

Queen's Gurkha Engineers
Association



Newsletter

No 33

THE QUEEN'S GURKHA ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION

^{18 Feb 89}
NEWSLETTER - 1989

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OGEA COMMITTEE

President:

General Sir George Cooper GCB MC

Immediate Past President:

Lieutenant General
Sir Hugh Cunningham KBE

Chairman:

Brigadier M J F Stephens

Field Officer Recently Returned:

Col M Gaffney

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EDITORIAL

Sadly, despite my promise, this edition of the newsletter has also been delayed - again due to circumstances beyond my control. I am most grateful, not only for the Regiment's contribution, but also for the three articles by George Ritchie, Nick Tomlinson and Tom Langridge. I have also included, with the kind permission of the Editor of the Kent Evening Post - Mr David Jones - a most interesting article on 69 Sqn's visit to Cyprus. It sounds as though a good time was had by all.

Since the last newsletter I also, sadly, have to report the death of two of our members. I feel I must reiterate the point the Secretary and I made in the last newsletter - that it would help us enormously under these circumstances if we knew the dates members had served. The response to this plea has not been good - I am sure we can all do better, so do please let us know.

I've had very little in the way of family news - except for one item so scurrilous I daren't publish it!! Do please let me have something for our next issue.

I am sure you will all be delighted to know that we won the Nepal Cup this year, beating 7GR 2-1 in the final held on 4 March 1989.

A re-type perhaps

OBITUARIES

CAPTAIN C R WOOD RE

It is with regret and great sadness that the death, after a long illness, of Captain Charlie Wood, is announced. Charlie served in the Regiment as 2IC 67 Sqn from October 1985 - April 1986. He leaves a wife – Sue – to whom we extend our deepest sympathy. An outstanding sportsman, he will be remembered with affection by all those who served with him.

NBS

Mr B P CLUBLEY

We have recently heard of the death, at the end of February, of Pete Clubley. Although I had not seen him for many years, I had the privilege of serving with him in both 25 Engineer Regiment and 67 Sqn. He was one of the old stalwarts – blunt, outspoken at times, but with a heart of gold. I personally learned a lot from him, and in common with those who knew him, will miss him. We extend our sympathy to his widow.

JSN

QGEA, ASSOCIATE MEMBERS AND GBA FUNCTIONS

QGEA DINNER/AGM/DASHERA PARTY

1. The QGEA Dinner will be held in the REHQ Mess on Friday 29 September 1989. Timings will be 7.15 pm for 7.45 Dress - Black Tie. The cost will be £12.50 per head to include dinner drinks and wines at table. Please make a note of the time of meal you order.
2. A limited amount of accommodation will be available. Bids for this will be dealt with on a first come first served basis.
3. The AGM will be held in the REHQ Mess on Saturday 30 September 1989 at 10.30 am. This will be followed by the Dashera Party starting at 12 noon.
4. Please return the attached proforma to the secretary by 15 September 1989.
5. Tom Langridge will be contacting Associate Members with details in due course.

GBA FUNCTIONS

6. Field of Remembrance. Thursday 9 November 1989.
Westminster Abbey - 11.30 am.
7. Annual Dinner. Thursday 16 November 1989 at the Cavalry and Guards Club. Tickets may be obtained from:

Liaison Officer Brigade of Gurkhas
Ministry of Defence (Army)
Archway North
Old Admiralty Building
Spring Gardens
London, SW1A 2BE
8. Annual Reunion. Saturday 12 May 1990. Service in the RMAF Chapel at 11.15 am, followed by pre-lunch drinks at 12.00 am, lunch at 1.00 pm. Costs to be confirmed.

WESSEX GURKHA BRIGADE LUNCHEON CLUB

9. The lunch will take place on Sunday 26 November 1989 at Watersplash Hotel, Brockenhurst Hants, SO4 7ZP at 12 noon for 1.00 pm. Tickets (£11.00 per head approx) may be obtained from Maj (Retd) T B Foster (Brian) by writing to him at Watersplash Cottage, Burford Lane, Brockenhurst, Hants. All proceeds in aid of the Gurkha Welfare Fund.

COMMANDANT'S 1988 NEWSLETTER

1988 was our 40th anniversary. In 1948 Gurkha infantrymen were first invited to become Sappers and since those early days, soldiers from the Regiment have served in most corners of the world. This year has been no exception and the Regimental capbadge has been seen in the Falklands, Belize, Thailand, South Korea, Germany, Brunei and United States as well as in our home bases of Hong Kong and the United Kingdom. Next year too offers a similarly varied programme; Belize may be missing but Cyprus takes its place. In case, however, this suggests our main interest is in travel, I should add that we have found time to do some training and carry out a project or two in the course of the year.

Training has occupied a fair proportion of our time but is becoming increasingly frustrating within the confines of Hong Kong. The year has seen a considerable throughput on individual courses whether trade/combat engineer orientated or of a command nature, with at times over 100 soldiers away from their squadrons. Collective training has suffered as a consequence and next year the emphasis will change slightly. The intention is to dedicate 67 Squadron to support 48 Brigade and concentrate on tactical and combat engineer training, while 68 Squadron takes on the inevitable project commitments. This time next year we will know whether the idea has worked.

Our boating activities have continued although at a somewhat reduced scale since the numbers of illegal immigrants entering Hong Kong from China has been decreasing. This has allowed nightly patrols to be relaxed slightly but support to other training commitments has easily taken up the spare capacity. We must have some of the most heavily used Sea Riders and Rigid Raiders in service anywhere and the strain on the equipment was beginning to show. The system has however responded and shortly we should have a fleet to be proud of rather than a collection that would have done credit to Steptoe's yard. Having looked at the role, it has been decided that Boat Troop should continue for the time being.

The Search side too has been relatively quiet with most activities being of an internal nature to see where we should be heading. The way forward is now clear and each Squadron will be placing more emphasis on this in the coming year with 68 Squadron taking the lion's share. The annual training visit from the RSME has taken place and qualified our advisers, and we look forward to the next visit shortly.

Normally we look forward rather morbidly to a little disaster relief to provide unexpected challenges. This year the only disaster in the region was far too close for comfort - namely the earthquake in Nepal. The Regiment was not directly involved, and I am delighted to say that nobody connected with the Regiment at any stage was killed or indeed seriously injured. A lot however had houses damaged or destroyed. Our doctor, Capt Jerry Tuck, spent a couple

of weeks working at Dharan, and OC 70 squadron, Maj Tony Burnside, had to inspect a bridge on the Jogbani road to ensure it was still safe to use. Mention must be made of the MES(Wks) team in Nepal whose efforts particularly in getting the Dharan cantonment water supply functioning, and assisting in the town, drew particular praise.

The Vietnamese refugee situation created the nearest the Regiment came to providing disaster relief. Many will know that they arrived in Hong Kong in large numbers over the summer months and swamped available facilities. Erskine Camp had to be made ready at short notice which involved 67 Squadron quite heavily for several weeks and then plans were drawn up hurriedly to build a new camp on a bare site near Tuen Mun. This nearly came the Regiment's way but wrangles over money and procedures convinced me that we should leave it to the Hong Kong Government. The Corps, as opposed to the Regiment, was however more heavily involved and the fact that the camp was built at all, or at least in a very short time-frame, was largely due to the efforts of WO2 Rowan who is a Clerk of Works attached to the Architectural Services Department of the Hong Kong Government.

Project work has expanded this year and we have been particularly busy on this front. The ideal is something that will occupy a troop for up to 3 months away from camp and we have achieved this on several occasions. Lt Tim Grant and G Troop spent some very wet weeks building a track at Ping Chau. D Troop under Lt Brian Cook had a successful time at Stanley rebuilding part of the Sea Cadet Centre while B Troop under Lt (QGO) Mahendraprasad Gurung built an attractive footbridge at Ma On Shan. E Troop spent some time refurbishing the Sek Kong Youth Club and, combined with D Troop, worked shifts to complete a bridge at Long Chuk Han. 70 Squadron's tractors have also been out for prolonged periods and are now past the 'constant breakdown through enforced idleness' stage. Projects look good for the coming year and already we have more on the books than I suspect we will be able to complete.

Overseas exercises have offered a reasonable chance to travel to pastures new but we still can't get out as often as I would like. This year has seen troops in Thailand on Exercise THAI PHOON, the Korean Honour Guard and Brunei on Exercise JUNGLE TROOPER. We should achieve the same next year, with the bonus of two troops on JUNGLE TROOPER instead of one.

Visitors have continued at a fairly regular pace. We were particularly pleased that General Sir George Cooper could visit, this time as Chief Royal Engineer, and we look forward to seeing him again in December 1989. CGS spent part of a day with us in July watching live demolition training. The AG and A/CGS visited briefly, as did Maj Gen Ramsay who asked particularly pertinent questions about our organisation. The Engineer-in-Chief called in briefly on his way back from Australia and we look forward to a more formal visit in November. The Major General took our JLC pass off parade in December and commissioned our four newest QGOs: Mahendraprasad Gurung, Purnabahdur Gurung, Manhabadur Gurung and Mohankumar Gurung. In addition we have been delighted to see DGEME, Director Engineer Services, Commander 48 Brigade and Brigadier Brigade of Gurkhas at various times during the year. It has been nice also to see a number of former officers of the Regiment in Hong Kong. Keep on coming!

HONOURS AND AWARDS, PROMOTIONS AND SELECTIONS

1. Honours and Awards.

Queen's Commendation - 21166980 Spr Tekbahadur Gurung

2. Promotions.

a. Capt (OGO).

Lt(OGO) Chitrabahadur	Thapa
Lt(OGO) Manilal	Thapa
Lt(OGO) Dalbahadur	Gurung
Lt(OGO) Dilkumar	Limbu

b. Lt(OGO).

SSgt Gopalkrishna	Gurung
WO2 Haribahadur	Gurung
WO2 Purnabahadur	Gurung
WO2 Manbahadur	Gurung
WO2 Mahendraparsad	Gurung
SSgt Mohankumar	Gurung
WO2 Binodkumar	Lama

c. Honorary Ranks.

(1) Honorary Lt(OGO) on Retirement.

Maj(OGO) Kharkajang Gurung MVO

(2) Honorary Lt(OGO) on Retirement.

WO1 Mahendrasingh	Gurung
WO1 Bhimraj	Limbu

3. Selections.

a. Appointments.

(1) Comdt OGE wef Feb 90.

Lt Col C McF Peebles RE

(2) OC 68 Gurkha Fd Sqn wef Dec 89.

Maj P A H Poole RE

(3) OC 69 Gurkha Indep Fd Sqn wef Dec 89.

Maj A W H H Macleod RE

(4) OC 70 Sp. Sqn. Wef Dec 1989

Maj. R N Cobbold RE

(5) Resources Tp Comd Wef Feb 1990

Capt (QGO) (QM) Milanchandra Gurung

(6) GM QGE Wef Oct 1989

Capt (QGO) Hukumaj Thapa

(7) 2IC Admin Coy TDGB Wef Jun 1990

Capt (QGO) Haribahadur Thapa

(8) Asst QM TDGB Wef 1989

Capt (QGO) Dalbahadur Gurung

(9) Chief Clerk to LOBG (MOD) Wef Jul 1989

WO1 Dhanbahadur Gurung

b. Staff College in 1987/88

Maj J M Gunns RE

Capt A D Harking RE

ARRIVALS

7 Jan 88	Capt J M Gunns RE	Trg Offr
9 Jan 88	Capt R J Edwards RE	Res Tp Comd
11 Jan 88	2Lt D A Bill RE	SSLC
14 Jan 88	Lt M S Lodge RE	Tp Comd 67 Sqn
26 Jan 88	Maj C C N Jarrett-Kerr RE	OC 68 Sqn
18 Feb 88	Lt T D Grant RE	Tp Comd 67 Sqn
18 Feb 88	Lt S J Date RE	Tp Comd 68 Sqn
24 Mar 88	Capt S J Tucker RE	Adjt
29 Mar 88	Capt S M Vandennieuwenhuysen	IO
12 Apr 88	Capt(GE(M)) D A Kerr RE	Wksp Tp Comd
21 Apr 88	Maj R J Little RE	Regt 2IC
21 Apr 88	Capt G P Henshaw RE	2IC 68 Sqn
26 Apr 88	Lt J G N Williams RE	Tp Comd 67 Sqn
26 Apr 88	Lt B C Misselbrook RE	Tp Comd
30 Aug 88	Lt D J Faulkner RE	Tp Comd
13 Sep 88	Capt P J Lambert RAEC	Unit Ed Offr
11 Oct 88	Capt(GE(C)) K Reader RE	Desn Tp Comd
6 Nov 88	2Lt J G N Combes RE	Tp Comd
1 Dec 88	Capt A C Sheppard RE	Trg Offr
14 Dec 88	2Lt M S Gillott RE	Tp Comd 67 Sqn
14 Dec 88	2Lt D A Bill RE	68 Sqn
29 Dec 88	2Lt J M Lancaster RE	SSLC

DEPARTURES

2 Feb 88	Maj D A Walker RE	DGW(A) (PE) (AE)
2 Feb 88	Capt A M Souter RE	AA College Chepstow
16 Feb 88	Maj(QM) A J Davies RE	Depot Regt RE (HS)
1 Mar 88	Lt J T Turk RE	69 Sqn
Mar 88	Capt(QGO) Jogindrasing Gurung	Retirement
5 Apr 88	Capt A D Harking RE	RMCS
5 Apr 88	Capt A C Wareham RE	RE Diving Est RSME
14 Apr 88	2Lt D A Bill RE	12 RSME Regt (YO Course)
19 Apr 88	Capt (GE(M)) D H Williams RE	HQ Engr Resources
19 Apr 88	ACapt R I L Dow RE	34 Fd Sqn
19 Apr 88	ACapt D Morris RE	Depot Regt RE
28 Apr 88	Maj C W Haskell RE	73 Engr Regt (V)
27 Jun 88	Capt(QGO) Kharkabahadur Limbu	Retirement
1 Aug 88	Lt(QGO) Haribahadur Gurung	Retirement
4 Aug 88	Lt F A Mallam WRAC	WRAC Centre
11 Aug 88	Lt H C Vivian RE	69 Sqn
30 Aug 88	2Lt J G N Combes RE	Retirement (SSLC)
20 Sep 88	Maj N J Kyte RAEC	Army Ed Svcs
20 Sep 88	Capt P C Bowen RE	Discharged
20 Oct 88	Capt(GE(C)) R J Cross RE	HQ Mil Works Force
15 Dec 88	Maj J M Gunns RE	RMCS
22 Dec 88	Lt D J Faulkner RE	69 Sqn
29 Dec 88	Lt B C Misselbrook RE	69 Sqn

FORMER OFFICERS OF THE REGIMENT

Brig M J F Stephens BA, C Eng, MICE, psc	Deputy EinC(A)
Brig H H Kerr OBE, BSc (Eng), sq	Comd 12 Engr Bde
Col J Speight OBE, ndc, nadc, psc+	D Hd DACU MOD
Col D H G Corsellis BSc (Eng), ndc, psc+	DA Kuala Lumpur
Col J A N Croft MBIM, SVY (pr) SVY	Ch Geo HQ NORTHAG
Col P J Worthington BSc (Eng), ndc psc+	Col IMS NATO
Col H E Vialou Clark BSc (Eng), MICE	Comd MWF
Col D Verschoyle BA, MICE, psc	Col Engr 5
Lt Col W J Chesshyre MA, ndc, psc	DA Bucharest
Lt Col J N B Stuart BSc (Eng), psc+	SO1(W) LSOR 4
Lt Col J A Thorp MBE, MA, psc+	SO1 G3 OR
	1(BR)Corps
Lt Col N W A Tomlinson BSc (Eng), MICE, C Eng	SO1 Mil Const Offr
	Saudi Air Project
	Team
Lt Col D R Humphrey MBIM, MInstAM, psc, jsdc	SO1 Team Offr
	ACDS (POL/NUC), GS
	Sec 3d
Lt Col P G C P Druitt sq	SO1 (W) Engr
	Resources
Lt Col J G Forbes BSc (Eng), SVY (pg) SVY	CI Sch of Mil Svy
Lt Col M D Reynolds BSc (Eng), C Eng,	
MICE, FI Plant E	SO1 SHAPE
Lt Col D G Saunders BSc (Eng), MSc,	
C Eng, MICE, dis	SO1 SHAPE
Lt Col J D C Anderson BSc (Eng), psc(n)+	CO 22 Engr Regt
Lt Col C McF Peebles BSc (Eng), psc+	SO1(DS) RMCS
	Shrivenham

OFFICERS OF THE REGIMENT

Lt Col J G Baker MBE, BSc (Eng), psc+ RE	Comdt & Comd Engr
Maj C W Haskell BSc, psc+, aic RE	2IC until Apr 88
Maj R J Little BSc (Eng), sq RE	2IC
Maj A P Burnside BSc, MICE, C Eng RE	OC 70 Sqn
Maj L W Chapman RE	OC 67 Sqn
Maj D A Walker BSc (Eng), psc+ RE	OC 68 Sqn until
	Feb 88
Maj C C N Jarrett-Kerr BSc (Eng), psc RE	OC 68 Sqn
Maj P Watson psc RE	OC 69 Sqn
Maj K J Hazard MBE RE	QM
Maj P Chapplow RE	QM 69 Sqn
Capt A M Souter BSc (Eng) RE	Trg Offr until
	Feb 88
Maj J M Gunns BSc RE	Trg Offr until
	Dec 89
Capt R J Edwards RE	Res Tp Comd 70 Sqn
Capt A D Harking BSc (Eng) RE	Adjnt until Mar 88
Capt A C Sheppard RE	Trg Offr
Capt S J Tucker RE	Adjnt
Capt(GE(C)) R J Cross RE	Des Tp Comd 70 Sqn
	until Oct 88
Capt(GE(C)) K Reader BEM, LIOB RE	Des Tp Comd 70 Sqn

Capt (GE(M)) D A Kerr RE	Wksp Tp Comd 70 Sqn
Capt A Foxley BA MA (Hons) RE	2IC 69 Sqn
Capt S M Vandennieuwenhuysen BSc RE	Ops Offr
Capt A C Wareham BSc RE	2IC 67 Sqn until
	Apr 88
ACapt A J Frankland BSc RE	2IC 67 Sqn
Capt P C Bowen BSc RE	2IC 68 Sqn until
	Apr 88
Capt D M Jones BSc RE	Tp Comd 69 Sqn until
	Oct 88
ACapt G P Henshaw BSc RE	2IC 68 Sqn
ACapt M Stevenson RE	2IC 70 Sqn
ACapt R I L Dow BSc RE	Tp Comd 67 Sqn
ACapt D Morris BSc RE	Tp Comd 68 Sqn
	until Apr 88
ACapt B C Cook BSc (Hons) RE	Tp Comd 68 Sqn
Lt P K C Grundy BSc (Hons) RE	Tp Comd 69 Sqn
Lt J T Turk BSc RE	Tp Comd 69 Sqn
	until Feb 88
Lt A St J E Cameron BSc RE	Tp Comd 69 Sqn until
	Apr 88
Lt F A Mallam BSc (Hons) WRAC	Asst Adjt until
	Sep 88
Lt M S Lodge BSc (Hons) RE	Tp Comd 69 Sqn
Lt T D Grant BSc (Hons) RE	Tp Comd 67 Sqn
Lt S J Date B Eng RE	Tp Comd 68 Sqn
Lt H C Vivian BA RE	Tp Comd 69 Sqn
Lt B C Misselbrook BSc RE	Tp Comd 69 Sqn
Lt D J Faulkner BSc (Hons) RE	Tp Comd 69 Sqn
Lt J G N Williams B Eng RE	Tp Comd 67 Sqn

ATTACHED OFFICERS

Maj D W O'Keefe RAPC	Paymaster
Maj N J Kyte BA RAEC	Ed Offr until
	Oct 88
Capt P J Lambert BSc RAEC	Ed Offr

GURKHA COMMISSIONED OFFICERS

Capt (GCO(QM)) Milanchandra Gurung	QM 60 Fd Sp Sqn RE
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QUEEN'S GURKHA OFFICERS

Maj (QGO) Kharkajang	Gurung MVO	GM
Maj (QGO) Lakpatshering	Bhotia	ERE/HC BGMRO
Capt (QGO) Hukumraj	Thapa	Gurkha Capt 67 Sqn
Capt (QGO) Surjabahadur	Thapa	ERE/2IC Admin Coy
		TDBG
Capt (QGO) Haribahadur	Thapa	Gurkha Capt 69 Sqn
Capt (QGO) Kumarsing	Rai	MTO/Gurkha Capt
		70 Sqn
Capt (QGO) Durgaprasad	Gurung	Gurkha Capt 68 Sqn
Capt (QGO) Birbahadur	Limbu	Tp QGO 69 Sqn
Capt (QGO) Manilal	Thapa	Tp QGO 69 Sqn

Capt (QGO)	Dalbahadur	Gurung	Gurkha QM
Capt (QGO)	Chitrabahadur	Thapa	Asst Trg Offr Oct 88
Capt (QGO)	Dilkumar	Limbu	Asst Trg Offr
Lt (QGO)	Kulbahadur	Tamang BEM	Boat Tp QGO
Lt (QGO)	Chandrabahadur	Gurung	Asst Ed Offr
Lt (QGO)	Judbahadur	Gurung	ERE/PWO BGTC Kathmandu
Lt (QGO)	Nainabahadur	Tamang	Manning Offr
Lt (QGO)	Budhikumar	Gurung	Tp QGO 68 Sqn
Lt (QGO)	Imanhang	Limbu BEM	69 Sqn/Nepal I
Lt (QGO)	Hombahadur	Sen	Tp QGO 69 Sqn
Lt (QGO)	Haribahadur	Gurung	Unit Fam Offr until Aug 89
Lt (QGO)	Gopalkrishna	Gurung	MTO 69 Sqn
Lt (QGO)	Purnabahadur	Gurung	Unit Families
Lt (QGO)	Manbahadur	Gurung	Tp QGO 68 Sqn
Lt (QGO)	Mahendraparsad	Gurung	Tp QGO 67 Sqn
Lt (QGO)	Mohankumar	Gurung	Tp QGO 67 Sqn

BRITISH OTHER RANKS

24077222	WO2	K C Hall RE	RQMS
24068177	WO2	P H Hayward RE	CW (C) until Aug 88
24432731	SSgt	A H Gonzales	CW (C)
24147448	WO2	S Philips RE	MPF
24168382	WO2	D Ofield RE	QMSI (CE)
24168907	WO2	D J White RE	Res Spec
24209318	WO2	A Thompson RE	CW (M) until Dec 88
24328870	SSgt	D S Keepence RE	CW (M)
24324905	WO2	P E Lane RE	CW (C)
24136215	WO2	J N Schofield REME	AQMS until Oct 88
24307604	SSgt	G W Watson REME	AQMS
24329378	WO2	S A Gill RAPC	RAPC Div 2
24398997	WO2	D D McGuaig APTC	QMSI PT
24312701	SSgt	M P Chart REME	Art Veh
24277359	Sgt	E Taylor REME	Armr Sgt until Jul 88
24343228	Sgt	D Reid REME	Armr Sgt
24392467	Sgt	M J Higginbottom REME	VM Sgt wef Nov 88
24414563	Sgt	J A Hobbs RAPC	RAPC Div 3
24165371	Sgt	J McClelland RE	Ftr Sgt until Mar 88 (Replaced by a Gurkha)
24395002	Cpl	R C Birnie REME	VM until Jul 88
24547069	Cpl	S D McGillivray	VM

IO'S NOTES - 1988

DATES

EVENTS

8 Jan Brig V J Beauchamp Comd 48 Gurkha Inf Bde visited the Regt.

15 Jan Brig M G Hunt Davis MBE Brigadier Brigade of Gurkhas visited the Regt.

17 Jan Regtl Pipes and Drums 3rd place in Hong Kong Pipes and Drums Competition.

18 Jan Maj J M Allan DABM visited Pipes and Drums.

18 Jan One GOR deployed on Ex LITTLE LOOK to Singapore until 31 Jan.

26 Jan Annual Tickle BFT held.

29 Jan 1st Round Nepal Cup - lost to QG Signals.

1 Feb Maj C C N Jarrett-Kerr RE assumed command of 68 Gurkha Fd Sqn vice Maj D A Walker RE.

2 Feb Mr W Oster Assistant Director of Internal Audit (Service Units) visited.

8 Feb 68 Gurkha Fd Sqn annual Ex until 12 Feb.

9 Feb Chief Royal Engineer Gen Sir George Cooper GCB MC visited the Regt, leaving on 16 Feb.

9 Feb Maj Gen C A Ramsay OBE Director General Territorial Army and Organisation visited the Regt.

23 Feb Comdt, Lt Col J G Baker MBE RE left Hong Kong for Nepal.

23 Feb Ghazni Day observed by all ranks.

1 Mar Comdt, Lt Col J G Baker MBE RE returned from duty in Nepal.

1 Mar 7 GORs deployed to Thailand with 1/2 GR on Ex THAIPOON until 6 Apr.

2 Mar The Regt took Runners Up position in the Major Units Hockey Cup.

24 Mar E Tp 68 Gurkha Fd Sqn won the Sapper Bowl Competition.

1 Apr Capt S J Tucker RE assumed the duty of Adjutant
vice Capt A D Harking RE

22 Apr Farewell Beating Retreat for Regtl 2IC, Maj
Haskell RE.

26 Apr Maj R J Little assumed post of Regtl 2IC.

27 Apr Regt Rugby Team reached semi-finals of BFHK
side Tournament.

28 Apr Capt S M Vandennieuwenhuysen RE assumed the
of RHQ Tp Comd.

9 May Comdt, Lt Col J G Baker MBE RE departed Hong
Kong for UK.

13 May Junior Leaders Cadre 88/1 and 41 Training P
Pass Off Parade taken by Brig V J Beauchamp
48 Gurkha Inf Bde. The Parade was commanded
by Capt J M Gunns RE.

15 May Regtl Badminton Team Runners Up in BFHK Inter
League.

23 May Col P L Wilson, Col A Ed 5 and Lt Col M A Ha
RRF, SO1 PS4 (A) visited the Regt to discuss fu
ture plans for Resettlement Training.

23 May Col M T Cook, D Comd 48 Gurkha Inf Bde visited
Sp Sqn.

4 Jun Comdt, Lt Col J G Baker MBE RE reassumed com
mand of the Regt.

23 Jun Lt Col A M MacKenzie MBE Insp HKMSC (and former
70 Sqn) visited 70 Sp Sqn.

24 Jun Inter Sqn Swimming/Water Polo Gala. Win
ning Swimming - 70 Sqn, Water Polo - RHQ.

24 Jun 67 Gurkha Fd Sqn winners in RERA Small
Competition (SLR (Heckler Koch) Team League -
2).

3 Jul Regtl Badminton Tournament.

6 Jul D Tp, 68 Gurkha Fd Sqn deployed on Ex JUL
TROOPER 2/88 to Brunei until 3 Aug.

6 Jul Comd Maint Lt Col R G Heathcote visited the R
egment.

14 Jul CGS Gen Sir Nigel Bagnall visited the Regt
demolition trg at Castle Peak Range.

19 Jul Queen's Commendation for Brave Conduct awarded
21166980 Spr Tekbahadur Tamang.

3 Aug BFHK Swimming and Water Polo Championship. Winners of Water Polo League.

8 Aug Environmental Health Inspection.

18 Aug Regtl 2IC and 3 x GORs deployed on Ex SETIA KAWAN as umpires.

2 Sep Regt came Runners Up in BFHG Inter Unit Volleyball Plate Competition.

5 Sep Maj C C N Jarrett-Kerr RE left Hong Kong for Thailand on a recce for Ex THAIPHOON 2/88.

12 Sep 68 Gurkha Fd Sqn FTX Ex PASINAIE PASINA until 16 Sep.

14 Sep Delhi Day.

15 Sep Visit by Rt Rev R Gordon Bishop to the Forces.

17 Sep Regtl Catering Team took part in a 24 hr sponsored swim for the Nepal Relief Fund. The team completed the greatest number of laps in its allocated time and won S250 which it donated to the Fund.

20 Sep Capt P J Lambert RAEC assumed post of UEO vice Maj N J Kyte RAEC.

28 Sep QGE Day - 40th Birthday Celebrations. Bowring Trophy was awarded to 21165375 LCpl Gaubahadur Pun.

4 Oct Col J N H Lacey OBE, Col PB7 visited the Regt until 6 Oct.

6 Oct ACGS Maj Gen C R L Guthrie LVO OBE visited the Regt.

7 Oct Visit by DGEME Maj Gen D Shaw CBE.

12 Oct Dashera. Guests at Kalaratri included Brig (Retd) J H Edwards and Doctor H Kadoorie.

12 Oct A Tp, 67 Gurkha Fd Sqn departed Hong Kong for Korea to provide Honour Guard under comd of Lt T D Grant RE.

20 Oct Capt (GE(C)) K Reader BEM RE assumed post of Design Tp Comd vice Capt (GE(C)) R J Cross RE.

25 Oct E Tp, 68 Gurkha Fd Sqn went to Thailand with 1/2 GR on Ex THAIPHOON 2/88.

26 Oct D Engr Svcs Brig J N S Drake visited the Regt u
29 Oct.

27 Oct Visit by Col MO1 (Col A D R Pringle) and SO2
MO1 Maj R P D Folkes to Regt.

28 Oct Ex TRAILWALKER. Regtl C Team came 2nd.
Ladies' Teams took part and completed the 1
course.

4 Nov Comdt, 2IC, OC 67 and OC 70 attended the HQBF S
Day.

5 Nov Visit to Regt by Capt (Retd) M Wilson (Ex QGE)

5 Nov Regtl personnel took part in Hong Kong
marathon.

8 Nov Infantry Training Development and Advisory T
visited the Regt to discuss training for NCOs
QGOs.

9 Nov Comdt, Lt Col J G Baker RE on duty in Korea un
11 Nov.

13 Nov Remembrance Day Parade - Regtl Search Te
deployed to clear Sek Kong Church area.

15 Nov Maj L W Chapman left Hong Kong for Nepal on D
Trek.

23 Nov EinC Maj Gen Peck visited the Regt en route b
from Australia.

26 Nov Bde Beating of Retreat.

1 Dec Capt A C Sheppard RE assumed command of Trg Wi
vice Maj J M Gunns RE.

3 Dec BFHK Khud Race - Regt was 5th in Major Uni
Competition.

7 Dec Korea Honour Guards returned.

9 Dec Maj L W Chapman returned from Nepal Duty Trek.

9 Dec Recruits Pass Off Parade at TDBG. Best Recruit
211168008 Spr Kishorkumar Rai QGE.

12 Dec RERA Smallbore Shooting Competition.

16 Dec

Junior Leaders Cadre Pass off Parade and Commissioning of the following by Maj Gen G D Johnson OBE MC MGBG.

Lt (QGO) Purnabhadur	Gurung (UFO)
Lt (QGO) Manbahadur	Gurung (E Tp)
Lt (QGO) Mahendraparsad	Gurung (B Tp)
Lt (QGO) Mohankumar	Gurung (A Tp)

17 Dec

Regtl Audit Day.

23 Dec

Regtl Cross Country won by 67 Gurkha Fd Sqn. Comdt won the over 40 section.

23 Dec

WOs and Sgts to Offrs Mess followed by serving of lunch to junior ranks in the main kitchen.

28 Dec

Maj Gen (Retd) J H S Bowring CB OBE MC and wife visited the Regt on the day of the King of Nepal's Birthday. A 9-a-side football competition held on that day was won by B Tp.

69 GURKHA INDEPENDENT FIELD SQUADRON - 1988 NEWSLETTER

1988 has been a very busy year for the Squadron. We returned from Belize in January after a very successful tour. The Squadron spent most of the tour building new accommodation blocks for the infantry and H Troop built a new observation post on Hunting Caye - a small island about 20 miles off the coast. This was an idyllic setting with the usual diet of bhat supplemented by lobster and coconuts. During this task Spr Tekbahadur Tamang gained a Queen's Commendation for Brave Conduct for rescuing 12 Honduran fishermen during a bad storm. Three other soldiers were awarded CBF's commendations for their efforts during the tour. The Belize tour also saw the handover of OCs with John Durance handing over to Peter Watson.

Almost immediately after the return from Belize Capt (QGO) Manilal Thapa took a troop off to the USA for a month exercise with 2 P IRISH. They all thoroughly enjoyed the experience and were extremely popular as always.

In April the whole Squadron deployed at short notice to Camberley in Surrey to build a temporary prison for the Home Office to help relieve overcrowding. The task was completed ahead of schedule which allowed I Troop to take some leave before departing for the Falkland Islands with 59 Commando Squadron. The troop completed a 4 month tour and were kept busy with both airfield damage repair and minor projects to improve the living conditions in the isolated outposts around the Islands.

Whilst I Troop were enjoying their holiday in the Falkland Islands the other 2 troops spent the summer in Scotland carrying out MACC tasks. G Troop returned to Portgordon to complete the repairs to the harbour wall. This was the third year a troop had visited the village and unfortunately the last. The final handover was an emotional occasion and the local community presented the Squadron with a tantalus with 3 decanters of good malt whisky as a memento. We have made a lot of friends in the area and it will no doubt remain a popular holiday spot. G Troop then moved south to Kelso to build a 300 foot Bailey bridge for the Game Fair. The River Tweed rose 8 feet overnight and Paul Grundy could see his military career coming to a swift conclusion.

H Troop deployed to the west coast of Scotland again under the command of Manilal Saheb to build an elevated timber walkway at Culzean Castle. This was the first time a troop from the Squadron had deployed to this part of Scotland but as usual the boys proved extremely popular and we have received many requests to return.

During the summer the Squadron shooting team was also busy under the tutelage of the Sergeant Major (Lalbahadur Tamang). The team won the SEDIST minor unit competition and were third overall at RASAM. The two teams that beat us were equipped with the new

SA80 with the optical sight, so we might claim a moral victory. We are looking forward to the new competition this year when we will also be competing with SA80, though alas without the optical sight. The conversion has gone well and the overall standard of our shooting seems to have improved.

Dashera was a great success and we were pleased to have the company of J F Allen Saheb, Cook Saheb and Tomlinson Saheb for Kalartri. Tomlinson Saheb enjoyed himself so much that he actually stayed a week joining in every troop party. The year ended with a Squadron exercise on Salisbury Plain. Luckily the weather was fine and all enjoyed the various tasks, especially their first encounters with APCs and the bar minelayer.

The year has seen the usual high turnover of both officers and soldiers. We have said goodbye to Chris Prowse who has retired to run a yacht charter business; St John Cameron has gone to the Training Regiments, David Jones to 21 Engr Regt and Andrew Foxley to the MOD. He is presently AMA to MGO and is still suffering from shell shock at being posted to the Ministry.

We are now looking forward to a month in Cyprus followed shortly by another 4 month tour in Falkland Islands.

MENACE OF THE LURKING GURKHAS

BY TREVOR STURGESS

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the Editor of the Kent Evening Post

Darkness swiftly follows dusk in Cyprus. Shadowy figures in a Mediterranean landscape move under its protection and slip noiselessly into position near a bridge, ready to kill.

Moonlight forms silhouettes but fails to pick out helmet, rifle and kukri amid gorse and scrub.

The Plough and the North Star glisten as H Troop's killing group lie on their bellies, rifle hammers cocked.

For four numbing hours they must keep alert, shaking their comrade if tired eyes close. They wait for the enemy to enter their arc of fire.

Then, just before 11pm, a 65-second burst of bullets crackles in the dark. Thunderflash and grenade briefly turn night into day in the killing area.

As the brilliance fades, three bodies lie still on the bridge. Once again Johnny Gurkha has done his duty for Britain and the Kent town he calls home.

Chatham's pride, 69 Gurkha Squadron Royal Engineers has just returned to its Kent HQ after a gruelling exercise, Royal Measure II.

GETTING FIT

Some 120 Sappers from Kitchener Barracks had been on the divided isle of Cyprus to learn and refresh infantry skills.

They also improved their fitness by skiing, marching, yomping and sport and boosted firing skills by getting to grips with their new SA-80 personal weapon.

They were following a remarkable 174-year tradition, blending Nepal's finest warriors with the British Tommy.

By valour, ferocity, fearlessness and derring-do in many bloody conflicts from the Indian Mutiny to the Falklands they have earned a special place in the hearts of Britons.

These gentle, courteous men from the hillside villages of Nepal have inspired fear in foes from Gallipoli to Borneo. Many have won the prestigious Victoria Cross for their gallantry.

Their most potent symbol of ferocity is their scimitar-shaped knife, the kukri. The glint of its silver blade has signalled death for many an enemy.

Now mainly ceremonial, it is still used to decapitate the sacrificial goat, severing head from body in a split second.

Under the leadership of Major Peter Watson the boys of 69 Squadron worked hard in Cyprus. Free days to enjoy sport in Happy Valley or see the sights in Limassol or Paphos were rare.

Their barracks were at Bloodhound Camp, near Episkopi - Britain's Sovereign Base Area west of Limassol.

But on the night of the mock ambush by the bridge, they were miles from base. It was a crucial part of a three-day exercise which involved night navigation, sleeping and keeping sentry watch under the stars, and storming a deserted village defended by 20 Coldstream Guards.

On their way to the bridge they had marched 10 miles by moonlight, weighed down by heavy Bergens on their backs. Most had begun their journey at RAF Akrotiri, where they boarded an RCL landing craft.

At sundown the platoon disembarked on a secluded beach and set off inland. The trek was not without problems.

Major Watson, 36, ticked off the troops for bunching - a sitting target for snipers - coughing, chattering, webbing brushing against gorse and electronic watches bleeping every hour.

But the boys soon learned living quietly in the undergrowth was easy for the Gurkhas, who can lie doggo all day - and night - if required.

Gurkha compositions - rice, dhal (lentils), curried meat, brown biscuits and tinned luncheon meat cooked in ghee (clarified butter) - provided two identical meals a day.

A small stove lit by firelighters heated mess tins and the 5am sounds of sizzling spam or boiling tea made a welcome start to the day.

It was often hard to spot the boys in the bush. Camouflage cream, combat gear and sprigs of foliage on helmets made them merge with the landscape. Only a gleaming smile suggested their position.

These are happy boys. Far from home and without their families (not allowed in UK) they are proud to serve the crown.

They are Nepal's elite, a few chosen from many in the foothill towns of Dharan - soon to close and Pokhara, which nestles in the shadows of Mt Annapurna.

They have to be fit - a mere and scar could eliminate them. Losers return shamefaced to their village but winners are heroes, soon setting off for basic training in Hong Kong.

MUTUAL RESPECT

Assigned to regiments, they usually remain in Hong Kong but a handful go to Church Crookham, Hampshire, and a few to Chatham and 69 Squadron.

A bond is soon forged between Gurkha sapper and British officer, firmly based on mutual respect and an admiration first won in fierce Nepalese wars of 1815.

Their Sandhurst-trained officers often trek in Nepal to better understand the culture of the men they lead. They learn Gurkhali, an odd mix of Nepali and ripe Army slang.

They respect Gurkha culture but sometimes get irritated by a courtesy that can mask true feelings or opinions.

"They often say what they think you want to hear," said one officer.

But others of firmer persuasion rise through the ranks. They are happy to wear QGO on their jacket - Queen's Gurkha Officer.

They are less happy about the cloud of uncertainty hanging over their Brigade.

The British exodus from Hong Kong in 1997 has led to a major rethink of the Gurkhas' place in the British Army. Sadly, Johnny may soon be marching home.

DISASTER RULES - OK?

BY LT COL G N RITCHIE

When I joined the Institute of Development Policy and Management Manchester University fifteen years ago, I went as a solo examining the role and responsibilities of governments, and government organisations, for pre-disaster planning and preparedness and for relief operations management. At about the same time Brian Ward (Lt Col B A O Ward, late Federation Engineers and 42 Field Squadron) took up a consultancy in Indonesia on behalf of the United Nations Disaster Relief Office. We had both come into 'disaster' business because of the nonsenses in disaster relief operations which we had seen or become aware of, around the world. Brian is now Director of the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre based on the Asian Institute of Technology in Bangkok. I am Director of the Cranfield Disaster Preparedness Centre based upon Reading, Shrivvenham, a faculty of the Cranfield Institute of Technology. Our programmes of counter-disaster staff training each aim at developing the capabilities to plan and to manage, without which so much of the disaster relief resources so generously provided, will continue to fail to meet the requirement and their potential due to an absence of disaster preparedness.

As an eighteen year old lieutenant, I first saw floods as I was flying for fun over the Ganges and Bramaputra delta one weekend in a DC3 with a school friend. Beneath us we saw the geography lessons we had recently left behind as these two rivers in flood renewed the fertility of the delta by spreading the annual deposit of silt which maintained the productive capacity of the land. I remember noticing how the villages remained isolated, but free from inundation, on land only inches above the flood levels. Culturally the villagers knew that but for a major disaster, they were safe. The next time I was involved and aware of this situation was when the cyclone of 1970 roared in from the Bay of Bengal, inundating and sweeping away hundreds of villages which increases and pressures of population have forced the peasant farmers to establish, on land which their ancestors had avoided because of the known dangers of doing so.

World wide increases in population, matched by a spread of modern technology not always fully understood or safely managed, environmental mis-management and failures to analyse the threat and plan to prevent or mitigate its effects, have created disaster relief as a multi-million pound activity and counter-disaster staff training as a very necessary growth industry, long overdue.

As soldiers we have been exposed to and learned the elements of effective counter-disaster action, ever since we were first introduced to Clausewitz's Principles of War.

The only one of Clausewitz's principles which does not have its direct parallel in disaster preparedness is 'achieving surprise'. We cannot surprise nature as it will always surprise us. We will continue to be surprised by man's failures, Chernobyl, the incompetence of which causes 'King's Crosses' and the rotten plumbing of 'Flixborough's' and 'Bhopals'. The counter must be to 'Be Prepared'. That requires political will, to which there is a growing commitment in the developing countries but surprisingly little in the United Kingdom.

Cooperation and the lack of it in disaster I first encountered in Kluang. I later found it in East Pakistan after the cyclone of 1970 when major charities, who had flooded in to help, were mounting intelligence operations against one another to locate targets for aid and developing security systems to prevent others getting knowledge of their aid operations!

But in 1964 69 Squadron were 'resting' in Kluang between Borneo tours. It began to rain and then to flood. Aid to the civil power in these circumstances lay with the residents, HQ, then Gurkha Engineers and 70 Squadron (the high tech end of the airfield!). Malcolm Campbell conscious of the capabilities and the needs of the moment made a polite request.

Off I squelched to the District Officer, where I found the Malay gentleman squeezed into his office, together with all his staff and a lot of very sweet and rather cold coffee. Eager to do something, I sought his needs. There was a long but polite silence and eventually my realisation that he knew nothing and that the telephone was working not!

Did he think it would be a good idea if he and I established our joint HQ in the police station where the communications and information were?

Polite smile but no movement followed!

To cut a long story short, I eventually established a radio link with the police station and put an LO there. A solution of sorts.

Shortly afterwards, the Dato Cheong, known variously as the owner of the Asia Cinema and restaurant, the local elected representative to (was it called the National Council?) and local prominent member of the Chinese community, arrived at the DO's office. He found me on the verandah with my remote link to the OCPD, a Sikh. We now had full representation of the ethnic populations, Malay, Chinese and Indian.

The Dato asked what was happening and I replied, expressing, as politely as possible, my belief that the sooner the DO and I moved to the police station, the better. I moved to accompany the Dato to the hubbub of the DO's office. He suggested that for the moment it would be better if he spoke with the DO alone.

Ten minutes or so later he and the DO emerged, the latter with the suggestion that we all move our HQ to the police station! I raised my eyebrows. In reply the Dato raised his too.

A year or so later the Dato held one of his sumptuous banquets for some departing celebrity in the office of the Asia Cinema manager. I took the opportunity to remind him of the floods and to ask how he had persuaded the DO to move his HQ to the police station. His eyes twinkled, again he raised his eyebrows and, holding up his right hand, he expressively rubbed an imaginary note between his thumb and second finger. Had he!? Did he mean he had?! Which principle of war was that? Flexibility? Cooperation? Surely not Economy of Force? Perhaps just Maintenance of the Aim!

Brian Ward and I are agreed that we have the most challenging, but also the most satisfying, appointment in either the Asian or Cranfield Institutes of Technology. He operates from Pakistan eastwards into Asia and the Pacific. From Shrivenham we operate into Africa and the Middle East with the focus of our work sharpening on southern and eastern Africa.

In the coming months, I have been asked to set up a workshop for the PM's Office in Tanzania to help heads of ministerial departments, and non-government organisations identify and coordinate their responsibilities for disaster preparedness and relief. In Mozambique we are to be responsible for a survey of planning and management needs in government staff where crisis management and disaster situations are the norm. In this project, we expect to be working with staff of the Eastern and Southern Management Institute. I am in discussion with the regional Agricultural Management Centre and the Zimbabwe Institution of Engineers concerning collaborative introduction of counter-disaster staff training into their programmes. There is a recent request from the Virgin Islands for an eighteen month 'Disaster Preparedness' consultancy. I do not foresee great difficulties in attracting volunteers for this one!

The highlight of my year is, however, a six week course run during the long vacation at Shrivenham. This draws together up to twenty-five senior officers from the military, police and emergency services of developing countries throughout the world. The programme is financially supported by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, but the measure of our success is that last year Ghana, having paid itself to send its Director of Military Operations and the Chief Instructor of the Armed Forces Staff College, is again this year and at its own cost, sending another two officers. The course is the greatest fun and has the added merit that I shall shortly have friends in Police HQ in every capital in the Commonwealth!

To complement and strengthen all this, the Commonwealth Secretariat has initiated a Disaster Management project with which we are to be closely associated.

It has taken as long to get counter-disaster staff training established as an essential element of disaster relief, as it would have taken to get a sophisticated weapon system into service! 'Maintenance of the Aim' was a significant feature of the operation! The threatened countries have long been aware of their requirement but have been dependent very much upon the providers of disaster relief for funds to create disaster preparedness including training.

It is easier to rattle a tin for disaster relief than for management development! Slowly however things are changing. There is now a realisation, and the beginnings of action at the UN and Commonwealth levels, that more must be done about the threat of disaster to the developing countries than throwing relief in necessarily vast quantities, at the victims. A pound spent now on counter-disaster preparedness planning and staff training can be worth hundreds in the event. But it is a message much harder to sell than you would think.

POKHARI TOK VILLAGE FUND

BY T LANGRIDGE

Last year I took Eddie Vallenge and two friends from the horticultural world to Nepal. Eddie was to meet his long lost friend Chure Thapa and for my other two companions there was a trek in store.

We spent our first day in Kathmandu touring the city under the expert guidance of ex QGE Mr Dipak Tamang who is running his Company Sunshine Travels in the city. Dipak is doing quite well and through his vast experience knows just how to handle the European. We wish him well and thank him for his help. He did us proud in arranging our travel arrangements and trekking visas during the holiday time, which many of you will know can be a problem.

We arrived in Pokhari Tok in the evening. How pleased I was to be in this small hillside Gurung village with its magnificent view of the Himalayas. I've been to this village many times and it holds a pleasant fascination for me. The village nestling into the hillside has a school with about 30 pupils and a Kot which has been built on top of the hill. From the Kot one can see far into the countryside, the mountains giving the northern view a superb backdrop. The folklore surrounding the village is fascinating but one needs to spend time to learn it. The village school has served its purpose for many years and now needs replacing. Although Pokhari Tok is like my village Crazies Hill in size, there is one big difference, wealth. I was troubled by the fact - here we are with my life-style and that of Pokhari Tok's inhabitants. Can we help? I thought on this point for some time. Here I had three companions, surely between us we must be able to assist in some way. Knowing the village well there were two problems that I considered we could assist with, a project to bring sufficient clean water to the village and the building of a new schoolhouse.

Chandra and I had previously talked about his village on past trips. Here was a man on site, ex QGE and of the correct trade and quality. Chandra has already raised some cash for his village from the serving soldiers of 2/2 GR and from other members of the village. On leaving Chandra I told him I could raise £1,000 by the end of May to assist his village in their efforts to improve their life-style.

January 20th saw the birth of the POKHARI TOK VILLAGE FUND (UK). I was amazed how the fund progressed. First with penny jars, then holding functions in my village. One such function raised £2,000, including donations from the villagers of Crazies Hill. The next step was to try and encourage others to help. With the help of one or two good friends in the right places the fund has now reached £5,000 plus. Our target was for approximately £8,000, however, it must be realised with the problems on the Indian Border, prices will increase and like the western world will never go down again. Therefore I'm fighting to raise as much cash as possible before I return to Nepal in the autumn (hopefully).

My sincere thanks to 69 Ind Gurkha Fd Sqn for their very kind support which has won them much admiration in Crazies Hill and the local press. Associates too have risen to the occasion and much financial help has reached me for which I, Chandra and the people of Pokhari Tok are truly grateful.

Anyone reading this article and wishing to assist us in this worthy cause please send any donations to the address below, and please make cheque payable to POKHARI TOK VILLAGE FUND.

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5 Foxsteep Cottage
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SAUDI ARABIA, SOME NOTES FROM A SAPPER THERE

BY LT COL N W A TOMLINSON

Saudi Arabia has existed as a nation in its present form only since 1932, having been conquered and unified under a strong Arab called Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud. His creation of Saudi Arabia, which took him 30 years, can be compared in some respects to Prithwi Narayan Shah's conquest of Nepal in the middle ages. Ibn Saud died in 1953, but his kingdom continues to be governed by his family. One of his many sons, Fahad, is the present king. The predominance of the Al Saud family can be compared to the prominence of the Thapa and Rana families in Nepal following the death of Prithwi Narayan Shah.

Like the Nepalese, the Saudi Arabians are in no doubt as to the existence of the spiritual part of man's nature. Like Christians, they believe unreservedly in man's immortal soul and the existence of one God, and so pray routinely several times daily both in public and privately. Just as the British are Christians and the Nepalese are Hindus, so the Saudi Arabians are Moslems. The two most important shrines in all Islam are in the west of Saudi Arabia at Mecca and Medina. And so strong is the belief of Islam, and so certain is the conviction that theirs is the one true and only path to heaven, that no other form of public belief is permitted, since this could lead to individual souls to damnation; and this reasoning can be compared to the Inquisition practised in Spain in the middle ages by the religious authorities there.

The source of Saudi Arabia's enormous material wealth is the oil which has been exploited since the second world war. This wealth has also brought enormous political and economic influence and power to the Saudi Arabian government. The reserves of crude oil are huge, as also is the demand for it, and both the reserves and demand are expected to continue well into the 21st century. Most of the income from oil is being used to develop infrastructure, industry and agriculture.

Saudi Arabia covers a very large area, 880,000 square miles of the Arabian Peninsula, many many times larger than both Great Britain and Nepal put together. To the north lie Jordan, Iraq and Kuwait, to the east lies the Arab or Persian Gulf, Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, to the south lie the Oman, the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen and the Yemen Arab Republic, and to the west lies the Red Sea. It is one huge yellow desert of gravel and sand, mountainous in the west but flatter to the east. It is very hot indeed in the summer lying astride the Tropic of Cancer. It is very arid, but there is a brief annual winter rainy season. There are no permanent rivers, nevertheless agriculture flourishes here and there irrigated from deep boreholes. The cities are new, modern and prestigious.

The towns are new and modern but not so prestigious. The population is 8 million, less than in Nepal and very much less than that of Great Britain. There are in addition very great numbers of foreign personnel providing the bulk of the work force.

The cities are kept clean, certainly cleaner than in Britain. This is brought about by sewerage, a dearth of dogs, frequent litter and refuse collection, and reasonable behaviour. Unlike most European countries there is no indecency or immodesty apparent. All dress properly and well, whilst the womenfolk always veil themselves and are accompanied by their male kin when outside their homes. The same restraint is applied to everything that can be read, heard or seen in public. So too there is no appearance of vandalism, drunkenness, violence or theft upon the streets. And a high degree of courtesy is the accepted and flourishing custom. Neither poverty nor destitution are apparent.

Above all the families are strong and united. All generations, healthy or sick, are members of a single household. In this comparison to Nepal is close, but unlike modern occidental society. There are no orphans or single parent families, nor any need for old people's homes.

In all societies freedom is constrained by duties and consequences; natural, religious, social and legal, regarded more or less by any individual or social system. In Saudi society nearly all these important constraints are part of Saudi law, the 'Sharia', which moreover recognises quite specifically in its application differences between men and women. Thus Saudi society has much less individual freedom of choice than most other non-communist ones, which is the price it pays for its adherence to Islam; and it could be argued has thus less scope for intellectual expression and development. There is certainly no hindrance to material advancement however!

The British Armed Services are well represented at the British Embassy to Saudi Arabia in Riyadh, all 3 services having their own attaches and clerks. There is a small Royal Naval team. The British Army mans 3 teams: the British Military Mission to the Saudi Arabian National Guard, the Saudi Arabian Communications Project and the Saudi Arabian Medical Project, each headed by a Brigadier with a small team of all ranks, advising the Saudi Arabian National Guard in their various disciplines. There is also a Royal Air Force team, the UK MOD (Air) Team.

The UK MOD (Air) Team is headed by an Air Commodore and manned predominantly by RAF officers and airmen, with some MOD civilians, a RN officer and 2 Royal Engineer lieutenant colonels. The 2 Sappers are a surveyor and a chartered engineer. The team is heavily involved in the Royal Saudi Air Force's acquisition of large numbers of British military aircraft, some naval ships, and construction of a large military air base.

Your writer looks back on what over the years brought him to his post as the RE infrastructure officer with the UK MOD Team in Saudi Arabia, and can summarise it in a string of letters: years of training at RMAS, RMCS and RSME; longer years of application in FARELF, HQNI, BAOR, HKLF, BNG, CINCHAN and UKLF; proudly wearing the badges of the R LEICS REGT, RMAS, RE, G ENGRS and QGE; from Black 60 the airstrip at Long Pasia in Borneo developed during confrontation to SACLANT's sophisticated maritime military airfields in Europe.

What next?



THE 17TH OREGANO WAR

The Corporal scanning the border through his issue binoculars spotted a Paprikan military convoy move into an already crowded assembly area. He reported the movement and continued to observe from the makeshift OP that had been occupied by soldiers from 48 Gurkha Infantry Brigade since that Brigade had moved to Oregano to support Cayenne against an anticipated attack from its larger neighbour, Paprika. The Corporal was kept busy as further convoys moved in and out of his field of view throughout the day.

Further south the Commandant of QGE surveyed the maps covering the walls of his temporary command post. Should war break out the Brigade's task would be to try to contain attacks by the numerically superior Paprikans until such time as further reinforcements from UK could be deployed to counter attack and regain any territory lost. Realistically this could only be achieved by a fighting withdrawal through a number of prepared positions and the Commandant knew that his squadrons would be fully committed from day one with minefield and demolition tasks that could not be carried out for political reasons before the Paprikans had violated the Oregano non-aggression treaty. One small ray of sunshine for the Commandant was that 41 Training Party had just completed its basic combat engineer training and was available to deploy under its instructors as R Troop, the Commandant's reserve. It would be needed!

On 2 May, Paprikan special forces crossed the border to recce and prepare the way for the 2 mechanised brigades massed along the border. The battalions of 48 Brigade deployed to battle positions and 67 and 68 Field Squadrons were fully employed on minefield and field defence tasks. With all other engineer assets deployed, R Troop was tasked to construct field defences in support of Brigade HQ in the Mai Po area. The task commenced early on 3 May and work continued throughout the day. Despite the great heat of the day the work was largely completed by 1800 hrs with wiring to stop infantry infiltration and attacks and fully revetted trenches with overhead protection for infantry weapons. Work was twice halted by Paprikan special force attacks when R Troop was forced to deploy as infantry to fight off determined recce patrols.

During the course of the day there had been signs of an imminent Paprikan amphibious landing in the Sai Kung area and two companies of infantry had been rushed to the area. To support the defensive positions a protective minefield was required and R Troop was rapidly deployed to carry out this task. Using the last hour of daylight to recce and set out the minefield the Troop Sergeant, Sergeant Damar Ghale, was able to start laying the minefield shortly after last light and the whole task was completed in the early hours of 4 May.

The Troop was able to catch its breath and take a few hours' sleep, before being tasked with the construction of an aerial ropeway to assist in the withdrawal of heavy equipment across a river where the existing bridge had been found to be unsuitable as a reserved demolition and had been destroyed as a preliminary demolition. The construction went very well and a large quantity of military equipment was saved from the advancing Paprikans.

Paprikan mechanised forces had crossed the Border at first light on 4 May and by this time were pressing hard against the Brigade's infantry battalions. The two Field Squadrons of QGE were preparing fall-back positions south of Sek Kong and demolitions along a break-clean line through Sek Kong itself. Enemy air activity throughout the day had been intense with FITTER and HIND attacks against transport and troop positions. In one attack a bridge in Sek Kong, planned as a reserved demolition, had been destroyed. QGE were tasked with building an MGB as an alternative withdrawal route. With both Squadrons fully deployed the Commandant decided to task R Troop.

Shortly after last light Sgt Damar Ghale and LCpl Netrabahadur Gurung set off to recce a suitable site. Approximately one hour later the main body moved off under command of the section corporals. It was a difficult journey with many diversions caused by blockages as a result of enemy air attack. Eventually the Troop arrived on site, married-up with the bridge train and commenced work. The importance of the task could be gauged by the arrival of several senior officers to watch the build, including the Commandant. In good time the bridge and approaches were completed and the stranded infantry were able to withdraw safely. By first light the MGB had been stripped, repalletised and moved away from site. As R Troop deployed to its next task Paprikan recce vehicles could be heard just north of the river line.

R Troop now moved to a site behind the infantry battalions in order to prepare a water point. The move to this site was complicated by the need to avoid main roads after first light and by a short but torrential downpour as the Troop arrived at their new harbour area. The task was completed quickly with the water point ready to supply water within 2 hours. The soldiers were then able to grab some sleep while the Troop management recce'd the next task.

With reinforcing units now flooding ashore and the promise of Royal Navy air support from first light next day, the Brigade plan was modified to lure Paprikan forces into a gigantic trap in which they could be destroyed by the reinforced Brigade. To entice the enemy into a suitable area 48 Brigade was to carry out a further withdrawal and more bridge demolitions would be required. R Troop was tasked with preparing 3 Bailey bridges as reserved demolitions.

The Troop deployed to site at 2000 hours and split down with a section deploying to each bridge. To confuse matters the weather deteriorated and preparations were carried out in the pitch dark. Corporal Uttamsing Gurung commanded the task at bridge codeword DAFFODIL and had a hard time but managed to prepare the demolition on time. The other 2 bridges, TIGER and COTTAGE under Corporal Mulukraj Rai and Corporal Santosh Limbu, were also prepared on time.

By 0200 hours the bad news that no infantry guard was available had been received and the sections settled into the routine of guarding and maintaining the demolitions. During the night each of the sections had a lively time fighting off enemy attacks and ammunition was very low when the order finally came to demolish the bridges. The demolitions were executed slickly at first light and the sections ordered to exfiltrate to a new RV, moving tactically to avoid enemy ambushes. As the sections moved off the sound of Sea Harriers streaking overhead to pound enemy concentrations was the first sign of the counter-attack that was ultimately to lead to the destruction of all Paprikan forces in Cayenne. R Troop meanwhile continued its march to a new harbour area and a brief rest.

PING CHAU PROJECT

BY LCPL BHISMARAJ GURUNG

After nearly a decade of silence the name of the Ping Chau Is once again appeared in the Queen's Gurkha Engineers' project 1 But this project, unlike the previous one during which 68 Gurkha Sqn constructed the whole camp complex, was a narrow but quite concrete track to join the island's only helipad to its north beach.

The new track, which is 1m wide and 195m long, was primarily intended to facilitate the transportation of stores from the RPL landing on the beach up the hill to the adventure training camp by means of a motor-powered or hand-pushed trolley. The responsibility for constructing this track was given to A Troop 67 Sqn after a request for Sapper assistance from HQ 48 Gurkha Bde.

The feasibility study of the area had already been done by 70 Sqn, and this was then followed by a detailed recce in order to produce the final detailed planning report. The recce was undertaken by the OC, Maj L W Chapman and Lt (QGO) Mohankumar Gurung and the report prepared by A Troop Comd, Lt T D Grant. According to the cascade diagram the project was to take place between 27 July and 19 August of this year.

As soon as the clearance and financial cover for the planning and construction was received from HQ 48 Bde, the project seemed to be under way in a quite hectic way. It was carried out in three stages. The first stage consisted of site preparation, alignment and setting up, and removal of thick scrub. Once this had been done the area was excavated to a required depth to provide a base for the concrete track. The formwork was then fixed into position and aggregate laid in to produce an even gradient. Having completed the second stage, the only thing which remained to be done was the concreting. To do it a 100 litre tilt drum for mixing concrete and a dumper for conveying the concrete up the slope were used.

As for difficulties, the only worrying factor was the very unpredictable weather, which was unfavourable during the last two weeks. The continuous rain caused one problem after another. Materials for concreting such as aggregate, sand and cement, had to be carried on our backs up the slope and handmixed because the dumper could not be used as it had bogged in at the top of the hill. An improved mobile shelter also had to be designed to allow the work to continue and to prevent the concrete being washed away by the rain. It slowed the project and, of course, put it behind the schedule which obviously meant extended hours of work and great personal effort by everyone involved. However, it was all worth it when the task was done successfully and finished well in time.

The project was not, however, without its lighter moments. We all laughed when the Tp Comd reappeared on the RCL from Wong Shek and told us of the practical joke he was playing. Officer Cadet S White, who was attached to us for two weeks, was told by him that he had received a message on the RCL's radio tasking him to recce on a camp site for Vietnamese refugees. Lt Grant had briefed OCdt White that as he had to go back to the project he was to carry and to recce. Sadly, as the RCL approached this 'deserted' island on which the recce was to take place, it could not get in to the beach so OCdt White was dropped off the ramp into 5 feet of water with the only rations they could spare on the RCL, a case of San Miguel beer! We laughed even more when OCdt White staggered into Camp 2 hours late and still dripping.

Finally, it is hoped that future generations of adventure training parties will have a nice and easy walk to the top where they can sit, admire the view, and wait for their stores to come up by motorized trolley courtesy of QGE.

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SSGT PRAKASH RAI RECEIVED THE BEM

BY WO2 MAHENDRAPRASAD GURUNG

During 69 Sqn's tour in the Falkland Islands from Sep 86-Jan 87, SSgt Prakash Rai BEM was employed as the Plant Sgt of the Airfield Damage Repair (ADR) Tp. The job of ADR Tp was to ensure that the airfield at Stanley remained operational, and in the event of hostilities carry out repairs to any damage incurred.

After Op CORPORATE the old airfield at Stanley was repaired and improved by the Royal Engineers, including 69 Sqn, using the American AM 2 mats. The disadvantage of these lightweight aluminium mats is that they tend to bend when aircraft land or take off. After a period of time the mats reach an unacceptable degree of 'bend' when it is necessary to straighten the bend on the airfield. Hence the task of straightening the airfield was called 'Operational Bender', which needed to be completed rapidly, as during this operation the airfield would become inoperative.

69 Sqn was involved in one major Op BENDER and, in carrying it out, broke the previous record set by our Royal Engineer predecessors. Op BENDER involved primarily the plant tp, and during it as many as 20 plant members would be used. This Op BENDER was such a success and was indeed a direct reflection on the thoroughly professional way in which SSgt Prakash managed and controlled the plant.

The Sqn was also involved in another major airfield operation just before the end of the tour, when many of the old AM 2 mats had to be replaced. In this 48 hour operation plant was again extensively used, under the direct control of SSgt Prakash. It was another successful operation, which ended 2 hours before the sqn farewell party for the Sqn Commander.

Apart from these major tasks, just as important were the mundane day to day jobs of minor maintenance to keep the airfield open. Here again SSgt Prakash was heavily involved.

We were therefore delighted when it was announced that SSgt Prakash Rai had been awarded the British Empire Medal for his services in the Falkland Islands. It was indeed a proud moment for the QGE when SSgt Prakash Rai was presented with the BEM by the Governor of Hong Kong, His Excellency Sir David Wilson on 12 Apr 88.

CHARITY EASTERN STYLE

On the 27 February 1988 the British WOs and Sgts Mess QGE entertained one hundred and thirty underprivileged Chinese children from Hong Kong. The day was arranged by SSgt Eric Taylor REME, with the cooperation of Treats Registered Charity.

The day started at 0845 hours when the children boarded a RPL for the one hour trip to Perowne Barracks, where they were met on the beach by all mess members and their families. After watching a Tae Kwon Do demonstration the children started visiting the numerous stalls and rides - mine detectors, plant equipment, weapons, aerial ropeway, combat support boats, pony rides, ducking stall, pedal cars and of course the Noddy train. It was a joy to see their faces when confronted with a pony as most of them had never seen one let alone had a ride on one.

Midday found everybody gathered around the mess car park to watch a display by the Pipes and Drums of the Regiment. Lunch came next and perhaps the best surprise of all - no rice, as, thanks to the generosity of some well known companies it was a choice of hamburgers or fried chicken and chips and hot apple pies and ice cream. Needless to say no one went hungry.

The afternoon began with a helicopter from 660 Army Air Corps hovering over the mess with four men abseiling down to the children armed with T-shirts for all. It was then back to the stalls and rides until three o'clock when it was back to the mess again. This time SSgt Taylor presented Mrs Jennifer Edwards, Chairman of Treats, with over five hundred new toys and a cheque for \$10,802:60. Major Lam, representing the Salvation Army, also presented the Mess President, WO2 K Hall RE, with a plaque commemorating the day.

Now came the hardest part - the goodbyes. The children once again boarded the RPL and with much waving and cheering on all sides they set sail for HMS Tamar and home, leaving behind some very tired but contented people on the beach. A good day had been had by all.

A thank you to all mess members, their families and friends, for their support and generosity in collections. Finally our appeal for this charity still continues and on the 29 April 1988 the Commandant presented Mrs Edwards with another cheque for \$7,000. Once again - thank you one and all.

EX THAIPHOON 2/88 - 'THE MEMORABLE TRIP'

BY SPR KRISHNARAJ RAI

The name 'Thai-phoon' itself gives the impression of some kind of stormy wind at first glance, but in fact it was the name of a recent exercise held in Thailand by A Coy 2/2 GR with QGE in support. Being soldiers we often have to travel to different places in the world, and in the course of this E Troop 68 Sqn was selected to be the Engineer support unit to 2/2 GR. Apart from this we also had the task of assisting Khao-Yai National Park (KYNP), which lies in South Thailand near Bangkok, by constructing suspension bridges and doing some repair works to older bridges around.

On 25 October the advance party, comprising 15 of us under the command of Lt S J Date and Lt (QGO) Manbahadur Gurung, flew to Korat, Thailand with mixed feelings of excitement and curiosity. The rear party, altogether 13 of us, under the command of SSgt Tekbahadur Gurung, arrived there on 28 October. After spending a few days with the 2/2 GR at Suratumpitak Army camp, which is situated next to Korat city, we moved down to KYNP to do our construction tasks. Some troop personnel were left behind at the camp to perform supporting tasks for 2/2 GR such as battle simulation, mine warfare and water supply under the command of SSgt Tekbahadur Gurung.

Whilst we were at KYNP we aimed to build two suspension bridges and create a good impression among the local people so as to pave the way for next year's training exercise. At KYNP E Troop built a new 25m long suspension bridge and repaired the other older one over the same Ghong-Geo river just a short distance away. Our accommodation was arranged at Yao-Wa Chan camp by the park authority. The place we stayed was beautiful because of scenic surroundings and nice park animals to look at. Having settled down properly we immediately plunged ourselves into the project. With the help of our combat engineering skills, we were able to put the finishing touch to the bridge well ahead of the deadline. Thanks also to the efficient management of our officers working details were arranged so that our individual engineering skills were used to the maximum. Despite the hard work we had put in we really felt proud to be of great help to the park authority and the tourists going there to visit.

In the course of the project we had many important visitors coming down to see the works and among them were Lt Col S McNeil, Comdt 2/2 GR. Most of us bought souvenirs of Thailand. After R&R there came lots of fatigues to prepare MFO boxes for backloading to Hong Kong. Finally, all of the exercise party were divided into 2 groups in order to fly them conveniently back to Hong Kong, via VC-10. But at the last moment there had to be some changes to the actual flight details. So, the first chalk was flown back on 30 October and was followed by the second chalk the day after. So it was that Exercise THAIPHOON 2/88 came to a happy end.

Although the duration of our stay in Thailand was short, we gained lots of experience in different areas that varied from combat engineering works to infantry skills, and also learned about the country and the people themselves. Looking back at all these achievements, obviously it proved the success of Exercise THAIPOON 2/88 which we hope will make it possible for its continuation in future. All those who took part in the exercise are looking forward to visiting that beautiful country again.

EX JUNGLE TROOPER 2/88 - BRUNEI

BY SPR UTTAMKUMAR SHERCHAN

For soldiers it is an unusual experience to have an exercise in the jungle, but having an exercise in the dense jungle of Brunei is another good opportunity to gain plenty of experience in a jungle environment. We found a great deal of differences, especially in map reading and jungle tactics.

We were a total of 59 personnel under the command of Capt A Frankland RE. Apart from D Troop 68 Gurkha Fd Sqn there were 1 men from GTR, a medic from RAMC NTGP Borneo Lines and 2 instructors from 48 Gurkha Inf Bde, and that formed JUNGLE TROOPER 2/88. We did a week on pre-exercise training before our flight to Brunei on 6 Jul 1988.

The 2IC of the exercise, Lt (QGO) Budhikumar Gurung had already left for Brunei on the advance party, and had arranged all the administrative requirements for the Exercise with Training Team Brunei (TTB) at Medicina Lines.

Once in Brunei after a half day's preparation period, we embarked on our programme run TTB. The teaching was mainly split into two parts, theory and practical lessons. This was followed by a whole day on the long range, zeroing personal weapons and competition shooting.

After a day's exercise preparation we set out for the 7 day final exercise in the Lavi training area. Having arrived at the drop off point on transports, we started our long walk lasting 4 hours carrying a heavy load each to the harbour area at LP 195A, situated near the Rampoya River. The 7 day exercise was divided into 6 section stands on a daily basis. Each day different tasks were conducted by sections. This included river crossing, tracking, live CQB lanes, survival, tactical night/contact drills, close target recce (CTR) and navigation.

Everyone enjoyed the various tasks and some managed to catch a few fish in their free time. Finally endex came on the morning of 24 July, when we again reorganised ourselves before our next task.

On the afternoon of the same day the exercise was airlifted into 2 different LP locations west of Labi area. Our task was to expand the existing LPs using explosives and chainsaws, not forgetting kukris. Meanwhile a section under 2 Lt Misselbrook RE went to Limbang to restore a monument for the Royal Marines.

Finally, on 28 July 1988, after nearly 10 days in the jungle extraction began for us to be airlifted back to Medicina Lines in Seria, after a successful exercise in the jungle by everyone of JUNGLE TROOPER 2/88.

SOMETHING WORTH LEARNING

BY SPR KRISHNARAJ RAI

Finally, the long awaited day had arrived when we were able to call ourselves 'The Gurkhas', the trained fighters. We felt very relieved once we had completed our recruit training intake 87. Maybe that was because of restlessness created by doing the same infantry tactics all the time. As a matter of fact, we wanted to do new and creative things worth learning. Luckily, we, 21 of us altogether, were chosen for QGE. We left behind our barracks in Sek Kong for the last time.

Once we arrived at the regiment we were familiarised around the camp for a couple of days, so as to adjust ourselves into the everyday life of QGE, before going on to the basic combat course. We had gone through 8 weeks of education that covered SLP2 and the mathematics.

Our basic combat engineering course started on 8 Feb 88 with the opening speech of the Comdt QGE, followed by the Assistant Training Officer Capt (QGO) Chitrabahadur Thapa. During the course we learnt various engineering skills from simple rope lashing to bridge construction, mine warfare, demoliton, water supply etc. We really enjoyed doing all of the technical works.

Among them, the medium girder bridge (MGB) happened to be the most interesting as well as demanding task we ever did, throughout our entire course. MGB is one of the simplest and quickest means to facilitate a way to advancing friendly tanks and other heavy wheeled and tracked vehicles over river crossing and other gaps.

We had the task in our hands to build an MGB over the dead ground next to the air strip in Sek Kong during night time. On the evening of 16 April 1988 we moved to the location with all the essential equipment needed for the construction and made them ready for the night lay. By 8pm, when it was quite dark, we had started to assemble MGB parts as our Section Commander told us, so as to give it a complete bridge structure. During the construction we had to be alert and energetic all the time because all the bridging parts were heavy, so capable of inflicting deep injury from silly mistakes. We took all the precautions and put much effort into building it.

In the middle of constructing we were visted by Brigadier Beacuchamp, the Brigadier 48 Gurkha Infantry Brigade. He was very impressed by observing every bit of effort put into the work. He asked a few questions regarding the MGB and its usefulness in the event of war. At the end he looked satisfied and happy with the answers given by some of us, as well as with the hard and quick performance on construction showed to him. He took particular interest in the way we assembled and laid it over the dead ground in the shortest time possible. After the completion of laying, he returned with the knowledge of the medium girder bridge and its usefulness in war.

We had a few moment's rest before reverse stripping, which was a very hard job. By 5am in the morning we had finished palletising all of the bridging parts and got back to the camp. Despite all the tough works, we felt proud and happy by knowing our ability accomplish whatever engineering tasks were given to us.

At the end of the course we had a final exercise in which every individual's combat engineering skills were tested - whether he was capable of doing any task as ordered by his Commander or not. Did he understand all the works he had already got through? After the exercise we had our pass-off parade on 13 May 1988.

At last the course came to an end and so we had to bid goodbye to all our devoted instructors and others involved with us. Though we got away from them we won't forget what they did for us. They were the people who taught us the vitality of being QGE's Sapper. Thanks for everything.

After finishing both infantry and engineering training respectively we became a product of infantry and tradesmanship. Above all we are soldiers in the first place and tradesmen later. That's the reason which makes QGE's Sapper so unique as well as UBIQUE in its truest sense.

HO JUBILEE SEA CADET CENTRE PROJECT

BY SSGT BHAKTA RAI

This was the second project undertaken by 'D' Troop, 68 Gurkha Field Squadron during its project training phase. The sea cadet centre is situated beside Stanley Services Boat Club and directly exposed to the elements. The aim of the project was to reconstruct the remaining sea wall that had been badly damaged by a typhoon a few years before.

The initial recce was carried out by 'D' Troop OC, QGO and myself. As soon as the project was officially approved by HQBF we were tasked for the job. The site was very restricted, and an RCL was the only possible means of transporting the stores and materials up to the site. In spite of the difficulties, on Monday 9 May 1988, 'D' Troop proceeded to Stanley by RCL with eighteen Sappers and various plant vehicles - for example a light wheel tractor, 100 litres mixing drum, Bomack roller and Hicycle. In addition, three tipper trucks were taken filled with sand and aggregate.

We arrived on site at 1030 and the stores were unloaded in double fast time because we were racing against the tide, and the transporting vehicles had to return quickly to the RCL. After that the troop OC and QGO confirmed the accommodation with the Duke of Edinburgh's Royal Regiment. The rest of the troop started the first step of clearing the debris along the project site.

Within the first week we were successful and able to prepare the sea wall foundation, having removed the many big boulders and old broken concrete slabs. We really concentrated on the foundation of the wall because we considered that this was the reason for the failure in the past. So we cleared down to the bedrock and then grouted in vertical reinforcement bars and thoroughly concreted the base before the actual wall was started.

Daily the sea wall grew taller and taller and although the temperature was high and the job was tough, the Sappers of 'D' Troop maintained their work speed and standard. At the end of the second week the sea wall was completed, but at the same time we found that sand and aggregate was running low, and so as a solution we transported the materials by road and dumped them in the service boat club's car park and replenished on a trickle basis. The car park was almost two hundred metres away and linked by a narrow footpath to the project site itself. A total of twenty-five tons of sand plus a hundred bags of cement were transported manually using improved trollies and wheelbarrows to and from the car park to site.

After completion of the wall lots of jobs started concurrently. The bricklayers started the fence wall and fence post grouting, other troops started filling the gap between the wall and existing slab. In addition the light wheel tractor was busy pulling the

rocks from the shore to the gap, while the roller boomack was rolling and tamping the filled area. As soon as the gap was filled and tamped, slab concreting was started, and completed by the end of the third week, and the difference could easily be seen from the original state of the site.

At various stages we were visted by the Deputy Commander 48 Brigade, Naval CAPIC, Commandant and Gurkha Major. Apart from the job itself we had certain routines such as swimming at lunch time, wind surfing and fishing after work both for refreshment and entertainment.

Finally all the finishing touches were completed and the troop returned to barracks on 10 June with lots of construction experience and the memory of the beautiful beach of Stanley. The project was a success and good training value for the tradesmen and GD Sappers, who maintained a high standard at all times.

OGE DAY - 28 SEPTEMBER 1988

BY SAPPER NIRAJ THAPA OGE

As the sun spread its rays all over, the Sappers couldn't resist falling-in to commence the celebration of the Regiment's 40th birthday. The normal reporting was done, after which the Adjutant took possession of the microphone to tell proudly about some historic events of the courageous Sappers and Miners.

Filled with curiosity every individual's heart started pounding like a 'crazy ball', hoping to be the winner of the Bowring Trophy. The ultimate winner of the award this year was 21165375 LCpl Gaubahadur Pun who deserved it fully. A 'birthday' cake was cut by the Commandant Lt Col J G Baker MBE RE. At first he was confused because there was a giant kukri instead of a knife to cut the cake but later he quite got the knack under the courteous guidance of the GM Saheb, Maj (QGO) Kharkajung Gurung MVO.

'Tele games' followed the opening ceremony which was in three parts - 'bucket filling', 'rowing' and 'pulling a 4-ton vehicle'. So all the macho-men of their respective troops and departments had the opportunity to show the power of their muscles.

At the end of the games 'A Troop' came out as the winner. Every and each participant fought with all his power but surrendering to the fact that all can't be winners. I'll say that 'winning or losing is immaterial, it's taking part that matters'.

Suddenly there was a racket like in a fish market, and I got worried. My worries altered into relief as the barbecue and food stall sold all its stock. After a heavy hog-on we dragged ourselves along and gathered in front of the cafe for the prize distribution ceremony. A lot of attractive prizes were given away by the CO's cheerful memsaheb to people winning gardening, stitching and other handicrafts.

Next was tombola, for which everyone was waiting anxiously. Everyone concentrated like a 'crane for a fish' in case they skip a number. It was a contrasting scene to be viewed; some yelled their guts out and went hysterical rejoicing while others comforted their depressed hearts cursing their stars.

Last but not least, the raffles draw was shuffled and it was entertaining to watch people go berserk as they won a prize or two.

Finally the GM Saheb concluded the day by giving his mighty thanks to all those who had attended and had made it a worthwhile day.

THE ROYAL MILITARY ACADEMY SANDHURST
250TH ANNIVERSARY REUNION
TUESDAY 6 AUGUST 1991

As part of the celebration to mark the 250th anniversary of the founding of the Royal Military Academy, it is proposed to hold a reunion of former Officer and Gentlemen Cadets of Sandhurst, Mons and Woolwich. The reunion will take place at Sandhurst on Tuesday 6 August 1991.

For further details please contact:

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