She has retired but is still involved in promoting English, particularly literacy in prisons.

Judy has been replaced by Mr Glen Thomson, who has previously worked as an ELT at GLW.

Amongst the British Officers in GLW Captain Fairclough left the Army in April to become a police officer in Manchester and Captain Robson left in September to work with adults who suffer from psychiatric disorders. Capt Whysall left in December, to put his instructor skills to good use teaching CLM in Colchester. Capt Boag took over as GLW 2IC in June. Capt Button joined the wing in April and Lt Higgins in June.

A number of Gurkha staff decide to transfer to the wider Army. Sgt Thakar Gurung opted for a life in REME, Cpl Ranjit

Gautam decided to join AGC (SPS), SSgt Surya Thapa went to the Royal Engineers and Cpl Rabindra Rai moved from QGS to Royal Signals in a new trade role. The administrative support functions have also seen a complete change: Cpl Yuvaraj Gurung went to 2 RGR whilst the Chief Clerk, CSgt Jeetbahadur Sahi, swapped post with CSgt Tarachandra Thapa in Battalion headquarters. GLW has seen two Sgt Majors. WO2 Amritraj Gurung arrived and left within six months to take over as SSM of 250 Gurkha Signal Squadron and was replaced by WO2 Ashokraj Gurung QGE. Other new faces are CSgt Yambahadur Bahik, Sgt Balam Pun Magar and Cpls Bharatmani Chongbang Limbu, Binod Gurung and Binod Sherchan.

All this has meant that GLW has kept a balance between maintaining its corporate knowledge as much as possible whilst also welcoming a constant stream of new enthusiastic instructors and support staff.



Staff List

Director of Music
Assistant Director of Music
Band Sergeant Major

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

The Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas

Newsletter

Winter and Spring

January 2008 saw the departure of Capt Kevin Davies and the arrival from Kneller Hall of our newly appointed Director of Music, Maj Wayne Hopla. Barely enough time to catch his breath, Major Hopla Saheb was whisked away to the Gurkha Language Wing in Catterick to undertake the daunting three-week basic Nepalese course.... It would be fair to say that Maj Hopla's Nepali since completing the course is 'ongoing'!

One of the early highlights of the year was on 7 March at the traditional Army Benevolent Fund Concert, at the Duke of York's Royal Military School, Dover, in the presence of no less than the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Kent, a certain Mr Jools Holland! Later that month, the Band returned to the same venue for the annual Gurkha Music Festival, which incidentally celebrates its 10th anniversary in 2009. Brainchild of former Gurkha DOM (then Capt) Neil Morgan, the Festival has continued to grow in popularity and raises considerable funds for the Gurkha Welfare Trust.

Bravest of the Brave

Following Nepalese New Year celebrations in early April, the Band took four days away from its extremely busy schedule to record a new CD 'The Bravest of the Brave'. Using Dover-based recording facilities the long awaited album was made in conjunction with, and funded by, the GWT and the Gurkha Museum, Winchester.

The CD features the Brigade Band in concert and listeners get the opportunity to enjoy a wide variety of Western and Nepalese music. Also on the album are three tracks by our traditional and highly talented folk group The Hill Boys and CD sales are literally booming!

Namaste Cyprus!

After spending three long days locked inside a recording studio, our eagerly awaited 2008 Cyprus roulement tour was upon us. The last week of April saw the Band pack away its instruments and band equipment, leaving behind the cold, wet Kent weather for the warm sun and sandy beaches of the Mediterranean. With the DOM and five members of the Band acting as advance party, the main body arrived on 3 May, just a few days before our first engagement - a sell-out concert at the Pissouri Amphitheatre.

The Pissouri concert began a string of high-profile events across the island, supporting the Commander British Forces Cyprus, ABF(C) and SSAFA, all of which generated fantastic support. A highlight worthy of note was performing for Riding for The Disabled in Happy Valley, Episkopi. The severely handicapped children joined in the dancing and clapping, reacting to the music like nobody had seen before. It was a humbling and emotional experience for all who were party to it.

There was also time to relax during our busy programme, with many members of the Band visiting the impressive Fassouri Water Park (BSM - three times!). The musicians dared each other to ride the highest, fastest and scariest rides in the park... DOM leading from the front of course!

The Tour concluded with a farewell concert in Episkopi at St John's School outdoor theatre, to thank the people of Cyprus for their outstanding support during our time on the island and to raise money for the GWT. Concerned we had perhaps performed 'one concert too many', we need not have worried as the 1800 hrs start-time could not be met due to the large queue of people waiting to buy their tickets at the box-office!

The customary raffle included a genuine Kothimora Kukri (permission specially granted by Colonel Brigade of Gurkhas) and this, along with ticket sales, raised a staggering £5500.

Our tour over, it was time to re-pack our boxes for the long journey home. Although it may be a while before we

return, the bonds between the islanders and the Brigade Band have been strongly forged and we look forward immensely to returning to Cyprus in the future, to play our music and rekindle friendships.

Star Trek

As mentioned earlier, Maj Hopla attended his basic Nepalese language course in January and, keen to practise his new linguistic skills, embarked on Nepal Trek in September 'To boldly go where no DOM has gone before!' Accompanied by his guide and mentor Brigade Band tuba player Cpl Milan, the pair flew into Kathmandu before travelling up country to commence the trek. All equipment and supplies must be carried up steep and well-trodden paths, before the often, more dangerous, slippery descent...

Sponsored by the GWT, visits on the seven-day trek included water purification projects, school refurbishments and the welfare of retired Gurkhas. Many of these brave ex-soldiers live quite solitary lives in remote areas and will only receive a visit on a four year cycle.

DOM commented that it was a great honour and privilege to meet such proud and loyal former Brigade members and to offer help and assistance in any way possible.

Although Maj Hopla returned very tired from Nepal, he thoroughly enjoyed the trek and is already planning his next trip in 2009, to the Western region of the country.

We are the Champions (Again!)

On Wednesday 17 September, the 6-a-side CAMUS Football Cup was keenly fought out on the Kneller Hall sports pitches. Entries were received from Bands throughout the Corps, with a league system culminating in a knock-out phase. Without losing a match, the Gurkha Band found itself in the final, up against a very good side from the Band of the Royal Engineers.

After a fiercely contested first half, the score stood at 2 – 0 before the RE Band put concerted pressure on the Gurkha Band goal mouth early in the second. 'Golden-boots' LCpl

Shyam, however, scored three quick goals to put the match out of the opposition's reach, winning the game and allowing the Gurkha Band to be crowned CAMUS Champions for the third consecutive year. We look forward to defending our title in 2009...come on you reds!

Recent Engagements

After appearing at Rhythm Force, the Brigade Band has been very busy performing at various events around the country. GWT concerts are always extremely well attended and we have also recently supported the newly formed Yorkshire Regiment in Freedom Marches around their home county. We have forged strong links with the Sussex town of Lewes, where we played for the Waterloo Bonfire Society as part of their annual 5 November celebrations.

Retirement

After 27 years of Army service, Capt Tirtharaj Gurung finally hung up his trombone at an emotional farewell party on 17 October.

Serving under the baton of no less than nine DOMs, Capt T rose through the ranks attending his Student Bandmaster's Course 1999 – 2002. His contribution to the Brigade Band has been immense - as instrumentalist, SNCO and eventually Assistant DOM. He will be sorely missed. All Gurkha Band members wish him, Memsahab and his son Pratik the very best salaams for the future.

2009

It already looks like a demanding year ahead The Gurkha Band will be performing with Jools Holland once again at the Duke of York's Royal Military School at the ABF concert on 6 March and appearing at the same venue for the Gurkha Music Festival (17 – 19 April). The Band is also performing at the Royal Bath & West Show (27 – 30 May) before departing in June for a two month roulement tour of Germany...Prost! We hope in September to be invited back to play for a fourth consecutive year at Rhythm Force.



Newsletter

By Captain Charles D McGregor

The year 2008 was a busy one indeed for The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada, with 2009 promising to be no less active. Two important events took place – first the Change of Regimental Sergeant Majors, followed by the Change of Commanding Officers. Additionally, the Regiment marked its 25th year of Airborne tasking and sent more than 20 soldiers to Afghanistan to serve in Canada's mission there.

The new RSM is CWO Shaun Kelly CD, who, in May, replaced outgoing RSM, CWO Scott Patterson CD, in a ceremony at Moss Park Armoury in Toronto, where the Regiment is based.

Taking over in September, new Commanding Officer Lt Col Robert A. Zeidler CD, is a Canadian-born Sandhurst graduate who served with the 2nd Bn Royal Anglian Regiment, the 9th/12th Royal Lancers and the 4th Bn The Royal Green Jackets. He has served in the Golan Heights, Northern Ireland, with the UN in Cyprus and with the BAOR in Germany. He is a full-qualified military parachutist and replaces another jump-qualified officer, Lt Col Martin J. Delaney CD.

Currently, The Queen's Own is the only Reserve Army Regiment in Canada to have an airborne tasking and over time has provided members to serve with the now-disbanded Canadian Airborne Regiment, as well as The Royal Canadian Regiment, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry and the Quebec-based Royal 22nd Regiment/ Royal 22e Régiment.

Since August 2008, almost two dozen members of The Queen's Own Rifles, including a number from the Airborne

The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada

Company, have been serving in Afghanistan as part of The Royal Canadian Regiment's Battle Group. Scheduled to be home by March/April 2009 they have been dispersed to a number of areas in Kandahar Province and have been representing their regiment with pride and earning kudos for their capabilities "Outside the Wire."

One of our jump-qualified soldiers was recently awarded a Medal of Bravery for his actions when the vehicle in which he was riding whilst on patrol in Afghanistan struck an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) and burst into flames. Cpl Stephen Thomas and the other members of the four-man crew immediately began removing live ammunition from the vehicle, at great personal danger, to avoid an explosion which would likely have killed or wounded a number of civilians in the immediate vicinity. All four were awarded Medals of Bravery which were presented by Canada's Governor General Mme Michaëlle Jean.

Meanwhile, The Queen's Own Rifles is anxiously looking forward to – and busily planning for – its 150th birthday, which will take place on 26 April, 2010. Our Colonel-in-Chief, HRH Princess Alexandra, KG, GCVO, will attend ceremonies which the Regiment and its Regimental Associations will hold in Toronto, Calgary, Alberta and Victoria, British Columbia.

It is hoped that we will be able to raise the profile of Canada's "Oldest and Finest Continuously-Serving Infantry Regiment" as we stage a year-long series of interesting – and possibly very exciting – events.



Exchange of Swords



Lt Col Robert A. Zeidler CD



Cpl Stephen Thomas MB

The Royal Australian Regiment

I RAR

Commanding Officer: Lt Col A D Galloway
RSM: WO1 P G Marsh
Home Base: Townsville

I RAR has maintained a high operational tempo since January 2007. The Battalion deployed to three separate operational theatres, Afghanistan, Iraq and Timor Lesté, returning in late October 2007. All three operations equipped the Battalion with invaluable lessons and experience. On return the Battalion proceeded on a well deserved Christmas leave towards late November 2007.

On completion of the Christmas stand down, I RAR assumed the role as the Ready Battalion Group (RBG) and trials on the Infantry 2012 structure. The 2012 model is reshaping the Battalion to provide a more robust and capable team able to operate with greater firepower and mobility in a wider variety of situations and theatres. This new model coupled with the experience gained from the three operational theatres last year, has set the Battalion up for success. The Battalion was reorganised to spread the experience from the three operational theatres throughout the Rifle Companies; this also led to testing the new 2012 model. Alpha through Charlie Company rotated through Jungle Training Wing (JTW) at Tully in February - March 2008. Valuable lessons were highlighted from the individual soldier level through to utilising the 2012 model at Platoon level. Training received at JTW also aided in moulding the new Platoons together.

Whilst the Companies rotated through JTW, the Battalion continued to run Initial Employment Training (IET) for new Infantry soldiers marched out of Kapooka. This training allows the Battalion to shape soldiers from the beginning, better preparing them to operate in any operational environment. The Battalion will continue to run IET courses for the remainder of the year. Also during this period I RAR marched along the Strand to commemorate the RAR Day. This culminated in a dinner with veterans who served in various operational theatres. Similarly the month of February also marked Alpha Company's involvement in Exercise Sea Lion. This was an excellent opportunity for the Company to familiarize itself and practise sea point of entry training with Navy, Transport, Cavalry and Aviation assets.

In March 2008, Support Company courses commenced, resulting in Support Platoons being fully manned with qualified

members. This was something not seen for years. Similarly the Rifle Companies focused on live fire exercises, training and trialing the new 2012 model. 2008 also marked the 15th Anniversary of I RAR's involvement in Operation Solace, Somalia. To commemorate this tour over 150 veterans returned to the Battalion in April. Veterans were briefed on the 2012 structure and new systems and equipment available to today's soldiers. There was also a dawn service and several opportunities to catch up with old mates and meet the younger generation of soldiers. The reunion culminated in an atmospheric dinner on the parade ground, catered by I RAR cooks. May was a busy month; it marked the 40th Anniversary of the battle of Coral. The Battalion hosted approximately 300 veterans who attended a dawn service and were given the opportunity to get hands on with the new equipment of today's infantry. A monument to commemorate the battle was also commissioned and proudly stands near the Battalion museum. In May the Battalion also participated in Combat Training Centre (CTC) rotations. CTC is a chance for a company to engage in an exercise that provides simulated indirect and small arms fire producing both simulated vehicle and human casualties. This is the most realistic exercise infantry can partake in. The rotation saw Bravo Company reform into a Combat Team with Bushmasters provided by B Squadron 3rd/4th Cavalry, a Military Police Detachment from I Military Police Battalion, an Engineer Section from 3 Combat Engineer Regiment, and Support Company elements including Assault Pioneers, Direct Fire Support Weapon Section, Recon and Snipers. The exercise thoroughly tested individual through to joint Combat Team skills and tactics in realistic warfighting scenarios providing further lessons that allowed the Battalion and supporting elements to develop on the 2012 model.

The remainder of the year will continue to see a high tempo with further Company CTC rotations, a Battalion live fire exercise and a Combat Team size exercise in Germany operating with Coalition partners. The year has so far, and will continue to shape the Battalion into an incredibly potent and modern fighting force with highly trained and well equipped soldiers ready to face any complex warfighting environment.

2 RAR

Commanding Officer: Lt Col B N James
RSM: WO1 S Wasson
Home Base: Townsville

In the past year, 2 RAR has completed a cycle of administration, training, exercises and operations. Following a period of individual training, the preparation for operations commenced in July 2007. C Company was committed to Op SLIPPER in Afghanistan and joined the Reconstruction Task Force 3 (RTF 3) which was based on the 3rd Combat Engineer Regiment (3 CER) and the remainder of the Battalion was committed to Op ASTUTE and became the core of the Timor Lesté Battle Group 3 (TLBG 3). The preparation phase was characterised by considerable administration as new soldiers joined the Battalion from their initial employment training. After the completion of a series of preparatory exercises at High Range Training Area (HRTA), both Battle Groups were deemed ready to deploy. In late September 2007, after each component conducted a farewell parade, RTF 3 departed to Afghanistan and TLBG 3 commenced its move to Timor-Leste. TLBG 3 was a diverse organisation that consisted of 730 soldiers from 27 different units of the Army, Navy and Air Force as well as a Rifle Company from the 2nd/1st Battalion, The Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment (2/1 RNZIR).

After assuming the responsibility for the Timor Lesté Area of Operations (TLAO) from I RAR, the Battlegroup deployed A Company to the Eastern districts centred on Baucau and Support Company into the hinterland of Gleno where they conducted their operational tasks from independent Forward Operating Bases (FOB). In most cases, the FOBs were built from scratch and living conditions were spartan. Self-improvement became the order of the day and, in time, these locations were developed to a habitable standard, but in the first instance, these conditions served to emphasise the remoteness of the terrain and the limited communications and infrastructure that characterised the TLAO. B Company remained in the capital, Dili; as did Battlegroup Headquarters, the administrative element and the New Zealand Rifle Company. The Op ASTUTE tour, it is fair to state, was a busy tour. Each Company was committed to a continuous programme that included patrolling, information gathering, key leadership engagement and the provision of support to medical and re-construction Civil Action tasks. In addition, there was a requirement to provide support to the United Nations Police as well as the Timorese authorities and Armed Forces. There was always a requirement to host visitors from Australia and support the Joint Task Force Headquarters. At the completion of the tour, TLBG 3 handed the commitment to TLBG 4 (which was based on 3 RAR) and returned to Australia in April 2008. 19 commendations were awarded to individuals within the Battle

Group for their outstanding service in a number of areas over the course of the deployment. C Company and a Mortar Section joined the RTF 3 and deployed to Afghanistan. They too returned to Australia in April 2008.

Both TLBG 3 and RTF 3 participated in a "Welcome Home" parade in Townsville. The two Battle Groups marched down the Strand in Townsville. The Minister of Defence, accompanied by the Chief of Army, Commander 1st Division and the Commander 3rd Brigade took the salute. Although a welcome home for the troops, the event was a families' day too: it was as much for the families and partners who stayed behind and supported those who had deployed, as well as for the soldiers themselves.

After such a fitting return 2 RAR is now in Townsville and complete for the first time in nine months. The training cycle has commenced with an emphasis on re-constitution and preparation for training and operations. In addition, the Battalion has hosted ExWANTOKWARRIOR (with a Company from I Royal Papuan Infantry Regiment (1 RPIR) - from the Papua New Guinea Defence Force) and is preparing to run two Initial Employment Training (IET) Courses on behalf of the School of Infantry to support the growth of the Army. Of note is the re-organisation to a new organisational structure - known as the Army Capability Requirement (ACR) 2012 structure that will increase the organic fire support capability within each Rifle Company. Soon 2 RAR will again resume the Ready Battalion Group (RBG) role as well as deploy back to the familiar stamping ground at HRTA for collective training including a Combat Training Centre (CTC) Battlegroup-level "Warfighter" rotation on Ex SWIFT EAGLE 08. After the training, operations again beckon. The Battalion has been warned to become the nucleus of another TLBG in 2009 as well as provide a company group for the security detachment task in Iraq.

It has been a successful year for the Battalion and several officers and soldiers have been recognised for their endeavours and commitment. Among the well-deserved awards for the operational tours, particular mention should be made of Corporal B J Daly and Corporal W D Wood who were both awarded the Distinguished Service Medal for service in Iraq during the Battalion's earlier tour on Op CATALYST in 2006. Special mention should also go to Corporal R J Ingold who was awarded the Conspicuous Service Medal and Corporal J W Huggett who won the "Hassett Award", which is presented to the best junior leader within the Regiment.

3 RAR

Commanding Officer: Lt Col W B Stothart
RSM: WO1 D J Welsh
Home Base: Holsworthy

This year has seen the first fighting elements from 3rd Battalion deploy to the War in Afghanistan. Three platoons in Support Company were chosen to be re-rolled and form the rifle company that supports Reconstruction Task Force Four (RTF-4). They are now deployed in Afghanistan under the title of Security Task Group - Combat Team Dagger (STG).

Support Company's Direct Fire Support Weapons Platoon, Mortar Platoon and Pioneer Platoon form the basis of Combat Team Dagger. RTF-4 is based on 6th Engineer Support Regiment's Headquarters and one of its Engineer Squadrons. In January this year Support Company travelled to Gallipoli Barracks in Brisbane to join RTF-4's Headquarters and conduct pre-deployment training. This training culminated in a Mission Rehearsal Exercise, which was conducted at Wide Bay Training Area.

Combat Team Dagger has been successfully conducting Security Operations in Uruzgan Province for three months. In order to support the Engineer element, Combat Team Dagger has been conducting Tarkts. A Tarkt is a security patrol into the local town of Tarin Kowt. These patrols allow RTF 4 Engineers, who are managing construction projects in the area, to inspect the progress of construction. The Combat Team is also providing the security for the construction of a Patrol Base for the Afghan National Army. This effort has been a challenging task, so much so that to increase the effectiveness of security they were required to dig in. For many, this was the first time that they had conducted defensive operations since Initial Employment Training at Singleton. In arduous conditions, they dug a Combat Team size defensive position, which included armoured vehicle scrapes. To date, the deployment has incurred three serious non-battle casualties. These men are currently recovering in Australia.

In February, Timor Lesté Battle Group Four concentrated at Holsworthy Barracks with 3rd Battalion being the Infantry component. Under the leadership of a new Commanding Officer,

4 RAR (Cdo)

Commanding Officer: Lt Col P Kenny
RSM: WO1 C Howe
Home Base: Holsworthy

4 RAR (Cdo) shared the anguish of the writer as we endeavoured, within the constraints of strict security requirements, to write a meaningful text on the unit's activities during the year. Regrettably we failed this time. However, the

Lieutenant Colonel Wade Stothart, the newly formed TLBG-4 Companies A, B, C, Support and CSS began to prepare their soldiers and equipment for operations.

While preparing to deploy, 'Old Faithful' was again called upon to rapidly reinforce the mission in East Timor due to an assassination attempt on the lives of the President and Prime Minister of East Timor on 11 February 2008. A Company deployed, after a rather late night of preparations, as the Ready Company Group. The deployment of A Company meant that all three Rifle Companies of 3rd Battalion have deployed to East Timor on short notice tasks during the previous twelve months.

TLBG-4 has seen numerous prominent achievements. The most notable of these include taking the surrender of the rebels involved with the assassination attempts. The Battle Group has also worked closely with United Nations and Indigenous Police Forces to effect the confiscation of a plethora of illegal weapons. These accomplishments have coincided with the presentation of several training courses including six Basic Combat Communications Courses, a High Frequency Radio Course and a Supervisor Infantry Operations-Section Course. This training is essential in order to elevate as many soldiers to 'Rifleman 343-2' as possible in preparation for 2009, which sees 3rd Battalion assuming the role of Ready Battalion Group.

Each of these deployments has placed stress on soldiers and their families. Whenever assistance is required, Rear Details has been stalwart in providing auxiliary support. Although fulfilling less glamorous roles, they are a fundamental aspect of the support network required to accomplish operations overseas. They have provided administrative support, welfare support, reinforcements and preparation for training to be conducted upon the return of the Battalion, in preparation for going online again in 2009.

other members of the Regiment continue to wish 4 RAR (Cdo) every success and earnestly hope for minimum casualties as they undertake their various missions.

5 RAR

Commanding Officer: Lt Col J F Ellwood
RSM: WO1 C Howe
Home Base: Robertson Barracks, NT

From June to December last year, the Tiger Battalion deployed to Al Muthanna and Dhi Qar provinces in Southern Iraq as the lead element of Over Watch Battle Group (West). OBG (W) 3 was supported by 2 Cav Regt and B Sqn 3/4 Cav Regt, 8/12 Mdm Regt, as well as attachments from across the Army. The soldiers of the OBG (W) 3 were involved in a number of contacts. However it was the constant patrolling to counter IED and IDF threats and engagement with the local population that was the mainstay of daily operational life. The patrolling was very successful and had a marked impact on preserving the lives of coalition forces that constantly transited through the area of operations. Many projects were undertaken to build or refurbish schools, family centres and an array of other initiatives in the Battle Group's AO. These efforts created work for the locals, education opportunities for the children and also damaged the insurgents' information operations campaign. Despite some minor casualties, all had returned home by late December 2007.

Having completed an earlier tour in Iraq in support of OBG (W) 2, D Company provided the nucleus of the Battalion at home. After clearing leave, D Company participated in a CTC led war fighting exercise as part of a I Armoured Regiment Battle Group. This was the first time that members of the Battalion had operated with the new MIAI Abrams Main Battle Tank. The individual training conducted focused on the maintenance of mechanisation skills and the development of junior leaders. During the first half of 2008, D Company went on line as the Ready Mechanised Company Group.

There was little rest for some members of the Battalion on return from Iraq. After Christmas leave in 2008, elements of Support Company, led by Maj Matt Shea, deployed to Malaysia in February for a three month tour on RCB 81. The Company included a Troop of Engineers from I CER and was rounded out from the remainder of the Brigade. For many of the soldiers this was the first time that they had operated in primary jungle. They quickly learnt the art of living and operating in the arduous tropical conditions. The rotation proved to be extremely valuable.

7 RAR

Commanding Officer: Lt Col J F Ellwood
RSM: WO1 C Howe
Home Base: Robertson Barracks, NT

5/7 RAR de-linked on the 3 December 2006 after 33 years of service. 7 RAR took with it B Company which was serving in Afghanistan at the time. From that point on though the Battalion

A successful Recon Course and live firing of mortars were key highlights of the deployment. The hard learnt lessons in the jungles of Malaysia and Brunei will serve the soldiers and the Battalion well into the future.

In April the Battalion deployed a mechanised platoon from B Company to Timor Lesté, as part of the 3 RAR-led Timor Lesté Battle Group (TLBG IV). The platoon acquitted themselves extremely well during the lead up training and Mission Rehearsal Exercise and has been operating very successfully in-theatre. The mechanised platoon is due to return to Australia in the latter half of 2008.

In February 2008, under the auspices of the Enhanced Land Force project, the Battalion was given approval to raise its third Mechanised Company, effectively increasing the Battalion's strength to over 700 personnel. Consequently, 5 RAR are conducting two initial employment training courses. 5 RAR have also conducted promotion courses, support company courses and mechanised crew courses as part of its remediation plan following its recent deployments.

On 6 June 2008 5 RAR commemorated the 39th anniversary of the Battle of Binh Ba. As part of this occasion, a parade was held to receive its new set of colours. The parade was held on 5 June 2008 at East Point Reserve in Darwin. 5 RAR Association members from across Australia participated in the parade. Pte Quintus Tertius (Sabre), the battalion mascot was also present on parade after a long absence from regimental life due to the Battalion's operational tempo. He will be promoted to Corporal on 10 August after seven fine years of service to the Battalion.

5 RAR has again been warned to deploy on operations in the latter half of the year. In the course of two years, this fine battalion will have grown in strength by over 200 and will have deployed over 700 personnel to almost every area of operations. This has been a tall order. The Battalion has taken the challenge in its stride and excelled. As always, 5 RAR remains situationally aware, combat ready and fiercely loyal!!

literally exploded, it grew so fast. A Company was raised from the ground up and by 1 September 2007 was fully manned. A skeleton C Company was also formed in September 2007 and

officially raised on 21 January 2008. The 7th Battalion has grown, trained and been on continuous deployments from 3 December 2006 gaining invaluable experience and maturity along the way.

The Battalion's rapid growth presented its own challenges, as there was no guidance for administration procedures, not enough accommodation to house two growing battalions and the Battalion was slotted into any space available from the de-linking of 5/7 RAR. The assorted members of the new Battalion managed to pull through and, drawing from experiences learnt from 5/7 RAR, new procedures were developed, rent in Darwin sky-rocketed as soldiers spilled out into the surrounding suburbs, and 7 RAR eventually secured its own territory to work from.

The Battalion Ball was held on the 12 October 2007 and was an eventful evening - wherever soldiers, NCOs and officers gather with free alcohol to midnight, the night will be one to remember. The highlight was the presentation of the awards for most valuable NCO to Cpl Bloffwitch and most valuable soldier to Pte (now LCpl) Kiely.

7 RAR participated in Ex SOUTHERN REACH 02/09 in Cultana, South Australia as the enemy for 1 Armoured Regiment (1 ARMD). As usual Cultana generated amazing amounts of dust, usually followed by rain, producing copious amounts of mud. The CO, Lt Col Gabriel, with a combat team confounded 1 ARMD and this resulted in a stalemate during the first round of the exercise. The only downside was that the boys occasionally were

8/9 RAR

Commanding Officer: Lt Col SA Stuart
RSM: WO1 W Lampard
Home Base: Enoggera

During the second week of September 2008, the 8th/9th Battalion celebrated its re-entry onto the Order of Battle of the Australian Army. The celebrations took the form of a re-dedication of the Battalion to the Colours service and a Battalion Ball on Friday 1 September.

The Battalion has achieved significant growth during 2008 and has achieved some significant milestones. The Battalion is currently able to deploy five light rifle platoons under a dismounted rifle company command and control structure. The Battalion also managed to achieve equal second place with the 2nd Battalion in the Duke of Gloucester Cup competition run at the School of Infantry. This is a significant achievement given that most of the other Battalions within the Royal Australian Regiment fielded teams of excellent quality. All of the soldiers in the team were very junior in their careers and had had little time to train. Success of this magnitude in the first year is a strong indication of the potential for the future.

A part of the celebrations for the re-dedication of the Battalion back to the Colours of the 8th and the 9th Battalions is the formal acceptance of the moneys for the Regimental Trust Fund. These funds, some \$47,000 remaining from when

woken by the sound of generators and vehicle repairs requiring jackhammers burning the midnight oil. Ex SOUTHERN REACH was a great opportunity for the new Battalion to flex its wings and show to all of 1 Brigade that we were here to stay and were going to have a big impact on the future.

7 RAR has had its fair share of deployments, and then some more; B Company to Afghanistan as part of RTF I, A Company to SECDet XIII, 1 PI A Company to East Timor, and another Rotation for the Battalion as the Battle Group HQ for Mentor and Reconstruction Task Force I, with more rotations to follow. The Battalion is flat out training, deploying and gaining invaluable experience and maturing as one of the finest Battalions in the RAR. This fast tempo has created an identity and independence apart from our mechanized brethren in 5 RAR. 7 RAR will continue to deploy, grow and mature and will move down to Adelaide in 2011. This will provide the Battalion with an excellent base at the Edinburgh Defence Precinct and a beautiful city for the soldiers to rapidly gain a reputation in!

7 RAR has come a long way from the de-linking on 3 December 2006 and rapidly grown, matured and deployed. A lot of the customs and traditions from the original 7 RAR have been restored and maintained, providing 7 RAR with its own culture and identity that will only grow and develop. Anyone who has or will serve in this Battalion has the right to be proud and know that this Battalion is in a class of its own at the front.

the 8th/9th Battalion was disbanded in 1997, have been held in trust by the Royal Australian Regiment Foundation since that time. Over the period the money has been earning interest and approximately \$60,000 will go back to soldiers of the Battalion. The officers and soldiers of the Battalion would like to thank the Royal Australian Regiment Foundation for their stewardship of these funds and those who had the unenviable task of closing down the Battalion for their foresight. The plan was for the money to be held only for ten years but the Foundation has generously continued the task for a little over 11 years.

The future is bright for the Battalion with their deployment to Ex SWIFT EAGLE 2008 as the Opposition Force Battle Group. This will be the first opportunity for the newest Infantry Battalion in the Royal Australian Regiment to exercise as a Battle Group. If the results of the Duke of Gloucester Cup are any indication, the Second Battalion will have a very evenly matched adversary.

Ist Battalion The Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment

The last few years of the history of the 1st Battalion The Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment (1RNZIR) have been marked by changes, transitions, deployments and a high tempo. Rather than detail a step by step account of the preceding two years the highlights and milestones will be highlighted for you, the readers of The Kukri.

The operational tempo for 1 RNZIR has remained high with 1 RNZIR personnel deploying into three theatres around the world. In September 2006, the last 1 RNZIR Platoon deployed to the Solomon Islands, and in November 2006 V Company deployed as a company group to East Timor on Op GYRO II. The main deployment 1 RNZIR has continued to support is Op CRIB in Afghanistan working as part of the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Bamyan Province. In October 2008, V Company deployed as part of a new CRIB structure that will see 1 RNZIR provide a company for deployment every six months, a high tempo to maintain.

In August 2007, 1 RNZIR celebrated its 50th birthday. The weekend saw many old soldiers and veterans turn up to be welcomed back onto the parade ground and see what the battalion which influenced so many of their lives was currently doing. Memories and stories flowed throughout as the Battalion conducted a Beat the Retreat on a cold, rainy Manawatu afternoon and then hosted all to a function that will go down in Battalion history. The next morning a memorial service was conducted in the centre of Palmerston North with the number of old soldiers marching at the front of the Battalion surpassing the numbers of currently serving soldiers.

In July 2008 the Battalion took part in Tribute 08, which saw the New Zealand Government formally recognize the service of, and apologise to, the New Zealand Vietnam veterans. The Vets and families descended on the City of Wellington for a weekend of reunions and celebration. 1 RNZIR had its battle honour colours re-dedicated to include the last two years of the Vietnam conflict. The standing ovation from the packed stadium as the 1 RNZIR Colours and guard marched on was a poignant moment for all soldiers involved.

The last few years has seen 1 RNZIR make progress in its transition to a CAV Battalion. One of the Battalion OCs coined the catch phrase, 'CAV is not horses, tanks, Attack helicopters or armoured cars..... it is a mindset change. We move faster, go further and hit a lot harder'. The firepower and speed that the NZLAV provides combined with the ability and capability of the dismounted soldiers give 1 RNZIR a capability that is still being understood. In 2006 and 2007 W Company led the way in

developing the CAV concept and culminated in Exercise WOLF III, which tested the Company on its capability while covering most of the North Island.

The last few years have also seen the introduction of other capabilities into the Battalion. New items of personal kit have made spending time in the field more comfortable and our soldiers are becoming well equipped for the modern battle field. The Javelin Missile system has been integrated into the Battalion and was successfully tested earlier this year and the new combat shotgun has also been introduced.

One of the most noticeable changes in the last year is the introduction of the Army Transition Plan (ATP) which will see the Battalion move from being two CAV companies and a Combat Support Company to three CAV companies that have their own integral support Platoon of Javelin, Reconnaissance and Snipers. This change will take some getting use to but is the direction the Battalion will take over the next few years.

In November 2008 the Battalion conducted a change of command as Lt Col J G Howard MNZM, RNZIR handed command over to Lt Col Motley RNZAC. Lt Col Howard has served 1 RNZIR, its soldiers and its cause well over his three year tenure and came out bleeding from many battles fought on behalf of the men and developing the CAV capability. His presence will be missed by all. The RSM WO1 T Wright, loved and feared by the men, will also hand over his role in December 2008. He had an ability to interact at all levels and get the best out of soldiers, while still installing fear on the parade ground.

The current state of 1 RNZIR sees V Company on deployment, W Company being Main Effort in the development of the CAV capability and A Company being regenerated as a light infantry company prior to getting NZLAV at the start of 2009.

Aside from deployments and numerous weeks on exercise, 1 RNZIR has been involved in all the other issues that surround a line Battalion; manning, personal issues, admin that is forgotten tomorrow, co-ord, maintenance and reporting.

2008 has been marked by upheaval and change and a never ending cycle of deployments. It has been a long year for all and, on this note, all the best for 2009. We will have a cold beer for you and those on deployment over the next month as we wind down for a well-deserved Christmas break.

Ake Ake Kia Kaha
Onward



Curator's Report on The Gurkha Museum - 2008

The Museum has experienced another excellent year with increased visitor numbers to the Museum itself and the two temporary exhibitions - our best on record. The Trading Company has maintained a reasonable level of trade over the Summer, despite the overall downturn in the international and national economy. We hope the Autumn and Christmas sales will improve the overall annual trading figures. A big vote of thanks must go to the numerous Volunteers and Gurkha Staff who have manned the Museum Shop and Mobile Shops over the summer period. In addition, the interest shown by the public in the Museum lectures has produced a 25% increase in attendance. The Gurkha Brigade Association lecture and Curry Lunch in April was particularly well attended.

This August we bade farewell to two of our serving Gurkha Staff who returned to their units - Sergeant Hariprasad Gurung (Chief Clerk) and Corporal Ombahadur Thapa (IRGR). Replacements are now in post at the Museum and we hope our visitors will be able to meet Sergeant Dalbir Gurung (Chief Clerk) and Corporal Saptaraj Rai. Rifleman Chetbahadur Rana and Rifleman Balbahadur Tamang who arrived in 2007 continue for another twelve months.

The Macdonald Gallery has again been the venue for the many Gurkha Regimental Association Reunions, the two temporary exhibitions and a number of successful lectures. Sadly, during the past year the Associations of the 3rd Queen Alexandra's Own Gurkha Rifles, 5th Royal Gurkhas Rifles (Frontier Force), 8th Gurkha Rifles and 9th Gurkha Rifles, decided to disband due to the advancing age of their members and decreasing numbers. The Museum has enjoyed hosting their annual Regimental Association Reunions, and we hope that individuals will continue to attend the Museum's lectures and exhibitions. A temporary exhibition titled "Art and Valour" was staged from 1-13 April 2008 attracting a wide range of visitors, both young and old. The GBA lecture on 18 April by Lieutenant Colonel 'Fairy' Gopsill on "An Infantryman's Experience of Malaya 1948-60" was a memorable and moving presentation to begin the 60th Anniversary Commemoration of the start of the Malayan Emergency. From 8 August to 7 September 2008, following a good review in the Times, a temporary exhibition was held to commemorate this Anniversary. The exhibition was opened by General Sir Garry Johnson and attracted a wide range of public interest, including many National Service veterans of the campaign.

Winchester Military Museums (WMM) again had an interesting year. The winter series of lectures (staged each year between October and March) appealed to a growing audience from within a 25 mile radius of Winchester. The School

Educational Programme continues to expand with schools from the Local Education Authority Area involved in both the cultural and military history fields.

The Brigade of Gurkhas Visitor Centre, Shorncliffe has attracted a steady number of visitors and local schools to view the exhibits. The Visitor Centre staged two exhibitions on the "The Gurkhas at Delhi, 1857" from November 2007 to April 2008 and "The Malayan Campaign 1948-60" from 13 October 2008 to 1 March 2009. There are now a large proportion of the Resident Battalion's Gurkha children in local schools. This has resulted in greater interest generally from schools in the Folkestone area to know and understand more about Gurkhas and their culture. A new member of staff, Corporal Bhuddi Sunwar, recently joined the Visitor Centre team of Gurkhas, replacing Corporal Prithviman Thapa in August 2008.

This year, the Museum has received from The Friends new purchases of fourteen medal groups including four India Distinguished Service Medals (IDSM) in respect of Rifleman Asman Rai 2/7GR from Mesopotamia, during World War I, Rifleman Saindhoj Rai 2/7GR who led a party of eight escapees from Tobruk in 1942, Rifleman Dilsing Limbu 2/10GR at Gallipoli 1915 and Bhunajit Rai 1/7GR, attached 3/11GR in Waziristan 1920. The Museum also purchased a major collection of Gurkha regimental buttons and a very rare Queen's Coronation 7th Gurkha Rifles silver cross belt insignia. Phase 2 of the Touch Screen Project incorporating the Serving Brigade of Gurkhas was completed in early 2008 and is proving popular with visitors. The Museum is currently developing a new interactive Touch Screen project to explain the campaign medals won by Gurkhas from 1815 to the present day. It will be a first amongst Military Museums and portray the essential aspects of each campaign medal and the geographic location in the world where it was awarded.

Looking ahead, I would like to remind readers that the Friends Annual Newsletter will be published in March/April 2009. Some dates for your 2009 diary include: The Gurkha Brigade Lecture and Curry Lunch on Friday 17 April 2009, titled "The National Trust for Nature Conservation in Nepal", by Field Marshal Sir John Chapple and Lieutenant Colonel Gerry Birch. The Friends Lecture on "The Gurkha Welfare Trust - The Way Ahead" by Colonel William Shuttlewood on Friday 12 June, and The Summer Lecture and drinks on "One Equal Temper of Heroic Hearts: The Gurkhas, Lord Roberts and the March to Kandahar" by the author Rodney Atwood on Thursday 16 July. The Summer Exhibition for 2009 will commemorate "170 Years of Conflict in Afghanistan" and will run from 8 August to 6 September. The Annual Theme Lecture by Colonel Jonny

Bourne on "Gurkha Operations in Afghanistan" including a curry lunch will be staged on 16 October 2009. The seating capacity for lectures is limited, so early booking is recommended. There will be other lectures and events at the Museum during 2009. For those that have access to the website, I would ask you to look at www.thegurkhamuseum.co.uk for further information or telephone 01962 842832.

The next project for 2009 will be the refurbishment of the Museum entrance and the reception area. An application for a grant of £17,000 has been submitted and we currently await the outcome of the grant application.

We look forward to meeting Kukri readers during the next twelve months and hope that you will be able to come and see the fruits of the new projects and the temporary exhibition during 2009.



The Gurkha Welfare Trust

Director's Report

By Colonel W F Shuttlewood OBE, Director GWT

The Trust has enjoyed a further good year during 2007/08. Income from all sources was just over £11 million, over half of which was from donations from our supporters. This was £2.5m more than the previous year and largely the result of media attention on the pension and immigration arrangements for the serving Brigade. The balance was made up by income from investments (£1.4m), legacies (£1.8m) and grants from both the MOD and DFID, the former to support the Trust's staff and administrative costs in Nepal, the latter to sustain the Regional Water and Sanitation Programme run by the Trust.

Expenditure was £9m, a 15% increase over the previous year, reflecting the substantial increase in the rate of welfare pension awarded by Trustees in 2007, a further payment of Cold Weather Allowance and increased support costs, the result of introducing revised terms and conditions of service for our Field Staff. But the central theme of Trust activities remains unchanged: the implementation of the Trust's Strategy Review 2005.

Support to our welfare pensioners remains the Trust's core activity – see tables. The rate of pension now stands at NCR 3,800 (about £29) and represents a substantial future financial liability. The Trust now has to earmark appropriate funds within its accounts to meet not just the current but also the forecast "obligation". Our Actuaries advise us that as at 30 June 2008 the Trust must earmark £25 million to meet our future welfare pension and medical scheme payments. Identification of this sizeable sum has one key implication: it is essential the Trust continues actively to raise funds to ensure we can sustain our welfare programmes in the long term.

There are four key developments which will be of interest to the readers. First, the Trust has agreed to provide support to Regimental Associations which wish to distribute funds in Nepal to their welfare pensioners. To protect the Trust's reputation, support would only be provided for activities to mark key Regimental anniversaries. The special nature of these events would allow the Trust to explain to the welfare pension community the reason why not all welfare pensioners would receive a gratuity. Such events would, by their nature, be exceptional rather than routine.

Second, the Trust's new governance arrangements are working well and the Nominated Trustee of the Gurkha Brigade Association is very active in sustaining the link between the Trust and the Association. The Trust is very conscious of the marvellous support provided by all members of the GBA over the years

and it is right that they should collectively be closely informed of Trust policies and activities.

Third, we are clearly entering a period of recession and the effect on the Trust's ability to raise funds is a concern, not least because of our ability to meet our long term obligations. As a result we are determined to ensure our various income streams are sustained, whatever the extent of economic gloom in the country and abroad. One immediate effect on the Trust is a substantial change in the Rate of Exchange between the Pound Sterling and the Nepalese Rupee (NCR). It is of note that a one rupee drop against £1 adds £60,000 to Trust expenditure - and since 1 July 2008 the value of Sterling has dropped by 15 rupees. We keep a careful eye on the markets! But equally the role and importance of our regional branches will increase, both to raise funds and to keep the aims and objects of the Trust firmly in the public eye. Their work is therefore of huge importance to the Trust and we greatly value the support of the individuals who give freely of their time in our support. But their numbers are diminishing and I ask all members of Regimental Associations to consider whether they can provide support.

Finally the Trust continues to press ahead with the Residential Home project in Nepal. The design has been agreed and it is intended to begin construction of the first home in Pokhara as a Pilot Scheme in Spring 2009, to be complete by early 2010. Providing all goes well the Trust intends to build a second home in Dharan and further homes may follow. Whilst Trustees do not doubt the need for this project in support of those welfare pensioners in the direst of circumstances, they are aware that it will benefit relatively few individuals. As a result the Gurkha Welfare Scheme have carried out a study into enhanced support for all our welfare pensioners. This is an important piece of work to ensure balance across the entire spectrum of Trust activities. It is intended to provide all Regimental Associations with a comprehensive brief on the Residential Home Project in the New Year.

In summary, the Trust finances are in relatively good shape and this will be reflected in our Balance Sheet when issued at the end of the year. But our future financial obligations remind us that we do need to keep generating funds. In this context we are extremely grateful for the way in which all Regimental Associations have supported us in the past and we hope that it is a tradition which will be maintained in the future.

The Gurkha Brigade Association

GBA Calendar of Events – 2009

UNIT	DATE	LOCATION	EVENT	REMARKS
GBA	19 May	Gurkha Museum	Briefing by Col BG	
	06 Jun	RMAS	GBA Memorial Service and Reunion	
	26 Jun	Aldershot	Nepal Cup & All Ranks Reunion	
	26 Oct	Army & Navy Club	GBA Trustees Meeting	
	05 Nov	London	Field of Remembrance	
	05 Nov	London	Gurkha Statue Ceremony	
	05 Nov	Army & Navy Club	GBA Committee Annual General Meeting	
	05 Nov	Army & Navy Club	GBA Annual Dinner	
	08 Nov	Cenotaph	Remembrance Sunday	
I GR	09 May	Gurkha Museum	AGM Lunch	
The Sirmoor Club	16 May	Morzine Orchardleigh GC Wye & Usk Cowes Winchester	Sirmoor Skiing Golf Fishing Regatta AGM & Reunion	
6 GR	21 Sep	RMAS	AGM & Reunion	
7 GR	12 Sep	Gurkha Museum	AGM & Reunion	
9 GR	25 Apr	Gurkha Museum	Informal Reunion	
10 GR	Apr		AGM & Lunch	
QGE	Jun	Minley Manor	AGM	
QG Sigs	25 Sep	Bramcote	AGM	
	26 Sep		Reunion	
QOGLR	8 May	Buller Bks New Normandy Bks	AGM	
	4 Jul		Reunion	
	30 Oct	Buller Bks	Annual Dinner	
RGR	02 May	Twickenham Folkestone	RGR Reunion	
	04 Jul		RGR 15th Anniversary Ball	
Gurkha Museum	17 April		GBA Lecture: The National Trust for Nature Conservation in Nepal, by FM Sir John Chapple & Lt Col Gerry Birch	
	12 June		Lecture: The Gurkha Welfare Trust – The Way Ahead, by Col William Shuttlewood	

UNIT	DATE	LOCATION	EVENT	REMARKS
Gurkha Museum (cont)	8 Aug – 7 Sep		Summer Exhibition – 170 years of conflict in Afghanistan	
	16 Oct		Lecture: Gurkha Ops in Afghanistan, by Lt Col Jonny Bourne	
	17 Oct		Friends of the Gurkha Museum AGM	
Brit/ Nepal Society	19 Feb	London	Annual Nepali Supper	
HQBG	27 - 29 May	RMAS	Brigade Conference	
Gurkha Religious Festivals	14 Jan		Maghne Sankranti	
	23 Feb		Shivaratri	
	10 Mar		Holi (Chir Jalaune)	
	11 Mar		Holi (Rank Khelne)	
	02 May		Sansarimai Puja	
	16 Jul		Srawan Sankranti	
	13 Aug		Shree Krishna Janmastami	
	25 Sep		Phulpati	
	26 Sep		Kalaratri	
	27 Sep		Mar	
	28 Sep		Tika	
	18 Oct		Laxmi Puja	
19 Oct		Gobardhan Puja		
20 Oct		Bhia Tika		

The Gurkha Brigade Association Golf Meeting 2008

By Lt Col Tony Skipper

Held at the Army Golf Club Aldershot on 10 September 2008 and hosted by the Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment Regimental Association in its 50th anniversary year, 34 golfers, including four ladies, gathered for a social but competitive day's golf on the second oldest course in Hampshire (founded in 1883). Once the golfers had passed the very difficult task of locating the club, they then had to pass the second test of negotiating the 6550 yards of picturesque heathland sandwiched between the Basingstoke Canal and Farnborough Airfield.

Ten Association teams of three players each and four individuals were mixed into mainly four-ball groups and played 18 holes before a late lunch. Despite the poor August and September weather, the players managed to escape with only about one hour of light drizzle on lush fairways and excellent greens. The 6 GR Association team were keen to emulate their 2007 success but were matched stroke by stroke by both the QOGLR teams, who eventually prevailed. The QOGLR "B" team of Major Chitraj Limbu, Major Rudrabahadur Sahi and Captain

Khimparsad Gauchan scored a winning 99 points, with the QOGLR "A" team of Lt Col Tony Skipper, Lt Col David Turner and Major Michael Thorp as runners-up with 95 points, narrowly beating the 6 GR "A" team by one point.

Brigadier Tony Kerr QGE had the best front nine score and Captain Sovitbahadur Hamal Thakuri QOGLR the best back nine. The ladies' prize was won by Liz Peck, QGE Association and nearest the pin on the par 3 8th hole was Colonel Nick Cooke 10 GR.

At the prizegiving the Chairman of the QOGLR Association, Lt Col Tony Bridger, rather embarrassed by the QOGLR Association successes, congratulated all players and it was generally considered fitting that in their 50th anniversary year QOGLR should on this occasion be 'allowed' to win!

The 2009 meeting will be held on 4 September and hosted by Queen's Gurkha Signals in their 60th anniversary year.

A Tribute to the Gurkhas

Proud, Oh so proud are the Gurkhas,
Proud as their mem sahibs proclaim,
Knowing their husbands are heroes,
Praying their sons be the same.

Bawdy the humour of Gurkhas,
Cheery their smiles and their song,
Fighting all hours that God gives them,
Battling patient and strong.

Knowing the tricks of Houdini,
They vanish as dew on the grass,
Their foes are left quite bewildered,
Wondering how this came pass!

Brave, Oh so brave are the Gurkhas,
Courage is their second name:
Covered, distinguished with honours,
Blazing and brilliant as flame!

By Mrs Marilyn Fountaine

(Member of 3 GROA)

October 2008

Obituaries

Obituary List

The Editor records with regret the deaths of the following members of the Brigade between 1 January and 31 December 2008 together with earlier deaths not recorded in *The Kukri* 2007.

1 GR	Brig J E Heelis OBE (also 7 GR)	1 September 2008
2 GR	Honorary Havildar Bhanbhagta Gurung VC Maj Gen D K Palit (also 9 GR) Maj D Holloway (RAEC) Major (GCO) Lagopal Ghale MVO MM 1/2 GR Capt A Lyons Capt (QGO) Pomraj Pun Capt (QGO) Takbahadur Thapa Capt (QGO) Takbahadur Thapa 1/2 GR Capt (QGO) Pomraj Pun 1/2 GR Capt (QGO) Purnabahadur Thapa 1/2 GR Capt (QGO) Pahalman Gurung 2/2 GR Capt (QGO) Dilbahadur Gurung MM 1/2 GR Capt (QGO) Kumbahadur Gurung 1/2 GR Lt (QGO) Kusalsing Pun 1/2 GR Lt (QGO) Manparsad Gurung 2/2 GR Lt (QGO) Dirgasing Gurung 1/2 GR Miss P Castle MBE (WRVS) Mrs J Scobie	1 March 2008 3 April 2008 4 December 2008 11 July 2008 2 January 2008 8 February 2008 6 February 2008 6 February 2008 8 February 2008 3 May 2008 9 May 2008 16 May 2008 1 July 2008 1 August 2008 15 August 2008 2 September 2008 22 July 2008 22 July 2008
3 GR	R C McConnell Esq	14 August 2008
5 RGR	Lt Col E P Stuart-Williams Maj P D Tew W A Raynor Esq	24 January 2008 6 November 2008 4 December 2008
7 GR	Maj M Benthall Maj B Coombs Capt A Herriot F C Moore-Stevens Esq Mrs B Pulley (w/o Brig C Pulley)	7 September 2008 30 April 2008 24 November 2008 19 June 2008 12 January 2008
9 GR	Col A G Watson Maj A J R J Smith J Thorpe Esq	21 April 2008 28 December 2008 19 December 2008
RGR	CSgt Krishnabahadur Dura Rfn Yubraj Rai	15 November 2008 4 November 2008

QGE	Capt (QGO) Numbahadur Chhetri	7 June 2008
QGS	Col K Kirkby Lt Col J A Compston Hon Lt Harkabir Gurung (also 1 GR) Cpl Dhanbahadur Thapa Magar M J Garrity Esq	3 July 2008 28 December 2008 9 November 2008 22 September 2008 16 December 2008
QOGLR	Maj A C Macbeth Maj (QGO) Giriraj Chhetri Capt (QGO) Sundarsing Gurung Mrs P Stocker (w/o Lt Col R Stocker)	11 November 2008 16 January 2008 23 February 2008 4 January 2008

Havildar Bhanbhagta Gurung VC

Bhanbhagta Gurung won his Victoria Cross in Burma in 1945. His action was the culmination of a series of extraordinarily gallant actions by this soldier of quite exceptional courage, yet it occurred while he was in disgrace, albeit unjustly.

Born in the hill village of Phalbu in western Nepal, he was recruited into the old Indian Army soon after the outbreak of the Second World War, and joined 3rd Battalion 2nd King Edward VII's Own Gurkha Rifles (The Sirmoor Rifles). He first saw action with Brigadier Orde Wingate's Chindit expedition into Upper Burma in March 1943, having received early promotion to Lance-Naik (Lance-Corporal).

He was with Wingate's Number 4 Column, which had crossed the Chindwin and was on its deep penetration march behind the Japanese lines, when it was ambushed by elements of the very experienced Japanese 33rd Division and forced to disperse. Wingate had ordered his columns to do this when faced with overwhelming numerical superiority, but Bhanbhagta survived that day to be given further promotion to Naik (Corporal).

By the end of the first Chindit operation Bhanbhagta's battalion had been very badly damaged and needed months of training and refitting. It was not until March 1944 that it was sent to Arakan to take part in the 25th Indian Division's thrust down the Mayu Range, running parallel with the coast and leading to the strategically important port and airfield of Akyab. In the costly but ultimately successful fighting for what was known as the "Tiger" feature in September 1944, he did well while commanding a rifle section but then his luck changed and he was faced with disgrace.

His platoon commander, a Gurkha officer, sent him with his section to establish a piquet position on what turned out to be the wrong hill. The battalion commander was furious when reports reached him that the correct hill had not been secured as he intended. Bhanbhagta was charged with neglect of duty but all he would say in his defense was that he was certain he was on the hill he had been ordered to hold. His platoon commander remained silent and Bhanbhagta was reduced to the ranks and transferred to another company under a cloud.

In a subsequent action when a fellow rifleman was badly wounded, Bhanbhagta demonstrated his physical as well as moral strength by carrying him on his back for three miles over difficult jungle tracks to the company base.

The action for which he was awarded the VC followed 25th Indian Division's landing at Ru-ywa on the Burma coast, an operation designed to divert Japanese attention away from General Sir William Slim's main offensive towards Mandalay in February 1945. 25th Division's advance to the Irrawaddy through the An pass was fiercely opposed by part of the Japanese 54th Division holding a series of hill features, including one code-named "Snowdon East", near the village of Tamandu. 3rd/2nd Gurkha Rifles fought for two days to take and hold

Snowdon but might have been denied their victory had it not been for Bhanbhagta.

The battalion's supporting artillery had to cease firing when the leading rifle platoons began to incur casualties from supporting rounds falling short, because of crest clearance difficulties. The section of which Bhanbhagta was a member was then pinned down by machinegun fire, and a Japanese sniper in a tree added to the menace.

Unable to get the required rifle elevation from the prone position, Bhanbhagta stood up and shot the sniper dead. After that the section advanced until, 20 yards from the objective, it was held up again. Without waiting for orders and shouting for the rest of the section to follow, Bhanbhagta charged towards the top of the hill. He threw two grenades into an enemy fox hole directly above him, killing the two occupants before rushing to the next enemy trench which he cleared with the bayonet.

Savage hand-to-hand fighting then ensued with no quarter given. Bhanbhagta cleared two more foxholes single-handed. For a fifth time, he went forward alone and leapt on the roof of a bunker to throw two phosphorous grenades into the slit. Two burning and partially blinded Japanese ran out and he killed them both with his kukri.

Crawling into it, he crushed the surviving machine gunner's head with a rock, as there was insufficient room to swing his kukri. He then organised a Bren light machinegun to fire from the bunker, and his leadership of this small party was largely responsible for repelling the subsequent enemy counter-attack.

Snowdon East was taken but Bhanbhagta's company lost half its men dead and wounded; 66 Japanese dead were counted. Bhanbhagta was awarded the Victoria Cross and the 2nd Gurkha Rifles the battle honour "Tamandu" to add to their many others.

After the war, Bhanbhagta's company commander tried to persuade him to stay in the regiment, but having only a frail mother and young wife to care for his land and stock at Phalbu, he decided that he must return home. He left the Army in 1946, having regained the rank of Naik, but within a few years his regiment honoured him with the title of Havildar (Sergeant). The King of Nepal awarded him the Medal of the Order of the Star of Nepal. His three sons followed him into the 2nd Gurkha Rifles and are now pensioners.

Bhanbhagta Gurung, VC was a smiling, hard-swearing, gallant and indomitable peasant soldier who, in a battalion of very brave men, was one of the bravest.

The young wife whom he left the service to rejoin died before him. He is survived by his three sons.

His death leaves 11 surviving holders of the Victoria Cross.

[This obituary first appeared in The Times and is reproduced by kind permission of the Editor of the Obituary Column.]

Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw

Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw, who has died aged 94, played a key role in India's victory over Pakistan in the 1971 war between the two nations.

The partition of 1947 that brought independence to India created an East and West Pakistan separated by 1,000 miles of Indian Territory.

In 1970 the East Pakistan general election was won by the Awami League, led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman; but the refusal of the Pakistani President, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, to concede defeat led to unrest in the capital, Dhaka.

Mujibur's spokesmen declared the independence of East Pakistan (henceforth to be known as Bangladesh) in March 1971; a move supported by the Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi. The subsequent intervention in East Pakistan of the West Pakistan Army led to 10 million refugees crossing the Indian border, and tensions between Delhi and Islamabad rose to a peak.

On 3 December 1971 Pakistan attacked airfields in north-west India and war broke out.

Manekshaw had become Chief of Staff of the Indian Army in 1969. As war loomed, he resisted great political pressure to attack the Pakistani forces prematurely, arguing in characteristically outspoken fashion that it was essential that they hold back until the monsoon was over.

He also urged that possible Chinese involvement must be forestalled by delaying until the mountain passes were blocked by snow.

Some senior politicians wanted to sack Manekshaw and go to war at once, but he warned Indira Gandhi that if they had their way, the country could be humiliated, its troops, artillery and equipment at a standstill, bogged down in the monsoon mud. She rejected his offer to resign and followed his advice.

When war came, Indian troops, well trained and properly supplied, marched on Dhaka while guerrillas loyal to Mujibur harassed the Pakistani troops in the countryside.

Dhaka fell, and on 16 December Lieutenant-General Abdullah Khan Niazi, the commander of Pakistan's Eastern Army, surrendered and was taken prisoner together with more than 90,000 soldiers and civilian personnel. The war established India as the regional superpower and led to the creation of Bangladesh as a separate nation.

Sam Hormusji Framji Jamshedji Manekshaw, the son of Parsi parents, was born on 3 April 1914 at Amritsar, Punjab. He was educated at Sherwood College, Nainital, before being accepted by the Indian Military Academy at Dehra Dun.

In 1934 he was commissioned into the Indian Army and was attached first to the Royal Scots. In the Second World War he served in Burma and won an MC in February 1942.

As a captain in command of 'A' Company, 4th Battalion 12th Frontier Force Regiment (4/12 FFR), he was ordered to counter-attack the Pagoda Hill position, the key feature on the left of the Sittang bridgehead, which had been captured by the enemy. The counter-attack was successful despite 30 per cent casualties. Manekshaw was severely wounded shortly after the position was taken.

After recovering from his injuries he attended Staff College, Quetta. He rejoined 4/12 FFR in Burma and was again wounded. In the final phase of the war, he served as a staff officer in Indo-China and helped to rehabilitate Allied PoWs after the Japanese surrender.

In 1947 fighting broke out in Kashmir after tribesmen supported by the Pakistanis made a series of violent incursions into the region. Manekshaw, a colonel in the Military Directorate and responsible for operations throughout India, was said to have devised a masterly strategy for defeating the raiders while lying in his bath.

After commanding an infantry brigade, Manekshaw became Commandant of the School of Infantry and Colonel of the 8th Gorkha Rifles. He commanded a division in Jammu and Kashmir before moving to the Defence Services Staff College in 1959 as commandant and then took command of a corps in the north-east.

His astute handling of an insurgency in Nagaland while he was GOC-in-C Eastern Command was recognized by the award of a Padma Bhushan – one of India's highest honours – in 1968. He received a Padma Vibhushan in 1972 and, in January 1973, after nearly four decades of military service, was promoted Field Marshal, one of only two Indian soldiers ever to reach that rank.

A great individualist who affected a blimpish manner, Manekshaw was so popular that Indira Gandhi was believed to have asked him whether reports that he was planning to take her place were true.

He is said to have replied: "You have a long nose. So have I. But I don't poke my nose into other people's affairs." After retiring from the Indian Army, he served on the board of several companies, among them the Oberoi group of hotels.

Sam Manekshaw died at Wellington, India, on 27 June 2008.

He married, in 1939, Silloo Bode. She predeceased him and he is survived by their two daughters.

[This obituary first appeared in The Daily Telegraph and is reproduced by kind permission of the Editor of the Obituary Column.]

Major General D K Palit, Vrc

Major General D K ('Monty') Palit died in Delhi on 3 April 2008 at the age of 89. Colonel Anil Athale writes in an obituary that General Palit was an exception to the adage that old soldiers never die, they just fade away.

He goes on to say that General Palit was possibly even more active in retirement than in service. A prolific writer and original thinker, he has had a profound influence on strategic thinking and policies in the last two to three decades. He was indeed an exception to the general drought of military intellectuals that India has always suffered from. But he was no armchair thinker, and his exploits in the first Jammu Kashmir War of 1947-48 are proof of that, when he commanded the famed 3rd Battalion of the 9th Gorkha Rifles (which had been part of the Chindits force in Burma in the Second World War). He was seriously wounded in action when personally leading an attack.

Field Marshal Sir John Chapple writes:

"I was privileged to know General Monty during the last 30 years of his life. We met both on my visits to India and when he came to stay during his annual visits to the UK. It was a pleasure that he could visit us in Hong Kong and in Gibraltar.

We shared a common interest in the game of polo and in the history of the Army in India and spent many happy hours together pursuing these.

His historical research was very accurate and detailed, as is evident in his published books. He retained these interests right to the end. Only ten days before he died we visited him in Delhi to tell him of our trip to North-East Assam in the Mishmi Hills and the Namdapha Reserve. He knew these areas well, having served there and written the history of the Assam Rifles.

I was also happy to be a Trustee of the General Palit UK Historical Trust, which makes grants to UK students doing research into primary sources in India. This Trust helped a number of young academics and authors at the start of their careers.

Not only was he a good friend and a delightful companion, but he acted as a proxy parent to our eldest daughter when she married in India in 1997.

A lovely man and a great friend...."

He had many friends in, and associations with, the 9th Gurkha Rifles Regimental Association and a number of us will remember him when he attended the refurbishment ceremony of the grave of Lt Col G C Wheeler VC at Milton in Hampshire in 1999.

Bruce Roberts, Chairman 9 GRRA

Mrs Rosa Laird McDonald, CBE

The long association which Rosa McDonald (1916-2009) enjoyed with the Brigade of Gurkhas was the product of chance. In the late 1970s the Pipes and Drums of one of the Brigade's Regiments, the Queen's Gurkha Signals, were performing at a concert in Toronto, Canada, to raise funds in support of the Gurkha Welfare Trust. The event was attended by both Rosa and Ellice who were immediately captivated by the Gurkha soldiers

and the story of their place as an integral part of the British Army. Specifically, they were concerned to learn of the abject circumstances of many ex-members of the Brigade in Nepal, specifically those veterans of the Second World War who did not serve for long enough to earn an Army pension.

Their response was immediate and typical: to begin a relationship with the Brigade of Gurkhas in general, and the Gurkha soldier in particular; and to see where they might be able to help. It was a relationship that lasted the rest of Rosa's life. Her keen interest was marked not just by her annual visits to the United Kingdom and, with Ellice, their generous annual dinner in London for the Brigade's good and great. More importantly it was marked by the establishment in 1979 of the Gurkha Welfare Trust Foundation (USA), to make available funds to be used specifically in support of the Gurkha soldier, both during his service and more importantly during his retirement in Nepal.

Working with the Gurkha Welfare Trust in London, the Foundation provided funds in support of the Gurkha soldier in both Nepal and in the United Kingdom. In Nepal the money was used to provide medicines in support of retired members of the Brigade living in poverty and distress; to provide water to isolated Gurkha communities deep in the middle hills of the Himalayas; to support the education of children of the Brigade; and to enable the construction of welfare centres that to this day act as a focus for the delivery of aid to those in real need. As



Rosa McDonald and FM Sir John Chapple

a consequence thousands of ex-soldiers and their families have been able to lead a life largely free from poverty and distress thanks to Rosa's energy and enthusiasm, and together with Ellice a remarkable generosity of spirit.

Rosa's charitable work for Gurkhas included the keen interest that she and Ellice took in the Gurkha Museum in Winchester, which they came to see each year they were in England. They both saw the importance of its three-fold appeal: as a national archive; as a window to the Gurkhas and their history to excite the interest of the public; and as a support for the Gurkha Welfare Trust both financially by sharing profits from commercial enterprises and, less directly, by helping to widen the field for donors and bequests to the Trust.

Their joint interest and acumen - for they did these things together - encouraged them to help the Museum in all sorts of ways. Among these, they gave money to increase the Endowment Fund's capital; they bought the Museum a vehicle to help it operate mobile shops; they paid for all the beautiful furniture in the gallery. When added to the gallery's splendid display of pictures, silver, medals and badges this furniture made the gallery such an attraction for so many Gurkha regimental gatherings, other charities' meetings and commercial events ranging from lectures and lunches to wedding parties that it was, with their permission, named The McDonald Gallery. The name above the door not only brings Rosa and Ellice to mind as soon as one enters, but the gallery brings in a healthy income which delighted Rosa: she was a firm believer in helping people and organizations to stand on their own feet. The Gurkha Museum's McDonald Gallery is a living memorial to a shrewd, kindly and most generous lady.

Colonel A G Watson

Alan Watson, the Secretary of the 9th Gurkha Rifles Regimental Association for 26 years, died on 21 April 2008 after a short illness. He was a very well known figure in the Gurkha Brigade through his dedication to all matters of history and people not only in his own Regimental Association but throughout the Brigade. He will leave a big gap not only in his own Regiment but to all.

He was sent out to India in January 1943, completed officers training at Bangalore and, with three other inseparable friends, joined the 9th Gurkhas at the Regimental Centre in September 1943. There he showed such promise, as well as fluency in khaskura, that he achieved early promotion to OC Training Company despite his wish to be posted to an active battalion. Later he served with the 3rd Battalion in Malaya and Indonesia where he became the Intelligence Officer.

He was returned to the UK just before Partition and immediately applied for a regular commission in the British

Rosa's generosity extended to support for the raising of a Statue in Whitehall of a Gurkha soldier that stands as sentry to the main entrance of the Ministry of Defence to remind all those who pass of the contribution the Gurkha has made, and continues to make, to British military history.

And finally, her interest in piping was marked in 1980 by the presentation to the serving Brigade of the McDonald Trophy, a solid silver "Revere Bowl", to be awarded annually to the Brigade's outstanding piper. The award remains the issue of intense competition within the Brigade and plays no small part in ensuring the standard of piping remains high. It is fitting that a Gurkha piper should have played a lament in her memory at her funeral.

It was also fitting that her interest in and support for the Gurkha soldier should have been marked in 1992 by Her Majesty the Queen by the honorary award of Commander of the Order of the British Empire.

Rosa's passing, on 3 January 2009, will be mourned by the Gurkha soldier, serving and retired. Without her kindness and generosity many would have lived out their lives in Nepal in poverty and distress. Through her work in support of the Trust, the Museum and the serving Brigade her memory will live on. The Brigade in general and the Gurkha soldier in particular salutes her and mourns her passing.

Jai Rosa McDonald! Jai the Gurkha soldier!

Army, where he served with the Royal Army Service Corps until his retirement, having taken part in the Suez Campaign and held many subsequent appointments. He attended Staff College at Camberley.

It has always been clear that his love of the Gurkhas and the friends he made in those early days were his abiding interest which generated such complete involvement with the 9th Gurkha Rifles Regimental Association for so long and with such intensity. He was, above all, a very modest, warm-hearted enthusiast with a tremendous sense of fun. It is said that his Gurkhas much enjoyed his exotic lachadori lei during the nautches. In his time as Secretary of the Regimental Association he added greatly to the history of the Regiment and those who served by his conscientious researching and writing obituaries which now reside at the Gurkha Museum in Winchester.

Bruce Roberts, Chairman 9 GRRA

Lieutenant Colonel E P Stuart-Williams

[Extract from an address given by Tom Dew at Lt Col Stuart-Williams's funeral on 5 February 2008.]

...To begin at the beginning, Patrick was a child of the India of the Raj. His father occupied an important post in the management of Indian Railways. Actually, Patrick was not born in India but when his parents were home on leave. They then went back with him to Calcutta, leaving his two older brothers to be fostered and to attend school in Britain. Such also was his fate when they came home again three years later. On their return to India he was also left behind with his siblings. Apart from occasional home leaves, the boys did not see their parents again for years at a time, but when old enough they continued their education in boarding schools. However strange it may seem to us now, this was not an unusual existence and it bred in those who lived it the early development of reserves of character and self-reliance that were a dominant feature in Patrick's life. You had largely to face and solve your own problems and not rely too much on those around you.

Patrick eventually won scholarships - first to Haileybury and then to Trinity Hall, Cambridge where he studied Classics and Law and achieved a good honours degree. He then tried to find work in London. It was 1931 in what was to become one of the worst recessions in British, and indeed in world, history - the Great Slump. With three million unemployed it was not easy to find any sort of work. However, he eventually found a job in a City shipping office and began to learn what was to become his trade. There was not very much hope here, but by a piece of good fortune, and the influence of a friend of his father, he achieved a position in India in the port of Calcutta and began a career there and in Bombay, dealing with the control of the loading and unloading of a bewildering variety of cargoes and accounting for port dues. Here was work requiring steady nerves and a cool head, reconciling the competing demands of owners, ships' masters, brokers and shipping agents, all clamouring for attention.

Being India, however, in those days there was time for recreation - for sport - at which Patrick excelled. Of robust constitution, he was a fine athlete and Rugby player and a good horseman. He joined the Calcutta Light Horse, an auxiliary unit rather like a county yeomanry regiment, where one would ride but without the expense of buying and maintaining a horse. He played polo well enough, as he put it, to fill a gap in the team if a regular player was not available. The one theme that runs through his life at this time which had such an influence on his future life is friendship. One shared quarters to keep down the expense, one joined clubs, and one simply had to get on with the people around one, and I am sure that this was one source of the affability which I found in him when in later years I got to know him better.

Then came the War - at first in Europe. To begin with he was retained in his post. He was becoming a senior man and shipping was a vital resource. Then in early 1941 he was eventually granted permission to join the Indian Army, and after passing through the cadet training establishment he was commissioned as an

officer in the 5th Royal Gurkha Rifles (Frontier Force). This was, of course, before Pearl Harbour, so the emphasis was on the action in the Middle East. I think it was his reputation (although he called it a fluke) that led him to become ADC to the General commanding the 8th Indian Division, which was preparing to go to the Gulf to protect the vital oil supplies of that area, and the route to Russia through which massive quantities of supplies were flowing to sustain the Soviet armies and economy. He had by now become the staff officer responsible for the division's movement by sea, for the efficient accomplishment of which he was Mentioned in Despatches. After two years in Iraq and Iran, the tide having turned in the Middle East with the defeat of the Germans in North Africa, he was ordered back to India where the concentration of effort was on the war against the Japanese in Burma. To his great surprise he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and made responsible for the control of shipping for 11th Army Group within the South East Asia Command. This was an exceptionally important post, as the needs of the invasion of Europe - D Day - made huge demands on shipping, causing great problems in the S E Asia theatre. Eventually V-J Day came, and in September 1945 Patrick was granted a long home leave - 60 days - after six years' absence from the UK.

It was then that he met Jean, who was an officer in the WAAF. It was on a blind date to make up a foursome with a friend. This led to a whirlwind romance and by the end of the leave they had become engaged to be married, and before he returned to India it was arranged that Jean should in due course join him in Calcutta, where they were married in November 1946.

By now Patrick had obtained a very senior position in the P&O group of shipping companies...

Patrick's years with P&O in the City saw some very dramatic changes in the whole field of shipping and he was at the heart of the decision-making. There was a realisation that the growth of travel by air, with the increasing efficiency and speed of planes powered by jet engines and flying near to the speed of sound above the effects of weather, spelt the end of the regular P&O passenger services between the UK and India, the Far East and Australia, and of those beautiful liners.

Then the development of the bulk carrier and the tanker, and containerisation, was revolutionising the carrying of cargoes. So the Nourse Company within P&O began to specialise in tankers and bulk carriers, supervising the ordering of these very large vessels from shipyards outside the UK, and Patrick - by now a member of the Baltic Exchange - found himself travelling to Japan for that purpose. As the programme progressed, Jean to her great surprise and delight was invited to name one of the ships in Japan, a great experience for her.

Patrick finally retired from P&O in 1973, but that was not the end of his remarkable career. Such were the demands for his expertise that for eight years he continued to act for a firm of City lawyers; first to dispose of some surplus vessels on behalf of a client, and then at their request to act as their office

manager - so he did not finally retire until 1981. At the age of 72 he had earned his retirement.

During his long and busy life he still found time to play a significant part in local affairs. He served on the P C C. of this church, where he was a regular worshipper. He was an active member of the Kemsing Branch of The Royal British Legion. During that membership of 47 years he served as Chairman and then as President, doing a great deal to keep the branch alive and prospering...

Patrick was a well-rounded man. He painted in water colours, he was fond of good music and literature, and he had a lifetime love of the Classics. He enjoyed a glass of good wine. He loved the countryside...

Major P D Tew

Educated at Tonbridge, Peter Douglas Tew joined Shell - a company with which he would remain, very successfully, for the duration of his career. However, in September 1940 he joined the 2nd Battalion 5th Royal Gurkha Rifles (Frontier Force). Having knowledge of Russian, as an Interpreter Officer he was involved as a cryptographer during his service.

After the war, he returned to Burma Shell in 1945, and spent much of the remainder of his working life with them, in India - largely in Bombay. An extremely intelligent man, he specialised in Personnel and Administration, Organizational Development

Colour Sergeant Krishnabhadur Dura

It is with great sadness that we report the death of Colour Sergeant Krishnabhadur Dura, of the 2nd Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles, who was killed in Afghanistan on Saturday 15 November 2008.

Colour Sergeant Dura was taking part in a road move in the Musa Qal'eh district of Helmand Province when the Warrior Infantry Fighting Vehicle he was travelling in was struck by an explosive device.

Colour Sergeant Krishnabhadur Dura, aged 36, came from the Lamjung district of western Nepal and was enlisted into the British Army in 1992. He completed his recruit training at the Training Depot Brigade of Gurkhas in Hong Kong and was subsequently posted to A Company, 7th Duke of Edinburgh's Own Gurkha Rifles, based in Church Crookham in the UK.

He immediately stood out as a robust young soldier and attended the All Arms Parachute selection course which he passed with ease. He excelled on all his military courses and was promoted quickly through the ranks. His drive, determination and outstanding soldiering skills marked him out early in his career and he was subsequently selected to serve in the Gurkha Reinforcement Company with 2nd Battalion The Parachute

Throughout his long and busy life he enjoyed a very great blessing - perhaps the greatest blessing any of us can receive - a long, loving happy marriage, extending almost to the 60th anniversary, together with the joy of a beloved and greatly loving family... [As a measure of his undaunted spirit, in his mid nineties, he travelled to Australia to stay with his son and his family.]

So we say farewell to a most distinguished man, a rare spirit, a man of unimpeachable integrity, a man of quality.

May he rest in peace.

[Lt Col Stuart-Williams died in January 2008, aged 98.]

and General Management, and was described by his colleagues as "a giant for work".

He fathered four girls and was a keen family man. He and his wife Joy moved to Liphook in Hampshire after his retirement, where they devoted themselves to many good causes, including the highly successful Bramshott Open Gardens event which raises funds for the church.

Peter Tew died on 6 November 2008, aged 91, after a long illness.

Regiment. He served with distinction with this battalion and returned to the 2nd Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles in 1997.

CSgt Dura was a very experienced and exceptionally capable Senior Non-Commissioned Officer. He had served on operations in Bosnia Herzegovina, East Timor, twice in Sierra Leone and this was his third tour in Afghanistan. Last year he was promoted to Colour Sergeant and singled out to form the battalion's sniper platoon in Support Company. He set about this with great enthusiasm and skill forming an excellent platoon of some of the battalion's most capable soldiers.

CSgt Dura commanded by the power of his personality and led by example. Never demonstrative, he was exceptionally calm under pressure and reserved in character. He was rated as one of the Army's best snipers attaining best student on his Snipers' course. He was highly respected by all. A hugely enthusiastic and healthily competitive individual,

CSgt Dura particularly enjoyed playing football with his friends and colleagues. His effectiveness as a soldier and a leader belied a softer caring side, from a man who was deeply devoted to his wife and two daughters.

Lieutenant Colonel Chris Darby, Commanding Officer of 2nd Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles, said:

“Colour Sergeant Krishna was an exceptional soldier, a gifted leader and consummate professional. Recently promoted out of D Company, he had deployed on Operation Herrick as the Master Sniper in command of a platoon that he had formed less than a year before, and which he had trained himself. Deployed from day one under the most demanding conditions countering an ethereal, highly dangerous and elusive enemy, he and the men he commanded had already delivered extraordinary results in a very short period of time.

“Intelligent, hard and totally committed, I knew that whatever the challenge I could turn to CSgt Krishna and have absolute confidence in his ability to deliver. His knowledge of his trade and of his men was without parallel, and the team he forged based on this knowledge and his own commitment was second-to-none. Tightly knit, entirely upbeat and utterly professional, CSgt Krishna’s snipers were, and continue to be, one of my most potent capabilities, and their strengths are due almost entirely to his own ability as a soldier, a leader and commander.

“Like all those who have gone before him, CSgt Krishna was a proud Nepali, a proud soldier and was exceptionally proud of his regiment and of his part in it. A man of significant operational experience, he understood the dangers associated with fighting a determined and dangerous enemy, but his ability to counter this threat successfully with an equal measure of ‘pahari’ cunning, tenacity and military skill were one of his great strengths. He was hard, intelligent, brave and strong; he was a gifted leader; and he was a commander with the highest potential. I was extremely proud to have known this bold and noble man and will miss him.

He will not be forgotten.”

Major Toby Jackman, Officer Commanding Support Company, said:

“We have lost a truly unique and talented man and his loss will be felt acutely by all those who had the privilege to know him. As a soldier and Senior Non-Commissioned Officer [SNCO] he epitomised Gurkha infantry professionalism, and delivered consistently excellent results. He moulded his team in the last year to a most effective and cohesive unit. I have had the rare privilege of commanding CSgt Krishna as a SNCO who was completely attuned to what he had to do, and had the pleasure of watching him developing the Sniper platoon on his own initiative with only the minimum of guidance. He was utterly reliable and as a result was quickly recognised, outperforming many of his peers.

“Everyone in the company respected him; he did not confine his talent to the battalion and became recognised for his ability in the wider sniper community of 3 Commando Brigade and the Sniper Division. He was always calm, assured and utterly focused. He represented his men fully in all they did and needed. His loss is tragic and untimely; he gave so much, unselfishly. I can see him smiling calmly, even when tired and under pressure. My heart and thoughts go out to his wife, daughters and family. I will never forget him, we will remember him.”

Secretary of State for Defence, John Hutton MP, said:

“It is clear that Colour Sergeant Krishnabhadur Dura served with professionalism and courage and was wholly committed to his mission: he was helping Afghanistan and the cause of wider security. My thoughts are with his family, friends and fellow Gurkhas at this sad time.”

Rifleman Rai supported his mother, sister and three brothers as the family’s main earner. He will be missed dearly by his family and all who knew him.

Lieutenant Colonel Chris Darby, Commanding Officer, 2nd Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles, said:

“Yubraj Rai was an extraordinary character and a hard professional soldier with a proven operational record. Having served his time as a driving force in 5 Platoon, he moved to a supporting role in Musa Qal’eh, but it was typical of the man that he volunteered for a place on the operation in Dagan when another member of his Company fell ill, and a measure of his professionalism that he did it so seamlessly.

“Big, strong and highly experienced, Rfn Yubraj was one of the cornerstones of his Company and he was known throughout the Battalion for his presence, drive and his ability as a soldier. Part of a small and tight knit team he understood intuitively what needed to be done, how, when and by whom, and would move heaven and earth to ensure he got the support to his friends and comrades whatever the circumstances.

“Yubraj was a proud Nepali, a proud soldier and was exceptionally proud of being a Gurkha Rifleman. He knew the dangers involved in becoming a soldier and understood better than most what it meant to go to war; this was one of his greatest strengths. He died doing what he did best, amongst his greatest friends and admirers and for a cause he had taken the time to understand. He was brave, strong, hard and noble; he epitomised all that makes the Gurkhas great - the best. I was proud to have known him; he will not be forgotten.”

Major Ross Daines, Commander of B Company, 2nd Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles, said:

“Rifleman Yubraj Rai was a stalwart of B Coy 2 RGR. After six years as a member of a Rifle Platoon he volunteered to become the Company’s storeman, a job that requires great attention to detail and genuine concern for other soldiers. He was invariably the man working long hours to ensure that he could issue equipment in the best condition.

“Rifleman Yubraj was a quiet man who I will always remember politely entering my office with a pile of forms requiring signatures. Once he got them he would smile shyly and walk purposefully away from the office. Not once in my year with B Company can I remember a bad word said against him. He was held in genuine affection by all.

“Rifleman Yubraj died as he lived his life, selflessly and with great humility. After deployment to Musa Qal’eh he volunteered to be a member of 5 Platoon, a job that involved frequent patrolling in dangerous areas. He chose this role when he could have easily avoided being so close to the action. This willingness to do the hard graft and share danger was his hallmark.

“The death of Rifleman Yubraj is a great sadness and one that will not pass easily. He was a fine man and I miss him already.”

Secretary of State for Defence, John Hutton MP, said:

“I was very saddened to hear of the death of Rifleman Yubraj Rai. I am told he stood out as a selfless, tough and dependable soldier. These qualities marked him out very early in his career as an ideal candidate for service with D (Gurkha Reinforcement) Company. Clearly the loss of Rifleman Rai is sorely felt by all those who worked with him and I extend my condolences to his family, comrades and friends.”

Rifleman Yubraj Rai

It is with great sadness that we report the death of Rifleman Yubraj Rai of the 2nd Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles who was killed in Afghanistan on Tuesday 4 November 2008.

Rifleman Rai was killed while taking part in a joint International Security Assistance Force and Afghan National Security Forces operation against enemy forces south of Musa Qal’eh.

While working alongside a fellow Gurkha, Rifleman Rai received a gunshot wound from enemy fire. He received medical treatment at the scene but died a short time later from his wounds.

Rifleman Rai, aged 28, came from the Khotang district in eastern Nepal. Following in the footsteps of his uncle, he joined the British Army in January 1999. On completion of his recruit training, he joined the 2nd Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles in Brunei.

In 2000, Rifleman Rai was posted to D (Gurkha Reinforcement) Company, the 1st Battalion The Royal Irish Regiment, where he served with distinction for two-and-a-half years. His soldiering

skills were widely recognised and his career was characterised by a number of successful operational tours including to Iraq on Operation TELIC 1, Sierra Leone, Bosnia, and a previous tour in Afghanistan during Operation HERRICK 4.

Rifleman Rai was an avid sportsman who enjoyed all competition, but his real passion was for football, at which he represented B Company. This enthusiasm for the game extended to his support for Manchester United FC.

He was one of B Company’s more senior Riflemen. He acted as a mentor for the younger men in the Company, often impressing them with his fitness and stamina. Most recently he was employed as the Company storeman, where his attention to detail, care to ensure that the men received the correct administrative support, and constant diligence were immensely respected.

He had been eager to deploy back to Afghanistan, his selfless attitude once again coming to the fore when he volunteered to deploy with 5 Platoon to replace another rifleman who had fallen ill.

Book Reviews

Jungle Warfare – Experiences and Encounters by Lt Col J P Cross OBE

This is an updated version of John Cross's original book that came out in 1988. There can be few people around who have spent so much of their lives living and fighting in the jungle. As a respected commander of Gurkhas, themselves no mean jungle warriors, he understands exactly what surviving in the jungle and making it your hunting ground means. His service in jungle conditions is impressive, against the Japanese in Burma in World War Two, against the Communist Terrorists in Malaya from 1948 to 1960, against the Indonesians during the 1963 -1966 Borneo Confrontation - but he doesn't simply rely on his own experience. Reading the book one becomes aware that he has talked widely and researched deeply of others' experiences such as the French and Americans in Vietnam. Perhaps most striking is the fact that he is a born linguist whose ability to communicate with the indigenous peoples in the various war zones gives him a unique insight into the various conflicts.

All experience and knowledge can be vulnerable to the limitations of written description and it is here that this book really excels. It is highly readable, immensely descriptive and consistently amusing. One really feels the jungle closing round one and relives its unique blend of physical discomfort, danger from man, beast, disease and natural hazard but also its pristine fragile beauty and the cathedral like magnificence of the dim vault beneath the towering canopy.

Britain's Gurkha War – The Invasion of Nepal 1814-1816 by John Pemble, with a Foreword by Lt Col JP Cross.

This scholarly and erudite book throws a particularly interesting slant on the causes of the Anglo -Nepal war and on the warrior state of Nepal which provoked it, as well as covering the war itself in fascinating detail. Most books about the causes of the war tend to follow the line that because Nepal had occupied territories claimed by the British East India Company war resulted, whereas Pemble looks much deeper in his quest for the reasons behind it which were complex and owed as much to personalities as politics. He also diverges from the commonly held view that the ruling class of Nepal originated from the admixture of Rajputs fleeing north to avoid the Mogul invasion of India and Nepal's ethnic Mongolian inhabitants and predates them to a much earlier stage in the history of Nepal. This well researched and thought provoking work makes clear that the Anglo-Nepal War of 1814-16 was fundamental to the subsequent relations between the two countries, leading to the

For the military expert there is plenty here to conjure with as John Cross takes us through the various campaigns and his thoughts on and reactions to them. The twelve year Malayan Emergency ended in the complete defeat of the Communist Terrorists despite the Communist victories elsewhere in China and Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. This was no mean achievement and this book gives a good idea how such victory was achieved which, with the equally successful campaigns in Brunei and Borneo, gave a bright and prosperous future to present day Malaysia and Brunei. However, for the lay reader who just wants to know what living and fighting in the jungle is all about, there is plenty too; all liberally laced with humorous and slightly irreverent anecdote which makes the book such fun.

Finally the immense empathy between John Cross and his beloved Gurkhas shines through - his mastery of their language in all its dialects, his love and knowledge of their country and their shared humour and respect. In his retirement he lives amongst them with his adopted Nepalese family so it would be difficult to find anybody better qualified to write of their very significant part in what is a definitive book on jungle warfare.

Reviewed by Brig Christopher Bullock OBE MC

Jungle Warfare - Experiences and Encounters is published by Pen & Sword, Barnsley. ISBN 978-1-84415-666-5. Price £19.99.

recruitment of the hillmen of Nepal, the Gurkhas, first by the British in India and subsequently their employment separately by Britain and India.

In 1814 Nepal was a warlike expansionist state whose highly efficient army had already invaded Tibet and now occupied the sensitive North West Indian states of Kumaon and Garhwal. Already embroiled elsewhere with Sikhs and Maharattas, it was a tricky situation for the surrogate of British power, the Honourable East India Company, and it took drastic, if reluctant, military steps to solve it. At first it limited itself to driving the Nepalese army out of the territories they had occupied, but, when this did not curb Nepal's militaristic tendencies, it invaded Nepal itself. Clearing the Nepalese out of the territories they had occupied was a major undertaking involving large numbers of King's Service British troops and East India Company sepoys,

but even so it met with mixed success, most of the columns being baulked by the determined Gurkha resistance. Fortunately in General Ochterlony, his energy in no way abated by the possession of two Indian wives and numerous progeny, the British had a leader of real quality in stark contrast to some of his fellow column commanders. His column's victory in the first campaign was enough to convince the Nepalese to agree to a negotiated settlement which they subsequently renounced believing, erroneously, that the British were over-extended.

Ochterlony's masterly conduct of the second campaign, the invasion of Nepal itself, was a desperate race against the onset of monsoon conditions and makes for compulsive reading. This second campaign, no longer bedeviled by the foibles and inadequacies of fellow commanders, showed just how quickly

Britain's Gurkha War – Foreword by Lt Col John Cross

"To respected Ean Ramsay, the great-great-great-grandson of General Ochterlony from the great-great-great-grand cousin of Bhakti Thapa. Two hundred years ago we were enemies, now we are friends."

This was written on the back of a painting of Bhakti Thapa especially commissioned in Nepal by my surrogate Nepali hill-man son, Buddhiman Gurung, to Ean Ramsay, the last direct descendant of the Great Man. Buddhiman, his wife and I gave it to Ean Ramsay when we met him in England in 1994.

In my view, and I have lived with Gurkhas, militarily from 1944 and in Nepal from 1976, almost one-third of the time of the British-Gurkha connection, it says it all. In straightforward unpoetical words, it captures the mystical dimension of the result of the Anglo-Nepal War which John Pemble so vividly and accurately describes in this book, arguably the best written and easiest to read book on this subject ever produced.

I have read widely and am of the opinion that, had Nepal's army had the same resources as had the East India Company and the 'Royal', British, Army, artillery piece for artillery piece, elephant for elephant et cetera, the British would not have prevailed. But prevail they did: the one column that beat the Gurkhas was in 'naya muluk' – 'the new country' – chiefly in Kumaon and Garhwal; the three columns that were beaten back from a few timorous toe-holds in the Terai failed to achieve anything positive. Apart from the incursion up to Makwanpur (and the Chinese incursion of 1792), Nepal's heartland cultural, religious and territorial virginity is still unsullied.

There is no doubt that Ochterlony was an excellent commander but as a civil administrator he was not popular. This is borne out in letters written by William Linnaeus Gardner, 1770-1835, founder of Gardner's Horse, still an Indian Army unit now designated 2nd Lancers (Gardner's Horse). In a letter dated 16 September 1820 he wrote: 'I have no hesitation in saying that the English name is at present disgraced. ... I wish for the sake of his character, that Sir David would die.' In an undated and earlier letter he wrote: 'Sir David is very unpopular here with all natives and all Europeans. Skinner [of Skinner's Horse fame]

Ochterlony had transformed his East India Company army after the first bitter experience of being confronted by the formidable fighting power of the Gurkha army and its charismatic leaders. What distinguished the fighting throughout was that, despite its severity, both sides behaved with exceptional civility in regard to prisoners and wounded, founded on a mutual respect that has continued to the present day.

Colonel John Cross who writes the Foreword is probably the greatest living expert on the Gurkha state, having spent his entire adult life with Gurkhas - first as a Gurkha officer and then as an inhabitant of Nepal itself. It is thus not surprising that he sets the scene so subtly for this fascinating book.

Reviewed by Brig Christopher Bullock OBE MC

told him on taking leave that it was a pity he (Sir D) had not died 16 years ago, for then he would not have left a dry eye in Delhi, but that now, were he to die, there would be public rejoicings, and the dhole [drums] would resound in every house!!!' (The Gardner Papers, NAM 6305-56.)

I have walked well over ten thousand miles in Nepal, am known to many and have spoken to thousands of Nepalis. It is striking that the motto, 'It is better to die than be a coward', reputedly the motto that has become the motto of all Gurkha soldiers to this day, has never once been mentioned. This is, I believe, because it never was the hill-man's motto. Certainly, the hill Gurkha, like everyone else, does not want to lose. What the hill-man will say is that, once there seems no hope of staying alive, that is when one can fight without worrying about one's life. I do not know the originator of the quotation but Kaji Amarsing Thapa, a relation of Bhimsen Thapa, the prime minister, who started the Anglo-Nepal War and who also lost it, is reputed to have used the saying. Amarsing seems not to have approved of the war but, not wanting to appear against the most powerful man in Kathmandu, echoed, but did not originate similar sentiments as expressed by the Sikh, Mokhan Chand, in 1809 when Ochterlony moved from Delhi to compel the Sikh durbar to give up its recent conquests, 'It is better to die in honour than to live in shame', and later by the Afghan Muzaffar Khan, defender of Multan in 1818, 'It is more honourable to die fighting than to capitulate without firing a shot'.

But it is pertinent to ask if, in fact, such a motto was 'binding'? No: the Gurkha commander, Bal Bhadra (Bahadur) Kunwar (a.k.a. Thapa, Singh), at Kalunga (Nala Pani), gained immortality in Nepalese annals by his bravery. His name is on the reverse of the same memorial that was erected to Gillespie. Nepalese history is silent that Bal Bhadra left the fighting after the battle of Kalunga and Nepalko Sainik Itihas (Nepal's Military History), published by the Headquarters of the Royal Nepal Army, 1992, has it that such information only came from the British. William Moorcroft, Chief of Stud at Pusa, recorded in his journal, D248/59ff, that he saw Bal Bhadra killed as he led a Gurkha battalion of Ranjit Singh's army that attacked the Afghans near Attock, in 1824.

And much more recently, in 1996, the request for the required 'constitution' to set up a Gurkha Museum in Kathmandu was turned down by the Chief District Officer, his reason being that he would do nothing to help turncoats.

People ask why the Governor General of the time did not do more against Nepal than was the case. While this is fully explained by Pemble, it is fair to say that, had he, without doubt the remarkable relations the British and the Nepalis have had since the war would never have fructified in the way they have. Of a truth, the opposite would have been true. One proud Nepali boast is that it is still one of the very few countries in Asia that was never a colony, albeit the Government to its south did affect its behaviour.

Ochterlony's victory was in a minor war against a people unknown to those in England. Only on India's northern marches were the Nepalis (or Gorkhalis, as they were often called) known about. When the news of Ochterlony's victory eventually did reach England, the euphoria of Napoleon's defeat was still heady in military circles. Its significance and long-term implications were totally lost in England. And yet, today, not so far off the two-hundredth anniversary of the Britain-Nepal connection, more respect is paid to the hill-man Gurkha than, again probably, to the vanquished of Waterloo.

Prior to the war, the tactics used in 'the new country' between 1790 and 1814 were sedulously copied by the Revolutionaries in the opening years of the civil war that started in the Far West of Nepal in 1996 but this time the opposition to such was insufficient to curb it – the government of the day could not use artillery against its own people. Another similarity is that, in both cases, one man from each house, willy-nilly, had to serve the army that was trying to expand territorially. Likewise, the problems that were engendered by a 'baby king' in 1814 have, sadly in my view, been all too frequent between then and now.

Those whom Ochterlony was fighting against were only partly men from heartland Nepal. The rigour of the discipline and

hardships encountered had the effect of many of them deserting, first to Ranjit Singh's army in Lahore and later to the British. Although there was no proof of this, I believe that those men from heartland Nepal thought that the British would be able to take them back to their home areas. They were disappointed in that but the paternalistic attitude of the British officers, the friendliness of the British soldiers and their own obvious superiority to the men from the plains, made them realise, probably for the first time ever, their value as fighting men. This factor still pertains. As an aside, Bhakti Thapa's weapons are in a cave at the top of a steep mountain and are still worshipped twice a year and the language of the prayers is that of the now-dead language of the Duras, Bhakti's mother tongue. At last count I saw that there were eight swords and five scimitars.

Since becoming soldiers in the Indian and British armies, the Gurkhas' record has been and is unsurpassed. Just three examples from modern times: without them the land war in Burma would not have been won in 1945, maybe never; the Emergency in Malaya and Confrontation in Borneo would have rumbled on for many more years, probably inconclusively; and, with much panache and efficiency, they have played a full part in Afghanistan and Iraq.

On another level, even when the 1st of Foot was no longer on the British Army's Order of Battle, the Gurkhas, albeit fewer in number, were retained. And not only that: the Gurkha soldier has a worldwide reputation of doing that bit extra for longer and at a higher standard than, probably, any other soldier. A high standard brings its own penalty of expectation and, luckily for Britain and independent India, Gurkhas are fully confident and able to maintain that standard to an almost mystical dimension.

Pemble's explicit and engaging writing shows how, against all expectations, this mystical dimension started.

Britain's Gurkha War is published by Frontline Books, 5A Accommodation Road, London NW11 8ED, Tel: 020 8455 5559, price £15.99.

The March to Kandahar: Roberts in Afghanistan by Rodney Atwood

Like many great men of history, Field Marshal Lord Roberts' personality is misunderstood. In his masterly autobiography 'Forty-one years in India - from Subaltern to Commander-in-Chief' (1897), we learn much about his actions but it is a chimera in terms of understanding what motivated him. He undoubtedly describes his actions and justifies his decisions with one eye on the political impact his book would have.

In 'The Road to Kandahar' (2008) Rodney Atwood, an amateur enthusiast for the period, pens a biography of Roberts during the Second Afghan War. Atwood, a retired headmaster, who completed a Short Service Commission with The Royal Tank Regiment, writes that it is a precursor to a larger biography of Roberts' life. He intends that the book under review, and the larger work, will expose the personal aspect to Roberts' actions.

To a large extent he achieves his aim. The breadth of the primary sources he uses, and, more importantly, the significance he draws from them, guarantees that we see a depth to Roberts' character and begin to appreciate what drove him. His writing lets the letters, diaries and speeches he draws from speak for themselves.

Roberts' career and success can be paralleled with the efforts of the Gurkhas; his father commanded and fought alongside them, as did his mentor Lieutenant Colonel John Nicholson; the excellence and courage of Roberts and the Gurkhas were proven in the Indian Mutiny, Gurkhas fought with gusto under his command as he rose to prominence; and Gurkha Regiments were part of the vanguard that fought under him in the Second Afghan War culminating in the march and battle that is the centrepiece to this book (famously during the battle a Rifleman from 2nd Goorkhas seized the gun that now sits in front of the

Quartermaster in Taker Lines, Brunei Garrison, by thrusting his cap down the muzzle and claiming it for his Regiment).

Indeed Roberts died on the Western Front as an elderly Field Marshal visiting Indian Army troops, including Gurkhas. Little wonder that one of the nicknames his soldiers gave him was 'Bobs Bahadur'.

For those who know Gurkhas, the epithet has added weight. The efforts that won him the Victoria Cross are only the most prominent of many that prove the authenticity of the nickname 'brave' in Gurkhali. However, he shared more in common with the Gurkhas than just bravery. This book draws out expertly a personality much akin to a Gurkha soldier. Atwood's carefully chosen primary sources portray Roberts as a diminutively-proportioned (5'4") but gigantically-energised man, who was always smiling and laughing with his soldiers; he was kind and trusting to his subordinates and loyal to his superiors; he was fiercely competitive and career-driven but cared deeply about his family and their welfare.

The success of the book rests on how the author selects and presents his source material so that the reader can draw conclusions, like the above, for himself. The mark of a skilled biography is that the writer puts across his opinions of the subject in an understated but convincing way to the reader. He should direct the reader to believe his argument without ever being felt to be doing this. His directing touch should be light enough that the reader does not feel it. Atwood does just this; he rarely passes judgment on Roberts himself but instead lets the opinions of Roberts' contemporaries do this for him. His choice of when to use the letters, speeches and autobiographies of Roberts' superiors and subordinates is very skilled.

Atwood's argument that Roberts was an accomplished manipulator of the press is emphasised time and again by the reproduction of Roberts' correspondence with reporters who were favourable to him. He writes of Roberts' strong relationship with Hensman - a reporter who Roberts hosted throughout the march to Kandahar and who he patronised for the rest of his career - even going as far as to repeat the quote that 'Roberts made him, and he made Roberts'.

Little time is given to the other occasions when Roberts' relations with the Indian and British press was far less cordial and in fact hurt his political standing. Indeed, the notorious episode of the hangings at Kabul, carried out by Roberts as retribution for the murder of the envoy Cavagnari and his Guides, is brushed aside by Atwood when actually there was a maelstrom of press and political criticism that threatened to end his career.

The above is an example of how Atwood's opinions, although not ostentatiously presented to the reader, are powerful. He is a counter-revisionist in regard to Roberts and the British policy in India and the North-West Frontier that he represented. He depicts the latter as essentially benevolent but at times bungled and the former as the most skilled agent of this policy.

The Afghans in contrast are the opposite. Numerous quotes pepper the chapters highlighting the cruelty of this 'barbaric' people and the failings of their leaders. A ploy of the author

is to begin each chapter with a dramatic quote from the time. Many describe the Afghans; Lord Lytton, Viceroy of India, writes to Roberts 'The whole Afghan Population is Particeps criminis... every Afghan brought to death...I shall regard as one scoundrel less in a den of scoundrelism' (p90).

The contemporary sources Atwood selects almost universally portray their leaders as either cowardly or duplicitous, such as the Amir of Kabul, Yakub. He is described as either too weak to stop the murder of Cavagnari or secretly involved.

Atwood dwells on the murder of Cavagnari and the slaughter of the Brigade at Maiwand but not on the British retribution that followed. Indeed the book does rather insidiously portray the Second Afghan War as a revenge mission, playing down the fact Britain was an invading power and that our intentions were completely related to imperial policy. It is detrimental to an understanding of Britain's motives in Afghanistan that Atwood plays down 'The Great Game' aspect. Fear of Russian expansion into India was the fundamental reason for our involvement there.

Atwood's depiction of Roberts is equally apologetic, but more excusably so. The opinions of his peers that Atwood selects are a little weighted. His two great patrons - Lord Lytton and The Duke of Cambridge, Commander-in-Chief of the Army during the Second Afghan War - are often quoted. Similarly, Major George White, whose career was made under Roberts and is understandably positive, is given a strong voice.

In contrast, Lytton's Liberal Party replacement Lord Ripon, who had deep reservations about Roberts, has a lesser role in the book. His concerns about Roberts are overshadowed by Atwood's emphasising how happy he is with Roberts after the successful march and battle for Kandahar (p156).

Atwood gives less time to negative views from subordinates. Whilst Major White's diary is quoted throughout the book, Brigadier Macgregor's is not. As Atwood admits it is highly critical of Roberts. Atwood goes on to discount his views for being capricious and motivated by professional jealousy (p157-158).

Similarly, Colonel Hanna's official history of the Second Afghan War, which was also critical of Roberts, is denigrated by Atwood as an unreliable source on Roberts. He says Hanna had been denied promotion by Roberts and fundamentally disagreed with him on Afghan policy (p168-169).

Ultimately, these criticisms of Atwood are few. He achieves his aim of writing a learned biography of Roberts during the Second Afghan War. It is a subtle and perceptive study of a man during the most tumultuous period of his career and life; one that saw him begin the war as a Colonel and end it as a Victorian war hero.

The book is not meant to be a history of British Imperialism, of Afghanistan or even of the Second Afghan War. It would be dangerous for any reader researching these subjects to believe that the book gave anything but a cursory insight into them. The book is meant for a readership interested in Roberts.

The preface to the book, written by the publishers rather than Atwood, emphasises the parallels between the war and enemy Roberts fought and the war and enemy NATO now faces in Afghanistan. This is perhaps a rather over-simplistic comparison. Readers wishing to gain a deeper appreciation of the latter should search out books written with this in mind. The most potent insights are: that the Afghans have always been ferocious and cruel fighters; that their loyalties are ambivalent and motivated by personal, familial or tribal gain; and that their greatest tactical and strategic advantages are their knowledge of the ground and ability to disappear into the populace.

However, the enemy Roberts faced was significantly different to the one the British Army faces in Helmand. He fought against dynastic leaders who led mass armies, rather than the relatively small and disunited pockets of enemy now faced. They fought pitched battles where British superiority in weapons, tactics and discipline meant they could defeat armies two or three times larger than their own. Now we face insurgents that attack British forces with ambushes and IEDs.

Only in the last three pages does Atwood summarise events in Afghanistan since Roberts, and he is careful, as always, not to analyse what has happened. The only comments he does make are delayed until the final paragraph. It is a measure of the restricted scope of the book that they are somewhat misinformed, and confirm that the writer has produced an excellent biography of Roberts at the time of the Second Afghan War but not something with a wider bearing.

He compares the Taliban that British forces face now to the fanatical Ghazis of Roberts' day (p 177). The latter were an untrained mob, mad with religious zealotry, who led suicidal crazed attacks on the British column time and again at terrible cost. The former are shrewd, with a pragmatic approach to fighting, and are happy to reinvent their principles in order to

The Landings at Suvla Bay 1915 by Michael J Mortlock

Gallipoli has always captured the imagination of the British public, even those not normally interested in military history. To most, it is a story of ill judgement by politicians, bungling ineptitude and missed opportunities on the part of senior officers but great gallantry and fortitude by the lower ranks. Michael Mortlock has produced a detailed account of a later part of the Gallipoli campaign detailing the Suvla Bay landings in August 1915 when it was decided to reinforce the existing allied forces on the Gallipoli peninsula in an attempt to overcome Turkish resistance, a plan which was to ultimately fail over four months later.

He has carried out much detailed research from which he has described the planning of the landings, the landings themselves and what went wrong. There are several appendices and many notes supporting the text. He gives credit where credit is due but is quick to lay blame where he feels it necessary, in particular on Lt Gen Sir Frederick Stopford the elderly, inexperienced Corps Commander.

garner support from the populace. For example, the Taliban rescinded their precept that girls should not be educated after they saw the popularity of NATO's education policy.

Atwood goes on to say that the key to stability in Afghanistan is for the allies to find a modern equivalent of the dynastic leaders Britain installed in Afghanistan, such as Abdur Rahman, who Roberts supported after his victory at Kabul. Atwood makes no mention that it was Rahman's cousin, Ayub, who had defeated the British Brigade at Maiwand that led to Roberts' revenge mission to Kandahar.

For every one Afghan leader who was propped up by the British, two rebelled against them. Yet this is just an aside; the main concern is that Atwood does not realise how fundamentally Afghanistan has changed in the 127 years since the end of the Second Afghan War. The present Afghanistan is fragmented beyond measure by internal and external influences and it seems wishful thinking to believe an Afghan ruler can be found to broker a peace that could be maintained without the need for NATO boots on the ground.

These caveats notwithstanding, this biography, if read on its own terms, is a highly adept study of a complex and shadowy character. It lets the impressive collection of primary sources speak for themselves and allows Roberts to come alive for the reader. It is Atwood's skill as a biographer that he is unobtrusive. He gives the reader the opportunity to realise for himself how Roberts could become so successful, so quickly; and come to receive such honours as the epithet 'bahadur'.

Reviewed by Lt RWA Roylance, 5 Pl, 1 RGR

The March to Kandahar is published by Pen & Sword Books Ltd, 47 Church Street, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, S70 2AS (Tel: 01226 734241; e-mail: psmarketing@pen-and-sword.co.uk), price £19.99

The book is well written with supporting maps and illustrations and contains much detailed data drawn from official documents. The author quotes extensively from personal accounts, particularly those of Private Mortlock of the Suffolk Regiment, who at one point stated that the Gurkhas "were the only ones who were cheerful on Gallipoli." This view was also expressed by an officer of 1/6th Gurkha Rifles when describing the hardships endured by his men during the harsh winter conditions towards the end of 1915. Gurkhas had arrived at Gallipoli at the end of the previous April and were involved in the operation to capture the heights of Sari Bair in support of the landings, which operation would, like the landings themselves, ultimately fail. The author exposes the facts surrounding this unfortunate affair and reveals the views of officers and soldiers who fought so valiantly over 90 years ago.

Reviewed by Gavin Edgerley-Harris

The Landings at Suvla Bay 1915 is published by McFarland & Co Inc, Price £29.95

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Note: 4 GROA disbanded in 2007 and 3 GROA, 5 RGRRA, 8 GRRA and 9 GRRA in 2008. Their members remain members of the GBA as individuals.

**Regimental Association officials may be contacted through
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